



ISLAMIC ONLINE UNIVERSITY

INSIGHTS

MAGAZINE

Dr. Bilal

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University Students
in Pakistan

Behind Bars:

IOU Prison Initiative

10 Tips

for Better
Research Papers

Holding Tight

to the Rope of
Knowledge

Passion for Allah's
Knowledge and Deen

Gave Me Purpose

Top 10 IOU Assignments


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IOU Research Papers

One of the best ways to verify a student's knowledge and understanding is by assigning him or her a research paper. A teacher can readily see the individuality and resourcefulness of the student in the way the assignment was done. It is a great way for students to put into practice their research and writing skills, and challenge themselves.

The written assignment is a part of the final grade assigned to each subject in the semester transcript. In this edition of Insights, we have chosen a sampling of assignments from the various departments.

These papers demonstrate the abilities of our undergraduate students from various levels of their courses. They are diamonds in the raw representing skills, which will be polished with every subsequent paper that they produce, culminating in their bachelor theses.

We pray that the featured assignments will be an inspiration to our student readers and useful source of knowledge based on the Quran and the Sunnah for our visitors.

Dr. Bilal Philips & Veronika Matulova



MEET THE TEAM

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YOUR VIEWS

We would like to hear from you. Please let us know what you liked or would like to see in the magazine. If you would like to submit a valuable contribution to IOU Insights, please email: info@iou-insights.com.

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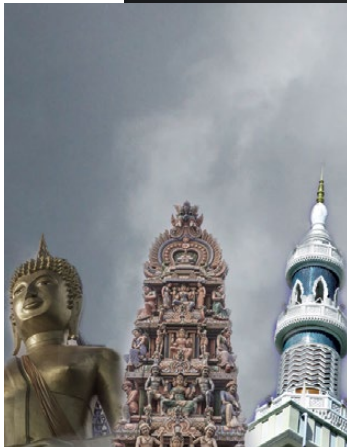
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Meeting TA EXPECTATIONS

For the past eight years at the Islamic Online University, I have had many opportunities to be on both sides of the assignment writing fence. I have written dozens of assignments as an IOU student, and graded thousands of assignments as a tutorial assistant (TA) for the same institute. I have seen outstanding assignments, as well as poor copy and paste jobs, and everything in between.

Over the years, I have noticed that some students do not understand the objective of assignment writing. Some students look at it as a task to get out of the way, or merely a repetition of whatever can be found on the internet.

With the assignment of a topic, a TA is expecting a few things:

1. Comprehensive Research

The TA expects the student to research the topic thoroughly through all available means, be it online or in print. This means the TA expects the student to make the effort to read books s/he has never read before, study concepts s/he is unfamiliar with, and visit academic websites s/he might not have known existed.

The TA can see whether a student did serious research or just a quick Google search by going through the books and resources referenced throughout the assignment. When there is a lack of resources, it is obvious that the paper is not well researched.

2. Understanding and Application

The TA expects the student to understand the new concepts introduced in the course and to be able to apply those concepts to his/her life. This is why assignment topics are often of a practical nature and focused on applying concepts to new scenarios.



3. Academic Writing Skills

The TA assessing each paper checks the level of the academic writing skills of the student. This includes the student's ability to reference properly, construct a proper bibliography, avoid plagiarizing statements and ideas, convey his/her own thoughts professionally, and utilize proper grammar and spelling. All of these things affect the final grade for the assignment.

4. Originality and Personal Style

The final aspect of the assignment is the originality of the paper and the mark of a personal style. If something was copied from Wikipedia or a website, then it will read and feel like a Wikipedia article or a blog post. An original assignment has a different feel to it; the TA can notice the student's personality in the choice of words, expression of ideas, and reflections on quotations. This is one of the clearest ways to see whether a student has grasped the objectives of the assignment or just copied from the internet. It may seem like a small thing but to the TA, it is one of the biggest signs of those who understood the work and those who did not.

These are the four most important elements of a well written assignment, and the things that matter the most in assignment writing. It is these kind of assignments that have been chosen to appear in this magazine.

The papers chosen for this magazine show a high level of research, understanding, application, academic writing skills, and originality. I hope that they serve as an example to other students of the standards expected by IOU TAs from all their students.



Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam:

The Comparison

“They have taken their scholars and monks as lords besides Allah...”¹

Introduction

Allah created man to worship Him alone. Denying the Creator’s right only leads to the worship of His creation. Buddhists do not believe in gods but nonetheless perform the acts of worship,² the bodhisattvas.³ Buddhism is named after its founder Siddharta Gautama, and currently there are 376 million⁴ Buddhists worldwide with most of its followers in Sri Lanka, Burma, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, China, India and Japan.

Buddha⁵ was born as a Hindu prince in India during the 6th century BCE. People were in religious turmoil and dissatisfaction was rising due to the rituals and sacrifices and an unfair caste system. Buddha was born a Hindu and remained as such for the rest of his life. That is why many believe Buddhism to be a reformist movement of Hinduism itself. Buddhism shares many of its creedal concepts and rituals with Hinduism yet there are distinct differences found between the two religions. Below is a brief comparison of these concepts.

Comparison of Similar Concepts of Buddhism and Hinduism from the Islamic Perspective

i. Karma:

It is the accumulated sum of one’s good and bad deeds which determine one’s status in the next life. There is no concept of repentance as opposed to Islam in which Muslims are encouraged to seek forgiveness⁶ as the Prophet ﷺ said,

“Indeed Allah accepts the repentance of a slave as long as (his soul does not reach his throat).”⁷

ii. Samsara:

This is the continuing cycle of birth, life, death and rebirth in which transmigration of a soul from one body to the next takes place which Buddhists and Hindus believe in. Muslims believe that one gets only one chance to do good deeds in this life which determines his final eternal destination. There are frequent references in the Quran regarding the

wishful thinking of sinners on the Day of Judgment but to no avail.⁸

Actual teachings of Buddha do not have any concept of God.

iii. Nirvana:

Both of these religions have the same goal, which is the release from the endless cycle of samsara. In Buddhism, it is called Nirvana,⁹ which is achieved by practicing Dharma¹⁰ and can be acquired in one lifetime. For Hindus it is called Moksha, which is the merging of one's soul with the supreme soul of Brahma and takes more than one lifetime to achieve. The goal of the Muslim is simple and clear. Allah says in the Quran,

“So he who is drawn away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise has attained [his desire]...”¹¹

iv. Meditation:

Yoga is the means by which a Hindu seeks Moksha. It has its roots in the Vedic ritual symbolism and is very similar to the Buddhist tradition Samadhi. In Islam, salah is the form of meditation which is the prime requirement after the declaration of faith and has been stressed repeatedly in the Quran and the Sunnah. This is the first thing that one will be questioned about on the Day of Judgment.¹²

Comparison of the Different Concepts of Buddhism and Hinduism from the Islamic Perspective

i. Creed:

Buddhist creed is based on the “four noble truths,”¹³ which describes the life as a suffering, identifies the causes of pain as desires and seeks to find an end to that pain by following “the eightfold path”¹⁴ in order to end the cycle of rebirth and attain Nirvana. Hindus, on the other hand, do not have one creed and hold a pluralistic world view.

The declaration of faith is the Islamic creed by which one acknowledges that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad ﷺ is His messenger. The purpose of life is to worship Allah and to live by His commands in order to be saved from the Hellfire and to live eternally in Jannah.¹⁵

ii. Way of Life (Monastic vs Life Affirming):

Buddhists lead an ascetic way of life while Hinduism is life-affirming, as they include Artha¹⁶ and Kama¹⁷

as two of the aims of Hinduism. A Muslim treads the middle path by acknowledging and using the blessings of Allah with thankfulness utilizing these to earn more good deeds for one's eternal destination.¹⁸

iii. Concept of God:

Actual teachings of Buddha do not have any concept of God. In Theravada, which is the oldest form of Buddhism, there is no worship of idols or even the image of Buddha and no incarnation. Hinduism is henotheistic and monist¹⁹ and is replete with idols of humans, animals, forces of nature and even of concepts. The Muslims believe in one God who alone is worthy of worship²⁰ and is unique in His names and attributes. This is the absolute foundation of Islam.

iv. Soul:

Buddhists do not believe in the existence of souls which in itself is a contradiction as the transmigration of souls is one of their fundamental concepts. Hindus believe in the existence of Atman which is the individual soul and part of the primordial soul, Brahman. Muslims believe in the human soul which is the creation of Allah and is by no means a part of Him.²¹

v. Religious Text and Transmission:

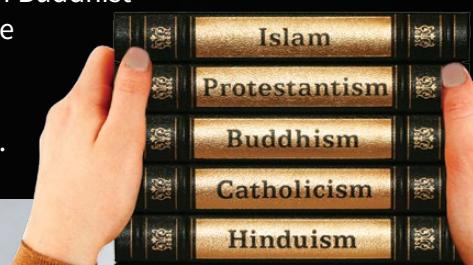
The Buddhists have not agreed upon religious texts as they relied on oral tradition of the teachings of Buddha for more than four hundred years.²²

This is surprising as the Hindus were a very literate nation and had a rich history of written Hindu religious literature including Vedas, Brahmana, and Upanishad. Vedas are considered to be the Hindu religious text.

The Quran, the final scripture preserved in its entirety, was transmitted both orally and in the written form, and along with the Sunnah serves as the basis of the Islamic law.

vi. Equality:

The main feature of Buddhist teaching is no caste system which has its basis in Hindu religious scripture.



They also treat women equally unlike in Hinduism. In Islam, the only criterion for superiority²³ is taqwa.²⁴

vii. Code:

The Buddhists' code is the eightfold path²⁵. Hindus, on the other hand, believe that there are many ways and means to reach Moksha. Quran and Sunnah are the code for Muslims, revealed by Allah to the last Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

viii. Sacrifice:

There is no sacrifice in Buddhism as opposed to Hinduism. Islam does have sacrifice but it is only allowed in the name of Allah.²⁶

ix. Vegetarianism:

Buddhists are not vegetarians²⁷ but Hindus are. Muslims believe that Allah created animals for human use²⁸ with certain restrictions²⁹ as long as they are not exploited and harmed.

x. Universality and Proselytization:

Due to the caste system and a creation story that is specific to the people of Indus valley, Hinduism does not appeal to everyone. It is a local and monocultural religion with no conversion rights. Also, Hindus do not proselytize. Buddhism, on the other hand, has universal appeal and has people from mixed cultures. They are the third largest, most aggressive missionary group with branches all over the world. Islam is a universal religion and calling others to it, in his or her capacity, is obligatory on every Muslim.³⁰

Conclusion

The philosophy of Buddhism is becoming very attractive to the secular Western societies. There is a lack of moral values and spirituality due to the materialistic values and Buddhists missionaries are aggressively working to fulfill that need with their self-created philosophies. It is incumbent on Muslims to fulfill their obligation of da'wah in this day and age. If we fail to carry out this obligation, we will have to pay the dire consequences not only in this world, but in the akhirah as well.

“And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful. And do not be like the

ones who became divided and differed after the clear proofs had come to them. And those will have a great punishment.”³¹

¹Quran 9:31

²Johnson

³Enlightened beings who reject nirvana for themselves in order to aid others.

⁴adherents.com

⁵Enlightened one

⁶Sahih Muslim, Book 1, Hadith Number 14. “Turn you people in repentance to Allah and beg pardon of Him. I turn to Him in repentance a hundred times a day.”

⁷Jami` at-Tirmidhi, Hadith Number 3537.

⁸Quran 32:12

⁹Reaching perfect state of mind.

¹⁰Teachings of Buddha. (Johnson)

¹¹Quran 3:185

¹²Munajjid

¹³Humanity's Diverse Faiths

¹⁴accessstoinsight.org

¹⁵Quran 59:20

¹⁶Success in Economic Life

¹⁷Gratification of senses (sensual, sexual and mental pleasure).

¹⁸Quran 2:22

¹⁹Everything is god and god is in everything.

²⁰Quran 112:1-4

²¹Quran 17:85

²²Muhyaddin

²³Quran 49:13

²⁴God Consciousness.

²⁵Humanity's Diverse Faiths

²⁶Quran 6:162

²⁷accessstoinsight.org

²⁸Quran 40:79

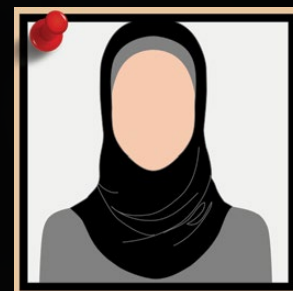
²⁹Quran 5:3

³⁰Quran 2:143

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By Naushin Sarfraz | BAIS | 5th Semester | Fall 2014



GOGG & MAGOG

Introduction

Gog and Magog are the names of two tribes of human beings, which are mentioned both in the Jewish scriptures, and Quran and hadith. Gog and Magog are names given in Hebrew, and they are called Yajooj and Majooj in Arabic. They are mentioned in surah Kahf and surah Al-Anbia. These two tribes are the progeny of Nuh as all humanity is after the cleansing of the earth in The Great Flood.

“And We made his descendants those remaining [on the earth].”¹

They are numerous in numbers: exceeding that of all humanity put together. They have a rebellious nature, and were spreading mischief and chaos on the earth. For that reason, Allah had them imprisoned in the mountains behind a dam of copper and iron built by the pious King Dhul Qarnayn, as commanded by Allah.

“Until, when he came to the rising of the

sun, he found it rising on a people for whom We had not made against it any shield. And thus We had encompassed [all] that he had in knowledge. Then he followed a way until, when he reached [a pass] between two mountains, he found beside them a people who could hardly understand [his] speech. They said, 'O Dhul Qarnayn, indeed Gog and Magog are [great] corrupters in the land. So may we assign for you an expenditure that you might make between us and them a barrier?' He said, 'That in which my Lord has established me is better [than what you offer], but assist me with strength; I will make between you and them a dam. Bring me sheets of iron' - until, when he had leveled [them] between the two mountain walls, he said, 'Blow [with bellows],' until when he had made it [like] fire, he said, 'Bring me, that I may pour over it molten copper.' So Gog and Magog were unable to pass over it, nor were they able [to effect] in it any penetration. [Dhul Qarnayn] said, 'This is a mercy from my Lord; but when the promise of



my Lord comes, He will make it level, and ever is the promise of my Lord true.' And We will leave them that day surging over each other, and [then] the Horn will be blown, and We will assemble them in [one] assembly.”²

Return of Gog and Magog

Abu Hurayrah reported that the Prophet ﷺ said,

“Every day, Gog and Magog are trying to dig a way out through the barrier. When they begin to see sunlight through it, the one who is in charge of them says, ‘Go back; you can carry on digging tomorrow,’ and when they come back, the barrier is stronger than it was before. This will continue until their time comes and Allah wishes to send them forth. They will dig until they begin to see sunlight, then the one who is in charge of them will say, ‘Go back; you can carry on digging tomorrow, in sha Allah. In this case, he will make an exception by saying in sha Allah; thus, relating the matter to the Will of Allah. They will return on the following day and find the hole as they left it. They will carry on digging and come out against the people. They will drink all the water and the people will entrench themselves in their fortresses. Gog and Magog will fire their arrows into the sky, and they will fall back to earth with something like blood on them. Gog and Magog will say, ‘We have defeated the people of earth, and overcome the people of heaven.’ Then Allah will send a kind of worm in the napes of their necks, and they will be killed by it...’ By Him in Whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, the beasts of the earth will become fat.”³

The above hadith very clearly explains the return of Gog and Magog, the consequences of their return and the end result. It is one of the signs of the end of times before the Day of Judgment. There will be three major wars between the Muslims and the non-believers where a great number of lives will be destroyed. After the wars end and the Muslims are victorious, the fitnah of Dajjal will arise. Muslims will be confined to the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah, and Dajjal will have control over the world. Isa will descend, kill Dajjal on the banks of river Jordan, and that is when Gog and Magog will be released to wreak havoc on humanity. Isa will take the Muslims to the Jabal At-Toor and supplicate to Allah to remove this evil. Allah will send worms in answer to his supplication and thus Muslims will be delivered from this evil. This is basically a brief summary of those turbulent times.⁴

Modern Beliefs about Gog and Magog

Nowadays, many modern Muslims believe that Gog and Magog might just be euphemisms. This is due to their claim that the technological advances, satellite systems and planes leave no corner of the earth hidden anymore. This is far from true; Allah shows to us time and again that our technology has limitations and only Allah is All-Knowing, and nothing is hidden from His sight and knowledge. A recent example is that of the disappearance of the Malaysian airlines flight.

Some of the Muslims believe Gog and Magog to be the nations of Israel and America while it is clearly stated in the Quran that Dhul Qarnayn entrapped them behind a dam and they will only be released near the end. The Prophet states in the hadith that they are trying to dig through the wall and will not succeed till they say in sha Allah, then how do they fit that into this false assumption.

“Until when [the dam of] Gog and Magog has been opened and they, from every elevation, descend.”⁵

Where is the dam that is holding back America and Israel and how will they descend? The USA has been committing atrocities against the Muslims whenever they feel like, unopposed, and Israel so far has not invaded other countries except for Palestine; hence, they do not fulfill the prophesy stated in this Quranic verse.

Abu Saeed Khudri narrates that Rasulullah ﷺ said,

“On the day of Qiyamah Allah will say to Adam to pick out the Jahannamis from his entire progeny. Adam will ask, ‘O Rabb, who are they?’ Allah will say, ‘Nine hundred and ninety-nine of a thousand are Jahannami while the one is a Jannati.’ On hearing this, the Sahaba were overtaken by fear and they asked, ‘O Rasulullah ﷺ, who will that one Janniti be?’ Rasulullah ﷺ said, ‘Do not grieve, the nine hundred and ninety-nine will be Ya’jooj and Ma’jooj while you will be the Jannati.’” (i.e. your numbers in relation to them will be one in a thousand).⁶

As we can see from the above hadith, the Gog and Magog outnumber us 999:1 and the population of Israel and USA put together doesn’t outnumber even one Muslim country, Indonesia. Calling them Gog and Magog doesn’t seem logical scientifically speaking. Zainab bint Jahsh says: “...once Rasulullah ﷺ awoke from such a sleep that his face was red and these words were on his tongue:

‘There is none worthy of worship except Allah. Destruction is upon the Arabs on account of the evil which has come close to them. Today a hole as big as this has opened up in the wall of Yajooj and Majooj.’ And Rasulullah indicated the size of the hole forming a ring with his index finger and thumb.’⁷

The USA and Israel didn’t exist in the days of the Prophet so for them to try and break the dam at that time doesn’t seem possible.

Conclusion

As we can see from the above evidence, it is very dangerous to interpret the Quran in a manner which is different to the understanding of the Salaf and the Prophet ﷺ. It is better to stick to their understanding. Otherwise, we give different meanings to the Quran and that would cause us to deny a hadith, which will eventually lead us astray to the point of going out of the fold of Islam. Why get into matters which are beyond our understanding and end up in Hell? The Quran and the hadith both mention them as two tribes of people. The reason we cannot see them is the same as why we can’t see angels, jinns, souls, and air. It is not Allah’s will for us to see them

right now and when Allah wills, we will see them. No questions, no doubts, and no assumptions are allowed.

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³Tirmidhee, Abwaab al-Tafseer: Surah al-Kahf (Hadith 5160), 8/597-99; Ibn Maajah, Kitaab al-Fitan, (Hadith 4080), 2/1364. Ahmad, Musnad, 2/510, 511
⁴Muslim, Hadith #7015, #68
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By Khawaja Hasan Bilal | BAIS | 6th Semester | Fall 2014

EDUCATE YOUR CLASS:

The Islamic Way!

In this essay, my aim is to help us reflect on smooth classroom management from an Islamic perspective following certain techniques, rules and procedures, and focusing on the teacher-student relationship.

Allah says,

“O you who have believed, when you are told, ‘Space yourselves’ in assemblies, then make space; Allah will make space for you.”¹

In this ayah, Allah the Almighty instructs us to follow leadership guidance regarding sitting down or getting up in places of knowledge because of its numerous benefits. We, as seekers of knowledge, cannot come and go as we please without rules and procedures. Just as the sahaba needed rules in the presence of the Prophet ﷺ, we need them as well.

Since the teacher is the leader in the class, he must be well guided for the student to benefit from him without any distraction. Moreover, the teacher takes the Prophet’s ﷺ role in passing knowledge. Therefore, it is incumbent upon him to follow prophetic guidance in all affairs of his life.

Classroom Management

Classroom management is defined as “the actions and strategies the teachers use to solve the problem of order in classrooms.”²

It is the effective discipline prepared for a class by building self-esteem, providing motivation and a safe and comfortable environment with creative and imaginative lessons for students. Effective teachers also use rules, procedures, and routines to ensure

Effective teachers create focused and nurturing classrooms that result in increased student learning.

that the students are actively involved in the learning process.³

In essence, they use classroom management not to control student behavior, but to influence and direct it in a constructive manner to set the stage for instruction.⁴

Why is it important?

Effective teachers create focused and nurturing classrooms that result in increased student learning.⁵ Classroom management is very important, especially for beginners, because satisfaction and enjoyment in teaching depends on student cooperation.⁶

The Principles for Success: The Techniques, Rules and Procedures

- Not only do teachers have to deal with disruptive behavior, but they also have to let the learners know what they want and do not want, i.e., the teachers need to express their approval and disapproval. When the teacher gets the response he wants, he should acknowledge it. Else, he should act quickly and appropriately.
- A technique that a teacher cannot afford to ignore is “withitness.”⁷ He has to come to class prepared, has to pay attention at all times to all students, monitor their progress, move around the class, and give clear communications, instructions and feedback to the students.
- Rules and procedures are second nature to a Muslim. We have rules and routines from the Sunnah ingrained in our life: before going to sleep, how to sleep, while turning over in bed, waking up, going to the bathroom, ablution, prayer, leaving home,



meeting someone, visiting people, coming back home and many more.

It is in the classrooms, where people are shaped today. Therefore, educators must have useful, proven, clear, positive, reasonable and enforceable rules and procedures in place.

Virtually everything that involves interactions among people requires rules. Also, Webster's dictionary defines a rule as "a fixed principle that determines conduct."⁸

- Effective educators have a sense of classroom tempo and student harmony such that they are aware of when an intervention may be needed to prevent a problem.⁹

The Teacher-Learner Relationship

This is the giant in the classroom as we see how easy it was for the students of our beloved Prophet ﷺ to learn from him because they held him in the highest regard. Hence, gaining the student's respect is of prime importance. Also, it is the duty of the teacher to instill curiosity and thirst for knowledge in the mind of the student as early as possible so that they develop the art to learn through discovery.

The young sahabi, Ibn Abbas' effort is a good example. He says, "I used to come during the heat and dust, and wait for the elder sahaba in front of their houses until they would wake up to teach me."¹⁰ Learners must feel a sense of involvement in their quest for knowledge and urgency for success to be achieved.

Additionally, research recommends:

- Having written expectations;
- Disciplining student quietly and privately;¹¹
- Moderate talk; remember all speech is recorded by angels.¹²

Teachers, like everyone else, also need to have patience. Allah says in the Quran,

"...Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account."¹³

Effective teachers need consistency. Allah says,

"So remain on a right course as you have been commanded, [you] and those who have turned back with you [to Allah], and do not transgress."

Indeed, He is Seeing of what you do."¹⁴

- Positive parental involvement is also highly important as our Prophet warned us that each of us is a shepherd who is accountable for his flock.¹⁵ Hence, parents are the primary responsible party for young learners.

- Teachers must know when to ask for help.

- Lead by example and practice what you preach. Allah says,

"Do you order righteousness of the people and forget yourselves while you recite the Scripture?"¹⁶

Conclusion

Keeping all the above factors in mind, it is apt to conclude that teachers need to possess certain ethical traits. They must practice and implement clear, proven rules and procedures in their classroom for instruction to be effective and beneficial for the learners and at the same time bring a sense of satisfaction to the educators.

¹Quran 58:11

²Doyle, 1986, p. 397

³Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003

⁴McLeod, Fisher, & Hoover, 2003

⁵Marzano et al., 2003

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⁷Marzano 2000

⁸McKenzie, 1983, p. 1585

⁹Johnson,1997: <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/104135/chapters/Classroom-Management-and-Organization.aspx>

¹⁰<http://www.onislam.net/english/reading-islam/about-muhammad/his-companions/462448-the-learned-scholar-abdullah-ibn-abbas.html>

¹¹http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/curr155.shtml

¹²Quran 50:18

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By Ahmed B Barrie | BEd | 1st Semester | Fall 2014

IOU PROGRAMS TO BLOOM IN THE GAMBIA

By **Sania Aziz**

On June 15, 2015, the Islamic Online University signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE) of the Government of The Gambia.

Based on the mutually acceptable terms, the Islamic Online University will provide courses in Intensive English, Intensive Math, Intensive Science, and Intensive Social Studies course according to the conditions and syllabus laid-out by the MoBSE of The Gambia. IOU will also provide TESL teacher training and practicum supervision for the IEC Teaching Assistants to be

certified by the MoBSE upon their review and assessment. In addition, IOU will offer a four-year Professional Degree in Education, a one-year Diploma in Education Administration and Supervision and other IOU courses to The Gambian population.

In return for all the services provided by the IOU, the MoBSE of Gambia will offer the IOU a conducive environment to operate in. This will materialize through education policies that will allow IOU to effectively participate in the development of education in The Gambia. Both the MoBSE and the IOU will ensure that the quality of education remains of the desired standards.

IOU MEMBERSHIPS

The IOU, in its quest to maintain high levels of education, has gained associate or full membership of several educational organizations, which will help the IOU to gain accreditation in different parts of the world. All of these institutions focus on increasing the quality of higher education:



Association of African Universities (AAU) marks the highest level of education consultation and teacher training in Africa and its aim is to enhance the quality of higher education in the region.

International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE) is the leading global membership organization for open, distance, flexible and online education, including e-learning, and draws its membership from institutions, educational authorities, commercial actors, and individuals. ICDE has consultative partner status with UNESCO.



The Talloires Network is an association of institutions that focuses on highlighting and strengthening the civic and social responsibilities of higher education. It aims to persuade universities and its students to actively engage in community service.

International Council of Islamic Finance Educators (ICIFE) was established by the government of Malaysia because it believes that awareness of Islamic finance in Malaysia and the world is very limited. So the aim of the council is to educate people in this field. Apart from sponsoring Islamic financial curriculums, the ICIFE also holds seminars and workshops to educate people and teachers.



International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAHE) is a not-for-profit organization whose main aim is to identify the contemporary practises in higher education all over the world – and provide learning solutions. It currently has 250 members affiliated to it.

African Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN) set up by the AAU itself, is an organization that works to foster healthy relations between different African educational organisations. It has financial support from the UNESCO.



Association of Quality Assurance Agencies of the Islamic World (IQA) was established in an effort to promote and enhance quality higher education in the countries of the Islamic world.

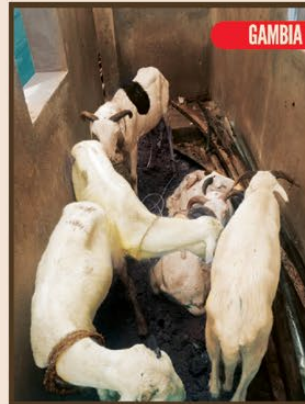
The Spirit of Sharing: Eid al Adha 2015

Authentic education, religion, unity and community participation are manifested in Changing the Nation through Education through various services that Islamic Online University (IOU) offers. On one hand, there are many Muslims all over the world who are not aware of the legal requirements of Islamic slaughtering, live in a countries that have no local sacrifice facilities, or in places where there are no Muslims to benefit from the meat that is sacrificed on the day of Eid al Adha. On the other hand, we have Muslims who are in great need of the meat slaughtered on this day. They see the meat as a privilege since they can not afford it on a regular basis as Muslims in other countries can. It brings them joy and fills their lives with a sense of unity and belonging to the global Muslim family. IOU has tried to be that bridge that joins both sides by keeping the Sunnah alive and offering sacrifice services.

Muslims from all over the world have been welcomed for the past three years to place orders for their sacrificial animals prior to the Eid al Adha. This year, IOU sacrifices were carried out in eight countries. 75 animals were sacrificed and their meat shared among hundreds of people.

The atmosphere everywhere was filled with happiness, humbleness and appreciation as meat was shared. Many people have accepted their meat with tears of joy and gratitude.

We ask Allah, The Most Gracious, to accept all sacrifices and shower His blessing upon His humble servants. Ameen.



FAST-NU

By Ayesha Khattak

The **National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences** (Abbrev. **NUCES** and **FAST-NU**) is a private research university sponsored by **FAST (Foundation for Advancement of Science and Technology)**. It is considered one of the leading technical institutions in Pakistan, popular for producing students who are well known for their expertise and hard work in the development of local software and other industries.

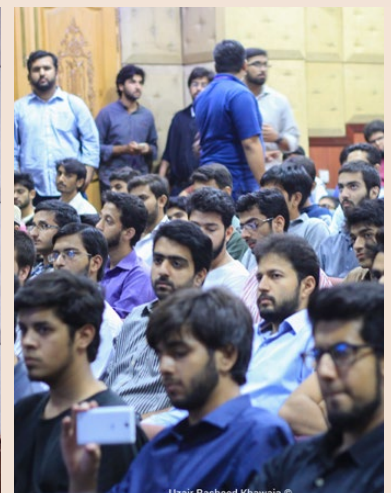
Dr. Bilal Philips' visit

Dr. Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips visited FAST-NU Islamabad Campus on Wednesday, 26 August 2015, at 12:30 pm and was warmly welcomed by the Director, faculty and students of FAST.

In a meeting with the Director, Dr. Arshad Ali Shahid, and faculty of the university, Dr. Bilal Philips introduced the concept and development of IOU, and its plans for further expansion by welcoming participation of universities around the globe into its academic network.

The Director and Faculty of FAST entered into an agreement with Dr. Bilal to pursue further exchanges of teachers/instructors and ideas, to assess the prospect of greater participation with IOU.

Dr. Bilal gave a profound and comprehensive talk on "Success Redefined" to FAST students who filled the auditorium to attend the lecture. The talk invited the students to ponder over whether they are "Muslims who happen to be students or students who happen to be Muslims?"



Muslims who happen to be students or students who happen to be Muslims?

Dr. Bilal addressed students on how they can make their studies *'ibadah* (worship) and a way to Paradise; as the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) stated: **“Whoever follows a path to seek knowledge, Allah will make easy for him the path to Paradise...”** (narrated by at-Tirmidhi, 2606; classed as saheeh by al-Albaani)

Dr. Bilal emphasized the vital importance of safeguarding themselves by being conscious of the *halal* (permissible) or *haram* (impermissible) nature of their activities even within their student life, which is a by-product of consciousness of Allah. As the first practical step towards this, he took an oath twice by the students in the Name of Allah to never cheat in exams ever again. In conclusion, a short Q/A session was held wherein he took various questions from the students and left a strong impact on them.

Dr. Bilal's visit to Al-Huda International

Dr. Bilal's visit to Islamabad this August concluded with a meeting conducted at Al-Huda International with Dr. Idrees Zubair, director/founder Al-Huda since 1993. The discussion revolved around the cooperation of both Islamic institutions, by facilitating further expansion in Islamic outreach programs and by benefiting from each other's experience and establishments.



Uzair Rasheed Khanwaja ©

ESTABLISHING AND STRENGTHENING ACADEMIC ALLIANCE

By Hunain Aijaz and Syeda Madeeha Bokhari

In February 2015 at the Vice Chancellor's Forum 2015 in Islamabad, Pakistan, Dr. Bilal Philips met the Chancellor of Indus University, Mr. Khalid Amin. Following the meeting, email correspondence continued between the officials of the two universities with the intent to establish a fruitful collaboration which would yield great results in the field of education for the students in Pakistan and across the globe.

In June 2015, a Memorandum of Understanding was finalized between the two universities. Dr. Bilal Philips was invited to the Indus University at Karachi during his Pakistan visit to establish and strengthen the academic alliance between IOU and the Indus University, and bridging the gap between Universities of the Islamic world. The event took place at the main auditorium of the Indus University on August 24, 2015. Dr. Bilal delivered a lecture followed by an engaging question and answer session, and the MOU signing ceremony. The topic of his lecture was "Bridging the Gap - Various Fields & Islamic Education."

Ranked with the top most category "A(W)" by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC), Indus University is chartered by the government of Sindh. In 2013, Indus University was placed in the list of 5 Star Universities of Pakistan by the Charter Inspection and Evaluation Committee of Pakistan.





Indus University's Chancellor, Mr. Khalid Amin, giving introductory speech and welcoming Dr. Bilal and IOU delegation.



Dr. Bilal Philips delivering a lecture on "Bridging the Gap - Various Fields & Islamic Education."



Indus University Vice Chancellor, Mr. Muhammad Ahmad Amin, giving concluding remarks.



MOU signing ceremony.



Chancellor, Mr. Khalid Amin, presenting Br. Hunain Aijaz, IOU Chief Academic Coordinator, with a Certificate of Appreciation upon the recommendation of the Board of Governors of Indus University, Pakistan, in recognition of distinguished services to higher education in the Islamic world.



Mr. Khalid Amin, Chancellor of Indus University, presenting Dr. Bilal Philips a crest in recognition of his spiritual works and services to higher education in the Islamic world.



Dr. Bilal speaking to the media after the ceremony.

SMOKING CIGARETTES:

A detailed ruling based on one or more of the 5 major maxims

Introduction

Alhamdulillah, we all are blessed to have a perfected deen that spans and penetrates every aspect of our daily life and is not restricted to worship only at specific times, at certain places or worship limited only to specific acts. The two major sources of Islam are Allah's Quran and the final Prophet's ﷺ, authentic Sunnah. Following the Sunnah means doing everything that the Prophet ﷺ said and approved of while avoiding what he prohibited or disapproved of.

Whole Islamic Jurisprudence Stands on Five Pillars or Maxims

May Allah bless our scholars abundantly who have struggled and sacrificed a great deal in order to make the life of future generations so easy and simple. Even though Islam claims to govern all aspects of daily life, the whole of governing rules can be classified in only five categories (six according to some scholars). These five core maxims, or Qawaid al-Fiqh as they are referred to, are as follows:

1. Harm must be eliminated
2. Acts are judged by the intention behind them
3. Certainty is not overruled by doubt
4. Hardship begets facility
5. Custom is the basis of judgment

Where Does Smoking Cigarettes Fit in the Above Maxims?

Smoking has existed in almost all societies in one form or another. The core substance of smoking might change, the technique might be different, but the intention and the act of smoking and its ultimate results remain the same. This issue has been a hot topic of discussion for a very long time. People who are addicted to this habit go around fatwa shopping till they receive a verdict from some scholar who says what they want to hear.

Although the cigarettes of today did not exist at the time, the following maxim was formulated, we cannot have a better fit for the maxim "Do not harm yourself nor harm others" than the act of smoking cigarettes. Research has suggested that it is equally dangerous to others as to the one committing the act. Hence, this harm needs to be eliminated.

So How Dangerous is Smoking Cigarettes?

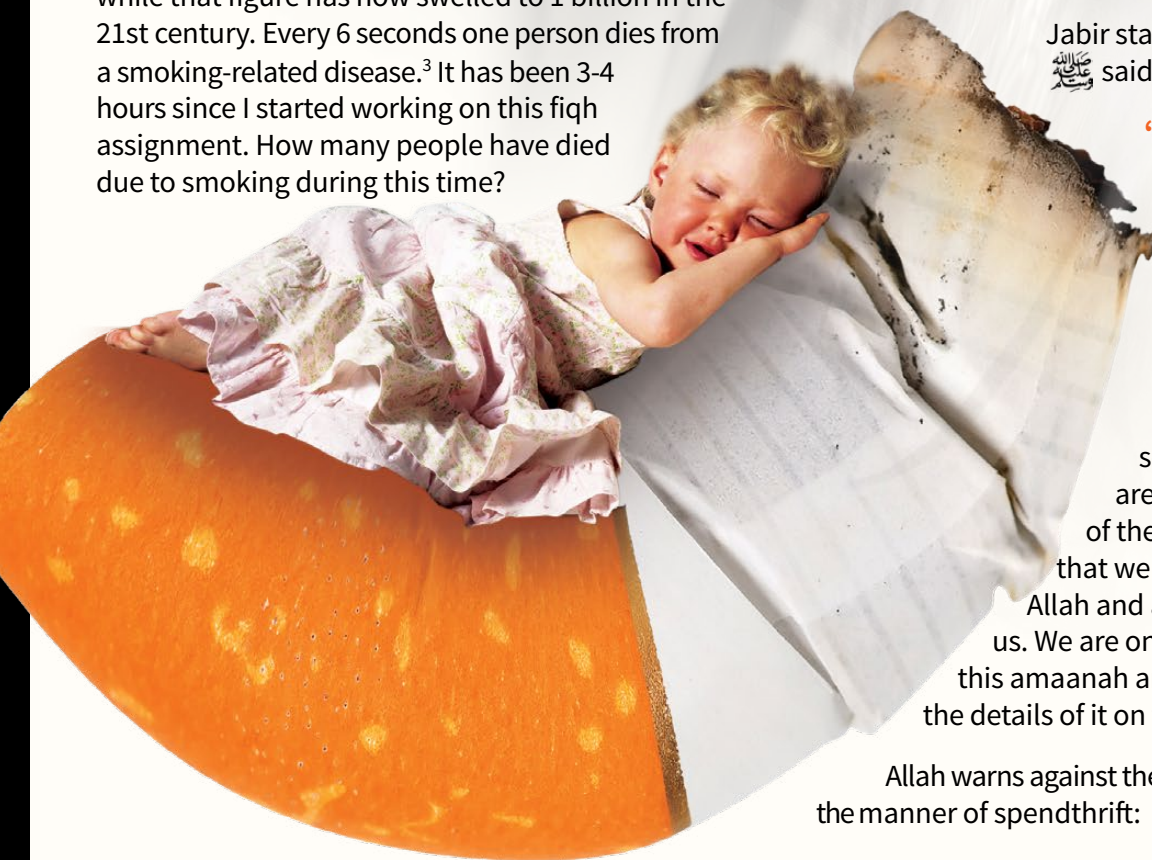
Research statistics on smoking as per WHO (World Health Organization) indicate that a total of 6 million deaths occur worldwide due to smoking. More than

600 thousand are affected due to secondhand smoke.¹ These are just the known cases but the actual numbers might be much higher. Also, these numbers are related to deaths, and most of them are the smokers themselves. So what about those who are affected by secondhand smoke through no fault of their own?

As per the official website of CDC (Centers for Disease Control), secondhand smoke is equally dangerous and causes the following diseases:²

- Cardiovascular Disease
- Lung Cancer
- SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome)

No wonder it has been designated as a silent killer. As per the website: Action on Smoking & Health, smoking is on the increase exponentially. There were around 100 million smokers in the 20th century while that figure has now swelled to 1 billion in the 21st century. Every 6 seconds one person dies from a smoking-related disease.³ It has been 3-4 hours since I started working on this fiqh assignment. How many people have died due to smoking during this time?



What Is the Islamic Perspective on Smoking Cigarettes?

As a Muslim, I personally believe that smoking affects the individual negatively as well as society on multiple fronts, which can be stated as:

- It is a prohibited act that goes against the teaching

of the Quran, wherein Allah says:

“...And do not kill yourselves...” (Quran 4:29)

“...And do not throw yourselves into destruction...” (Quran 4:29)

- It affects the individual fatally, ultimately taking his life, and taking one's life is not allowed in Islam.
- It harms his family, friends and whoever is around him.
- It affects the ecosystem negatively.

Allah has sent human beings as His viceregents (khalifas) on the earth. So whatever exists here is not for our ownership; therefore, we are supposed to take care of it and preserve it.

- People dislike being in close proximity to these individuals due to the bad odor that they emit, especially during salah.

Jabir stated that the Prophet ﷺ said:

“He who has eaten onion or garlic should keep away from us or our mosques.”⁴

- It is a waste of money which could have been used for some good cause. We are not the real owners of the money and property that we have. They belong to Allah and are His amanah upon us. We are only the caretakers of this amanah and will have to provide the details of it on the Day of Judgment.

Allah warns against the wastage of money and the manner of spendthrift:

“...And do not spend wastefully in spendthrift manner. Verily spendthrifts are brothers of Shayaateen...” (Quran 17:26,27)

- Even worse, smoking is a waste of precious time. That is why Sheikh Ibn Al-Qayyim, a student of the great scholar and Sheikh-ul-Islam ibn Taymiyyah, said that:

“Wasting time is worse than death, because death separates you from this world, while wasting time separates you from Allah.”

EVERY **6 SECONDS** ONE PERSON DIES FROM A SMOKING-RELATED DISEASE.

So is Smoking Cigarettes Really Haram or Is It Something That Is Makruh (Disliked Act)?

There have been some scholars who are of the opinion that the act of smoking is more of a disliked act rather than something that is absolutely haram. However many of them have since revised their views and now agree with the fatwa that it is a haram act.

In earlier times when not many people were smoking and technology was not that advanced, not much research had been done on such a global scale to understand the level of devastation

caused by smoking. So based on the little information about the tangible effects of smoking, all that the scholars could apprehend at that time was the emission of foul breath from the mouth of the smoker. And we are all well aware of the hadith where the Prophet ﷺ prohibited people who ate raw garlic or onion to come to the masjid due to the bad odor that results from doing this. The Prophet ﷺ did not prohibit them eating of these foods but disliked their coming to the masjid in this state.

So, based on this, the scholars issued fatwas indicating that smoking is makruh. But now that the ill effects of smoking have been proven with facts and figures beyond any shadow of a doubt, almost all of the scholars have ruled it as something that is haram and therefore, prohibited.

Conclusion

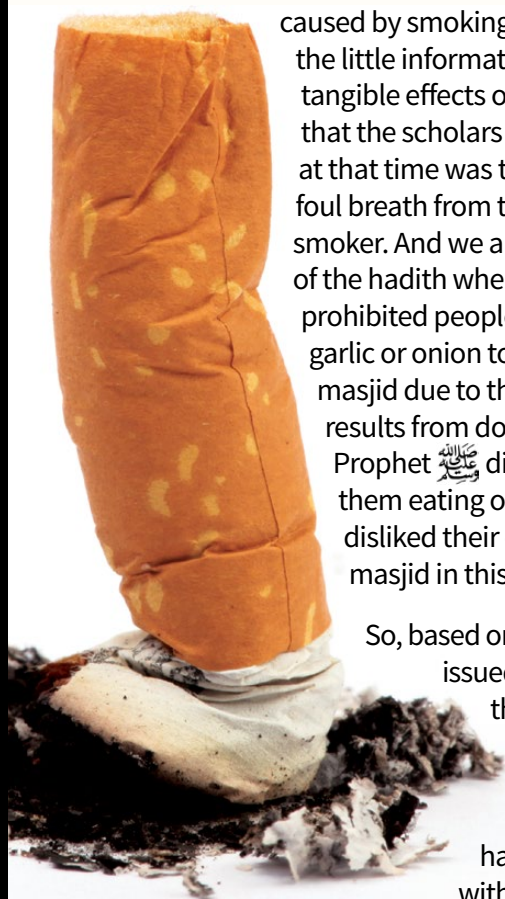
Based on the above arguments along with facts and statistics it has been established that smoking is a purely evil act that provides absolutely no benefit to the one who indulges in it nor to innocent bystanders. It causes great harm to society as a whole. It is not only an evil deed relative to the akhirah but is also equally bad in this life. Even a non-smoking kafir, atheist or agnostic would acknowledge the evil consequences of smoking and would approve of its banning worldwide.

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By Feroz Khan Pathan | BAIS | 8th Semester | Fall 2014

DEPRESSION: Causes and Treatment

Depression is a common mental disorder characterized by sadness, loss of interest or pleasure, feelings of guilt or low self-worth, disturbed sleep or appetite, feelings of tiredness, and poor concentration (Marcus et. al., 2012).

Usually, it is caused by a combination of factors. Evidences have been found to explain different causes of depression. Some of them are as follows:

Genetics:

It is one of the most influential factors in causing depression. It runs in families. The genetic risk of developing clinical depression is about 40% if a biological parent has been diagnosed with the illness (Black Dog Institute, 2012). Researchers have been trying to discover the specific gene or combination of genes responsible for it. One of the recent research suggests the genetic link to depression to a region on chromosome 3 (Breen et. al., 2011). Nevertheless, the carrier of such genes may or may not develop depression as having the tendency for it does not guarantee being a patient.

Environment:

Environmental factors may include stressful events like loss of a loved one, relationship difficulties, illnesses and different experiences during a life span. These factors along with genetic factors increase chances of developing depression (Tsuang, Bar, Stone, & Faraone, 2004). A research conducted on twins has shown that it is not entirely genetic for the twins to develop a disease (major Depression) but there is also an influence of the environment (Sullivan, Neale, & Kendler, 2000).

Hormonal Imbalance:

Strong evidences have been found that risk of

depression is greater in women than in men (Gater et al., 1998). One of the reasons is hormonal imbalance. It directly affects the part of the brain responsible for mood and emotions, and whenever women experience hormonal changes in the case of post-partum depression or premenstrual syndrome (PMS), the risk for developing depression increases (National Institute of Mental Health, 2011).

Psychotherapy:

Many treatments are used to help people with depression. One of these treatments is psychotherapy—also known as "talk therapy". "It involves helping patients develop understanding of various problems, as well as new beliefs and behaviors which can ultimately lead to more successful adjustment" (Ainsworth, 2000, p. 79). Psychotherapy is particularly useful for those who are unable or unwilling to take antidepressant medication (Lebowitz et. al., 1997; Reynolds et. al., 2006). Depending on the patient's need, different formats are used such as individual therapy, group therapy, family therapy, etc. Some of the main therapies are discussed below:

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT):

Different life events affect one's thoughts, beliefs and behavior. This therapy works on a person's inappropriate thoughts, inaccurate beliefs and unhelpful behavior. It is a combination of two therapies, namely, Cognitive Therapy and Behavioral Therapy. In this therapy, the patient is asked to focus on the problem and find its solution.

*The best kind of
psychotherapy we have is
du'a.*

CBT helps one to identify the negative thoughts and beliefs. It helps to change the thinking patterns and beliefs to positive ones, eventually, affecting the behavior to be more positive and healthy. It also helps the patient to recognize the reasons that may be increasing depression. This therapy is very useful with people having minor or moderate depression.

Interpersonal Therapy (IPT):

This short-termed therapy focuses on the person's interaction and relationship with others. IPT is based on the idea that improving communication patterns and the ways people relate to others will effectively treat depression (National Institute of Mental Health, 2014). Lack of good communication leads to issues of interpersonal relationships. This therapy, thus, helps to effectively interact and communicate with others for psychological well-being.

Psychodynamic Therapy:

This therapy focuses on the unconscious mind and past experiences. Its main goal is to give one better insight of thoughts and emotions and create self-awareness. It is based on theory of psychoanalysis proposed by Freud (1957), which states that the behavior of the person is affected by his unconscious mind; so, depressing events are somewhat associated with these thoughts and emotions. Thus, this therapy helps one to deal with psychological issues more effectively, leading to emotional satisfaction.

As Muslims, we must take advantage of the useful techniques which help in decreasing depression but should believe that ultimate cure is only from Allah. The best kind of psychotherapy we have is du'a. This talk therapy not only eases us by asking or saying whatever we want to Allah, but it also removes the cause of depression by His Will. Allah says:

“...indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me [by obedience] and believe in Me that they may be [rightly] guided.” (Quran 2:186)

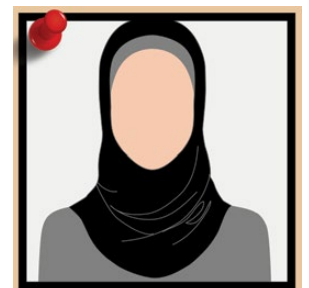
We must turn to Allah in every condition and have trust in Him alone, so that we may be rightly guided by Him. Indeed from Him comes the guidance and tranquility for those who submit to Him.

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By Asra Ahmed | BSc PSY | 2nd Semester | Fall 2014



RIBA

Allah orders the believers in the Quran in Surah 'Ali Imran 130:

“O you who have attained to faith! Do not gorge yourselves on usury, doubling and redoubling it - but remain conscious of God, so that you might attain to a happy state.”

In the Quran, there is no explanation of riba because during the time in which the Quran was revealed, people of that society were familiar with riba.

Pre-Abu Bakr Al Jassas's view :

● The earliest documented statement of the Prophet ﷺ about riba in pre-Islamic time is found in the Muwatta of Imam Malik:

Malik related that Zayd ibn Aslam said, “Riba in the jahiliyyah was that a man would have a debt (haqq) on a man for a set term. When the term was due, he would say, ‘Will you pay it off or increase me ('ataqdi aw turbi)?’ If the man paid, he took it. If not, he increased him in his debt (zada hu fi haqq hi) and lengthened the term for him.” (Muwatta 1180)

● Al-Tabari quotes Mujahid who died in 104 or 105 AH:

In the days of jahiliyyah one man would owe a debt to another. Then he would say to his creditor, “[I offer to] you such and such and you give me more time to pay.”

● And Al-Tabari also quotes Qatadah who died in 117 AH:

“From Qatadah: The riba of Jahiliyyah was a transaction whereby a person would sell something for a payment to be made at a specified future time. Then when the time of payment came and the buyer did not have the necessary amount, the seller would

increase [the amount due] and give him more time.”

● Later, Al Suyuti (d. 951 AH) defined riba of jahiliyyah in similar terms. He said on authority of Faryabi (d. 212 AH):

“They used to purchase something with the payment deferred to a future time. Then on the due date [the sellers] used to increase the due amount and extend the time of payment.”¹

Abu Bakr Al Jassas's view:

However, Abu Bakr al Jassas wrote in his Book Ahkam al Quran:

“The riba that the Arabs knew and used to practice was loan of dirhams and dinars for a period with an excess over what was loaned and upon which they have agreed; they were not aware of the spot sale when it carried an excess in the same species. This (the giving of loan on interest) was well known among them, and because of this Allah said:

“That which ye lay out for increase through the property of (other) people will have no increase with Allah; but that which ye lay out for charity seeking the countenance of Allah (will increase); it is these who will get a recompense multiplied.” (Quran 30:39)

Thus, he informed them that this stipulated excess [al-ziyadah al-mashrutah] was riba in the substance of the wealth, because there was no counter-value available from the side of the lender. The Exalted said: **“Devour not usury, doubled and multiplied”** (Quran 3:130-131) to indicate the manner in which the stipulated excess was doubled and multiplied.²

Pre-Abu Bakr Al Jassas's supporting view:

- 350 years after Abu Bakr Al Jassas', Imam ibn Qaiyyam wrote about riba in the light of pre-Al Jassas understanding:

“In the pre-Islamic period, riba was practised by giving extra time to repay a debt and adding a charge against this extension [thus, increasing the amount of debt] until one hundred became thousands. In most of the cases, only a needy individual would keep doing so as he would have no choice but to defer the payment of the debt. The creditor agreed to defer his demand for repayment of the debt, and waited so that he might gain more profit on the principal. On the other hand, the debtor was forced to pay the increased amount to ward off the pressing demands of the creditor and the risk of the hardships of prison. Thus, as time passes and the loss of the debtor went on increasing, his troubles multiplied and his debt accumulated until all his possessions and belongings were lost to the creditor.”³

Abu Bakr Al Jassas's supporting view:

- Abul Ala Maududi defined riba as:

‘Predetermined excess or surplus over and above the loan received by the creditor conditionally in relation to a specified period.’

This definition entails the following three elements:

- a. Excess over and above the loan capital;
- b. Determination of surplus in relation to time; and
- c. Stipulation of this surplus in the loan agreement.

- Nyazee, following another Hanafi jurist, al-Sarakhsi who also followed the definition of al-Jassas, states:

‘Riba in its literal sense means excess . . . and in the technical sense (in the Shariah), riba is the stipulated excess without any counter-value in bai’ 37 [sale].’

- Muhammad Taqi Usmani wrote in his book:

“We have already discussed the meaning of the term riba as understood by the Arabs and as interpreted by the Prophet ﷺ, and his noble Companions, and that it covered any stipulated additional amount over the principal in a transaction of loan or debt.”

- Mohammed Obaidullah, an associate professor at the Islamic Economics Research Center, King

There is no explanation of riba in the Quran because people of that society were familiar with it.

Abdulaziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and the editor of the International Journal of Islamic Financial Services, writes:

“Riba exists in every debt, which carries a stipulation binding the debtor to pay to the creditor any sum of money in excess of the principal sum of the debt.”⁴

Conclusion:

In the light of the above definitions, riba is clearly any excess which is either pre-determined or charged on a later date. It is any excess charged over and above the principal on loaned amount. A clear understanding of the definition of riba further clarifies that it is not what is popularly called as ‘usury’ but it is rather ‘ANY’ increase over and above the principal amount.

Reference:

1. Dr. Ahmad Shafaat (May 2005) Riba in Pre-Islamic Arabia. Islamic Perspectives [online] Available at <http://www.islamicperspectives.com/Riba2.htm> Accessed on 8 Dec 2014
2. Dr. Mohammad Omar Farooq, Stipulation of Excess in Understanding and Misunderstanding Riba: Th e Al-Jassas Link. Pg. 7 Arab Law Quarterly 21 (2007) 285-316
3. Dr. Mohammad Omar Farooq, Stipulation of Excess in Understanding and Misunderstanding Riba: Th e Al-Jassas Link. Pg. 15 Arab Law Quarterly 21 (2007) 285-316
4. Dr. Mohammad Omar Farooq, Stipulation of Excess in Understanding and Misunderstanding Riba: Th e Al-Jassas Link. Pg. 12 Arab Law Quarterly 21 (2007) 285-316



By Madiha Amin | BSc IBE | 2nd Semester | Fall 2014

10 TIPS

for Better Research Papers

By Veronika Matulova

5

Things to Do

1. Plan

Assignments are given at the beginning of the semester. A successful research paper needs planning because a student still needs to continue with his/her studies and prepare for exams. Hence, it is advisable to make a schedule, and allocate fixed times in a week for the assignment research and write up.



2. Research

An assignment is as good as its research. Do not depend only on the main search engine; visit Google Scholar, Google Books, Open Libraries and other free resources. Search through the Darussalam library or JStore offered by the IOU. Do not limit yourself to one or two sources; try to gather information from at least 7-10 various sources. Good research will provide you with a wider scope and understanding of the topic.

3. Stick to the Subject

Understanding the assignment question is crucial. If you are uncertain, ask your TA for further clarification. Understanding the topic question ensures that you will answer it adequately.

4. Reference

Pay attention to the assignment requirements. Some TAs want in-text citation while others will accept footnotes. Refresh your referencing knowledge by visiting web pages on the referencing style you wish to use. Be consistent; do not switch from one style to another. A well-researched and referenced assignment shows your understanding of the topic. Do not forget to include your list of all used sources at the end of the paper, which can be done with the help of various online referencing generators.

5. Review

Do not submit your paper if you have not re-read it. If possible, review your paper after a few days break. Look at all your referencing, and search for any grammar mistakes and typos. This assignment represents you. Hence, ensure that it reflects your best.

5

Things Not to Do

1. Copy-Pasting

A research paper should show your understanding and comprehension of the topic. Simple copy-pasting shows that you have the ability to use the mouse or keyboard shortcuts. Nothing more. Copy-pasting is like stealing, since you are appropriating someone else's work and claiming it as your own. If you need to copy-paste, either re-word or use quotation marks to indicate the source of your quotation. Never simply copy-paste.

2. Word Count

Many times, a student gets carried away and goes beyond the word count. Cutting down on words is very hard and submitting an assignment that exceeds the word count limit makes you lose marks. Verify your word count continuously throughout your write up.

3. Poor Referencing

Submitting a poorly referenced assignment will give the impression that you have just copy-pasted the article. If you have taken your time and done your research, make sure that your referencing reflects that.

4. Procrastination

A student's enemy. It is so easy to leave the assignment to the last minute. However, that will compromise the quality of your work. You might like to work under pressure with the deadline breathing down your neck, but you will never achieve the same quality of research as a student that has devoted weeks to it.

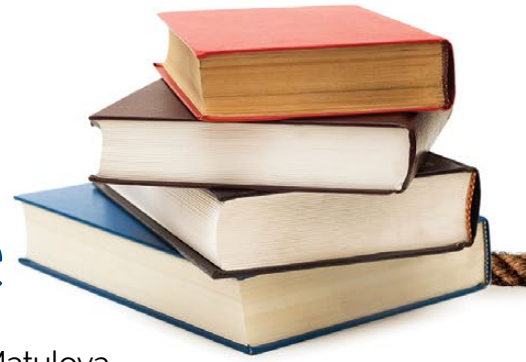
5. Poor English

Not everyone who is studying at IOU has excellent English language skills. Nevertheless, that should not be an obstacle in submitting well-researched and well-written assignments. Ensure with the help of spelling features that your assignment is free of spelling errors. Visit various English grammar websites when you are unsure of some grammar rules. Devote some time to reviewing your assignment. Do not click the 'submit assignment' button as soon as you have finished writing the assignment.





Holding Tight to the Rope of Knowledge



By Ahmed Nasir Mohamoud & Veronika Matulova

The initial excitement and enthusiasm that the freshmen experience quickly dwindles away by the end of the first semester. *How hard can it be to study a religion*, passes through the minds of knowledge hunters. Reality quickly kicks in. Studying religion on the degree level is hard work like any other degree studies. It requires patience, commitment, dedication, perseverance, and efforts. Students are usually not prepared for it and soon find themselves losing interest or thinking of excuses not to carry on.

Even before the actual study, some future students lose sight of the aim—to please Allah by fulfilling the requirement of seeking knowledge. Many students register, fewer actually begin their studies, and even fewer of them complete their degree. What is the problem? Shaytan is strong. Shaytan is smart; may Allah protect us from his plots. He will make you second-guess your choice and find “extremely important” and “valid” reasons to quit or postpone your studies—forever. So we need a plan. We need to step up. We need to become the support system, especially those who have persevered and held tight to the rope of knowledge. Alhamdulillah, IOU teams made up of volunteer students are trying to be that support system and finding a way to fight back the intrigues of Shaytan to keep people away from the true knowledge of Islam. The IOU team of East Africa has implemented some dropout-reduction strategies that have been successful. The most effective strategy has been described by Br. Ahmed Nasir Mohamoud in detail below. May Allah accept their efforts and may it be useful to IOU student committees all over the world.

Reading-group Strategy

One of our best dropout-reduction strategies is the reading-group system. Reading groups consist of 5 to 8 students who are usually in the same faculty and semester, and who further participate in promotion and registration activities. The number of the groups

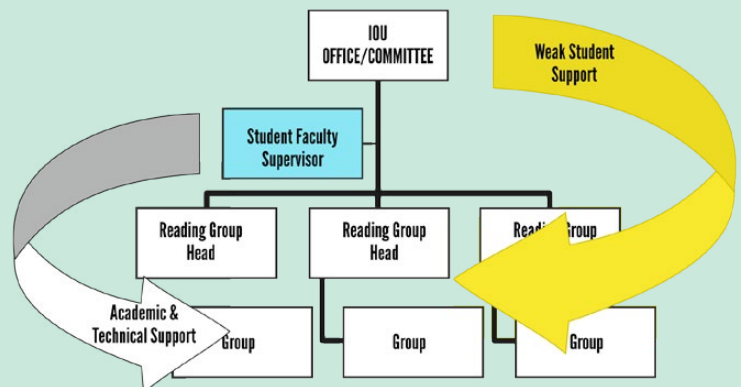
of the same faculty depends on the number of the students in that faculty. They have weekly meetings and keep in touch. During their meetings they read together and discuss their reading progress.

Each group is supervised by a reading group head, which is a student who keeps track of the group progress by filling in a report progress form which is then submitted to the student faculty supervisor. A reading group head also provides support to his/her group members.

The student faculty supervisor, who is a senior IOU student, supervises the reading progress of the groups in his faculty through the reading report forms. Subsequently s/he submits a weekly report to the IOU office/student committee in that city. The supervisor also provides faculty students with the technical and academic support they need.

The IOU office/student committee collect the weekly reports from all the faculty supervisors and assess them. Thereafter, they contact the weak students, assign them a consultant or any other support they need, and follow up.

Our student faculty supervisors and the group head are IOU volunteers. The best faculty and the best group of the semester share their experience with other faculties and groups in order to motivate them and improve the effectiveness of the groups.





BEHIND BARS: IOU PRISON INITIATIVE

By Mutahhir Sabree & Jordan Schneider

Bismillaahir-Rahmaanir-Raheem, Incarceration for most is a life-changing experience. For many of our brothers and sisters, jail or prison is a normal rite of passage from adolescence to adulthood. The majority of prisoners in the United States come from low income, single parent households, and have poor education, no mentors and little spiritual guidance. For this reason, and with the guidance and encouragement of Dr. Bilal Philips; the Islamic Online University (IOU) has set out to “*Change the Nation through Education*” in this most needed area, i.e. Prison reform and rehabilitation. With the help of Allah, strong commitment, and the vast experience of Brother Mutahhir Sabree, IOU Representative, retired Muslim prison chaplain,

and Federal Bureau of Prisons’ Imam; inmates now have an opportunity to change their lives for the better through the IOU Prison Initiative by earning a Diploma in Islamic Studies.

The courses for the inmates do not require internet access, as all materials are provided in hard-copy form, with an optional audio-visual supplements to be used under institutional supervision. The courses allow Muslim and non-Muslim inmates or those coming to Islam to earn a Diploma with IOU at no cost. Focusing on the Book of Allah and the authentic traditions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, and learning Arabic will help those incarcerated by giving them self-esteem, knowledge and guidance as they transition from incarceration to freedom.

To date, Brother Sabree has enrolled across seventeen states more than 700 inmates of whom more than 300 are currently engaged in their courses.

In addition to visiting and consulting with Muslim leaders and communities, as well as Muslim and non-Muslim Chaplains in jails across the United States, Brother Sabree produces and distributes the course materials, organizes testing and grading, and supervises IOU volunteers, along with many other administrative tasks for this project.

Brother Sabree is planning a webinar this fall for Muslim and non-Muslim Chaplains who are already familiar with the IOU Prison Initiative or would like

more information on the program. The webinar will give the Chaplains, IOU staff and volunteers a chance to interact, network and share the best practices, outcomes, and recommendations.

For those who would like more information on the IOU Prison Initiative, please contact Brother Sabree at director.usa@iou.edu.gm or call 803-201-7961.

Alhamdulillah, the Prison Initiative program has been recently welcomed by the inmates in Ghana. In a very short period, 50 inmates have already enrolled and many more are interested to join the program. For more information, please contact Brother Samudeen Yusif at ghana@iou.edu.gm or call 233 24 954 0148.

FACTS from Civic Report: IOU Prison Initiative

Due to the lack of Muslim support for the incarcerated, it becomes difficult for them to receive the correct guidance they often seek. Through this special initiative undertaken by the Islamic Online University, the incarcerated have the choice to study the general Islamic Studies Diploma courses or the Undergraduate programs at the University. Through this endeavor the University hopes to aid the rehabilitation process of the incarcerated and assist in preparing them for a successful and productive life outside the prison.

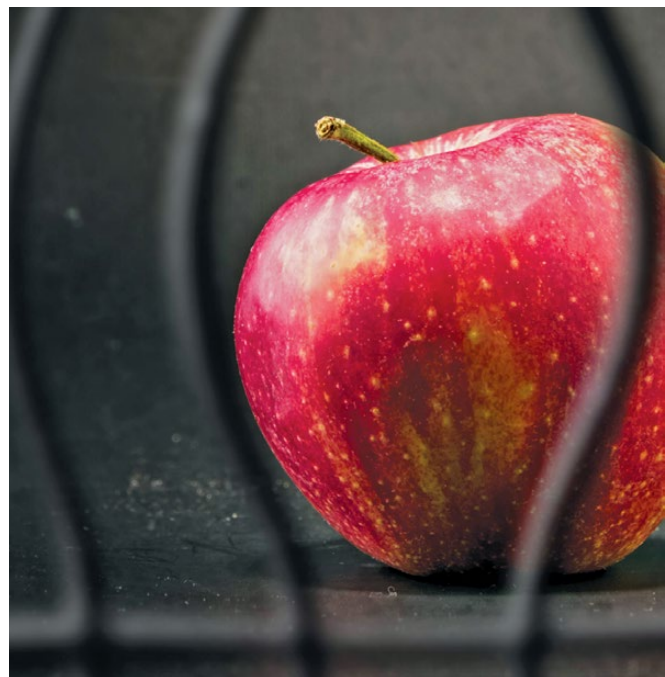
At the beginning of 2014, the Islamic Online University took a step to educate prisoners with Islamic education in the United States. The project started on a pilot basis with a donation campaign. The target amount of the campaign was \$5,000 USD and, in the end, \$7,235 USD was raised.

In December 2014, the University expanded the project and started the second donation campaign with the goal of raising \$25,000 USD. The campaign is still ongoing.

Among the highlights of this project are the following facts:

- Identified students at Federal and State Correctional facilities were identified to enroll in the Diploma program;
- Currently, 500 inmates are enrolled throughout the USA;
- The course work was initiated in new institutions in Florida Dept. of Corrections, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Connecticut, and New York;
- Continued production and distribution of course materials to registered inmates.

The University plans to introduce the program in other countries in the coming years in order to cater to the need of providing authentic Islamic Education to the incarcerated Muslim population in various parts of the world upon request.





Bismillah-ir Rahman-ir Rahim

Praise be to Allah, and blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah.

As Salaamu Alaikum, Believers:

Alhamdulillah. Truly, Allah (SWT) has blessed those of us brothers and sisters who are incarcerated with an opportunity to learn His Deen through the guidance of Islamic Online University. The courses offered are distinguished by their easy style, the organization of their contents and the author's adhering to the Methodology of Ahl us-sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah.

I am thankful to Allah (SWT) first and to the Islamic Online University of Columbia, SC, because now I'm learning how to serve Allah (SWT) and live a beautiful way of life, alhamdulillah.

Barakallahu feekum,
I/M Kevin Frazier.

Letters from Prison

Alhamdulillah, this program has been a blessing and we have received a lot of positive feedback from many inmates. We would like to share some of them with you.

As-Salaamu Alaikum My Dear Brothers,
All praises are due to Allah! Keep up the good work Allah has enabled all of you to participate in. Although I have recently enrolled as a student seeking to understand our religion, it thus far has been a blessing I wish had come along many years ago. It is hoped that the gap will continue to close for us—drawing Muslim inmates closer to the understanding of their duties to Allah, our families and communities, etc. By knowing our religion, it will help remove many misconceptions non-Muslims have about us and even open our eyes to what we as Muslim inmates may not have had the chance to understand until now.

May Allah bless you all,
I/M Bro. Saleem (Larry N. Fowler).

I've been enrolled in the IOU program for about 9 months now and am grateful for this immense gift that has been offered!

I first heard about the program through a sister who was attending the online program. After writing to IOU, I was able to enroll in the Diploma program and I hope to continue with the online classes when I get home in the next few months, insha'allah. So far, it has been a very rewarding experience and I have learned a great deal in the coursework that I have taken so far. Although some of the information is review, I am increasing my knowledge of deen based on the Quran and Sunnah. The material offers excellent references and footnotes, and is easy to understand. Staff are available to answer questions via email or snail mail. During my free time away from work, I spend it studying subjects that are of benefit and help increase my knowledge and understanding of our deen, alhamdulillah.

Barak Allah Feekum wa Jazakum Allahu Khairan,
A Muslimah from Aliceville CI, Aliceville, Alabama

A Poem from Prison



Author Unknown

O You, the Caged Bird of This Dunya

***Cry Not O You Caged Bird
This dunya is nothing but dust and dirt***

***You're tired of flying freely
This world treats you unjustly***

***Despair not from Allah's mercy
Verily, He is above everything.***

***This Dunya is all about trial and test
This hardship is to transform us to our best.***

***With hardship comes ease
And know Allah doesn't break His promise.***

***Allah knows and Allah sees
Soon He will grant you victory and peace.***

***Don't ever let this dunya make you weak
Strength from Allah is what you must seek.***

***When your patience is wearing thin
Remember Jannah is what we'll win.***

***A place which no eyes have seen
A place which frees us from all evil and sin.***

Today, you're a caged bird of this dunya

***Tomorrow, you'll fly high as a Bird of Jannah!
Inshallah...***

As-salaamu 'alaikum,

I am grateful for the opportunity to express my gratitude for the chance to study with the Islamic Online University Diploma Prison Initiative. As a prisoner, our resources are often very limited. As a Muslimah who is incarcerated, the ability to educate one's self in the truth of Islam is even more limited. Studying with IOU has allowed me to continue seeking knowledge through the courses offered to me. I am a better woman, wife, mother, and Muslimah as a direct result of what I am learning, and the direct impact that following and living the Deen of Islam has had on my life. I find that I am able to email or write for any questions or concerns that I may have and am responded to quickly and with kindness. One of the greatest blessings is that the program is offered to me free. All I had to do was have a desire to learn. I am thankful to Allah for placing it in the hearts of all who are a part of this program to bring peace, knowledge and hope to those who may have otherwise been forgotten.

**Suzanna Alguarella, FCI
Tallahassee**

As-salaamu 'alaikum

I have learned a great deal with the information that is in these books. I am at the impressionable stage being that I have only been in my faith for a few years so I am taking everything in and trying to get as much knowledge as I can. I am glad that this opportunity came to me and I will use this to further my path with Allah. Thank you.

Muslimah, Florida



On behalf of the Muslims in Sierra Leone and The Gambia:

Generous. May it be a source of blessings for you in both worlds, Ameen.

Thank you and barak Allahu fikum for helping us reach our goal to build Islamic centers in Sierra Leone and The Gambia with computers and free internet service to IOU students.

Increase Your Rewards

See our ongoing donation campaigns on

www.ummaland.com:

IOU Prison Initiative -

<https://www.ummaland.com/fundraising/181/iou-prison-initiative/>

IOU General Donation Campaign -

<https://www.ummaland.com/fundraising/184/islamic-online-university-changing-the-nation-through-education/>

You have made a difference. We were able to build and furnish Islamic centers so students may pursue and further their education and have a positive impact on their families, neighborhoods, communities and country in general.

We are grateful for your generosity and pray for your donation to be multiplied by The Most

See What We Have Accomplished

These are the new Islamic centers in Sierra Leone and The Gambia made possible by your kind and generous hearts. Alhamdulillah, our students are already benefiting from such a precious gift.





Passion for
Allah's Knowledge and Deen
Gave Me Strength and Purpose

By Enas Abdel Hameed Rady

toppers at this institute but sadly, my certificate was stolen with my computer bag while I was traveling abroad.

The former head of the ministry refused to issue a duplicate certificate. I was shocked and depressed, but I decided to complete the journey I had commenced and determined to remain on the path of knowledge hoping for reward in the hereafter.

While discussing the loss of my certificate with one of my friends, we hit upon the idea of commencing our studies with Islamic Online University (IOU). I had known of Dr. Bilal Philips and his journey to knowledge since my time in Egypt, which gave me strength and hope in my decision to join IOU.

Alhamdulillah, I am now enrolled in the IOU Masters in Islamic Studies program and I am pursuing a higher degree diploma in marriage therapy. I am also working part time as a teacher of Islamic Studies and Arabic Language for non-Arabs and as a family therapist at a reputable institute for the disabled in Dubai called "Kalimati."

Life Takes a Turn

In 2011, during my second semester at IOU, I could not take the exams on schedule because of a strange pain in my neck and ears. I thought it was just something minor that needed rest and physical therapy. However, one of my doctors referred me to

*M*y name is Enas Abdel Hameed Rady and I am an Egyptian living in Dubai. I am married with three children, one of whom is Ahmad, my special hero, and two kittens: Shahd and Jannah. After the birth of my first son, Ahmad, (a special needs child) in 2001, I started a special needs education diploma, followed by a higher diploma in Islamic Education from the Egyptian Awqaf Ministry Dawah Institute, that follows the Al-Azhar university curriculum. I was one of the

When I joined IOU, I was highly impressed with the system and support that I got as a special needs student.

a scan that confirmed tumors along the right side of my neck. By that time, I was in extreme pain and a biopsy showed carcinogenic tumors surrounding my vocal cords. I had to undergo multiple high-risk surgeries. Doctors said that I could lose my voice in the process but alhamdulillah, the surgery went well and I was put on extensive treatment plans. As is the will of Allah, the cancerous tumors came back not once, but twice, this time spreading all over the lymph nodes.

This type of cancer is usually treated with surgeries and radiation but I felt that the surgeries were painful and risky. Having consulted many therapists, my doctors chose different treatment techniques with minimal exposure to chemotherapy. I also tried natural medication with experienced doctors and radiation sessions. However, all this took a toll on me and I could hardly speak, besides having severe pain in my neck. I also developed Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) which needed another treatment plan altogether. Qadar Allah, wa ma sha fa'al!

What helped me the most was healing through dietary changes and tolerance tests using special anti-cancer food combinations. My food habits changed from 'unhealthy' to 'healthy', just like that, alhamdulillah!

IOU Support

When I joined IOU, I was highly impressed with the system and support that I got as a special needs student. From the beginning of my second semester, I was always in surgeries or undergoing treatment and unable to deliver the academic work needed. However, IOU Chief Academic Coordinator Brother Hunain, and the sisters at the IOU's HelpDesk and the Registrar took special care of me. Twice I was unable to attend the final exams as I could not walk, but IOU team always tried their best to help me—in fact, I have taken my exams in almost all the countries that I have been for my treatment! If I could not attend exams because of emergencies, the grade transfer option would come to my rescue and I would carry over the incomplete subjects to the next semester.

Typing or writing was a big challenge because the surgeries affected terribly my shoulders and arms. I could not write or read for long durations so I had to pause at regular intervals and record notes in special folders for future reviews.

During the course of my treatment I was isolated from people frequently. It was only the passion for Allah's knowledge and learning His deen that gave me strength and filled my time and soul with a purpose.

Cancer Changed My Life

The effect that cancer had on me changed my family's lives as well. My life was filled with people and activities until cancer stepped into my life. Cooking is my passion and I had appeared on a few cooking shows on TV in the early years of marriage. In fact, I was well-known in my neighborhood for my cooking skills, especially fish and seafood, alhamdulillah!

I could not continue taking care of my special needs son, Ahmad, or organize family get-togethers every week like I used to. I was not even allowed any physical activity because of loss of bone density which would tire me out very quickly, although alhamdulillah, I am overcoming this with supplements and walks.

My battle with cancer unveiled the best in my family, especially my husband. This strong, kind, sincere, loving, and righteous man sacrificed all his time, energy, and even work at times to be with me



for months in hospitals! I discovered a new us in the backdrop of cancer and we share a very strong, and blissful bond with the blessing and mercy of Allah.

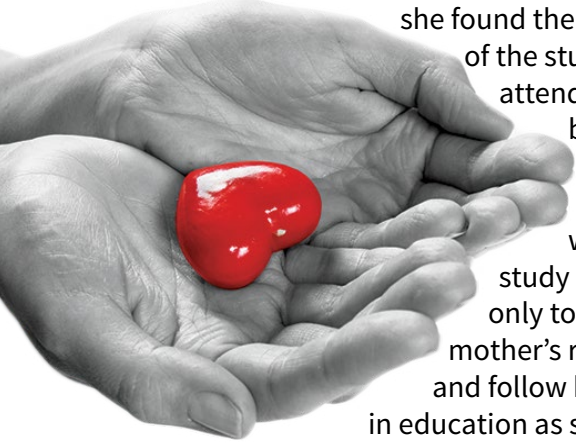
My daughters too are learning many things in life by supporting

me and are always beside me. Even my siblings have spared no efforts to take over my responsibilities whenever they could manage it because they live quite far away. And how can I forget my mother?! She gave me strength. She encouraged me to carry on and was always by my side ignoring all of her own age problems and health conditions. May Allah grant her Jannah!

Meet the New Enas

My battle with cancer is nothing but a test from Allah. Yes, it is not pleasant, but such experiences strengthen our soul and encourage us to be steadfast on the path of Allah.

Let me share a small memory with you. I was one of the honored students in high school for my grades, which is a critical year when your grades determine your future. I got a scholarship at the American University in Cairo [AUC] but my mother refused to let me take this unique opportunity because



she found the culture of the students attending AUC to be unIslamic in an Islamic country. I went on to study pharmacy only to obey my mother's request and follow her path in education as she is a pharmacist as well. I only did this to please her and make her happy. My dream was to work in the media and teach people through technology.

This dream was fulfilled after 20 years with IOU! They helped me learn and teach Islam in English as this is my second language and now, alhamdulillah, I teach in both Arabic and English. This gives me a sense of satisfaction that I obeyed my mother 20 years ago and followed her guidance, for now, after all these years, Allah gave me what I wanted.

Prior to cancer, I was very active in teaching and

It was only the passion for Allah's knowledge and learning His deen that gave me strength and filled my time and soul with a purpose.

delivering workshops and seminars to ladies, children and teens on different subjects. Alhamdulillah, although the medium has changed, I still continue to do so by giving recordings on special

topics. I love giving back what I have learnt in the form of da'wah that is beneficial to the Muslims.

Five years on, my battle with cancer still rages. I was almost unable to talk after the treatment sessions but now Allah has given me my speech back although I have to take precautions and cannot engage in long conversations. I have also re-joined work, but cannot overburden myself due to low immunity.

Allah's mercy is infinite and He enabled me to perform 'Umrah this Ramadan which was something my soul had always been yearning for. Allah put me to this test and blessed me at the same time with patience and power; how perfect is His will! I tasted the sweetness of real sisterhood and brotherhood for the sake of Allah as my students and friends supported me in whichever way possible.

It broke my heart to live away from my children for long periods for my treatment but by the mercy of Allah, I helped myself to heal by patience, faith, and perseverance. Cancer has changed my life from good to the better, alhamdulillah. Each day gives me a new life; it feels like I am a newborn with only one day to live! How joyous, active and useful this day is!

My attitude towards life has totally changed. I have taken the world out of my heart and placed it in my hands...it is now much easier to leave it!



Empathy

All praise is to Allah. We praise Him, seek His help and seek His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from evils within our souls and harms of our deeds. Whomever Allah guides, none can misguide. And whomever He sends astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah alone, with no partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad ﷺ is His servant and Messenger.

What Is Empathy?

“You never really understand another person until you consider things from his point of view – until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it.”¹

Empathy is the ability to understand the feelings and emotions of another person. It is coupled with the ability to understand and share what others are feeling.

Empathy in Quran and Sunnah

Empathy plays an essential role in Islam. Allah says in Quran:

“O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous.”²

Fasting is prescribed on every Muslim regardless of their financial, social or any other status. It teaches us patience, tolerance and it makes us feel compassionate and empathic towards the poor. One of the main reasons for fasting is to feel hunger for a while and to remember the pain of hunger of those who are in this

situation all the time. It is a means of feeling empathy towards the poor.

Another example of empathy can be found in the incident of hijrah that took place during the time of Prophet ﷺ when the Muhajiroon left their homes and migrated to Madinah. Allah mentions this in the Quran:

“And [also for] those who were settled in al-Madinah and [adopted] the faith before them. They love those who emigrated to them and find not any want in their breasts of what the emigrants were given but give [them] preference over themselves, even though they are in privation. And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul - it is those who will be the successful.”³

The Ansars at that time welcomed the Muhajiroon with open hearts and shared everything with them, including their wealth. This eased the difficulties faced by the Muhajireen who left everything behind in Makkah.

The life of Prophet ﷺ is also full of examples of empathy. The Prophet ﷺ was blessed with a higher level of empathy and compassion than other people, which is just one of his noble character traits as the leader of the Muslim ummah.⁴

Empathy is often characterized as the ability to “put oneself into another’s shoes,” or experiencing the outlook or emotions of another being within oneself - a sort of emotional resonance.⁵ Anas related that the Prophet ﷺ said:

Put aside your viewpoint and try to see things from the other person's point of view.

“None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.”⁶

An incident occurred during the Prophet's ﷺ time that provides Muslims with guidance regarding empathetic and compassionate leadership. A man came to the Prophet ﷺ crying and distressed. As one of the Prophet's ﷺ companions, Abu Hurayrah narrates what happened:

“While we were sitting with the Prophet ﷺ a man came and said, ‘O God’s Apostle! I have been ruined.’ The Prophet ﷺ asked what was the matter with him. He replied ‘I had sexual intercourse with my wife while I was fasting.’ The Prophet ﷺ asked him, ‘Can you afford to manumit a slave?’ He replied in the negative. The Prophet ﷺ asked him, ‘Can you fast for two successive months?’ He replied in the negative. The Prophet ﷺ asked him, ‘Can you afford to feed sixty poor persons?’ He replied in the negative. The Prophet ﷺ kept silent and while we were in that state, a big basket full of dates was brought to the Prophet ﷺ. He asked, ‘Where is the questioner?’ He replied, ‘I am here.’ The Prophet ﷺ said to him, ‘Take this basket of dates and give it in charity.’ The man said, ‘Should I give it to a person poorer than I? By God; there is no family between its two mountains (i.e. Madinah) who is poorer than I.’ The Prophet ﷺ smiled till his premolar teeth became visible and then said, ‘Feed your family with it.’”⁷

The Prophet ﷺ gently suggested to the man various ways by which he could make amends. He did not humiliate him but offered him a way out of his dilemma.

Applying Empathy In Life

We can cultivate empathy in every aspect of our life. Some of the examples of applying the concept of empathy would be to:

1. Pay Attention: Physically and Mentally

It is important that we give our full attention to the person we are talking to. It is essential that the other person feels that they have our full attention so they can express themselves easily to us.

2. Understand

We should not only hear the other person's words, but also understand the feelings behind those words.⁸

3. A Strong Imagination

It is necessary to see the world from other people's perspectives, which may be different from ours. It is necessary to look at the people around us and imagine the circumstances they might be living in and understand the suffering that many might be going through.

4. Respond Encouragingly

Put aside your viewpoint and try to see things from the other person's point of view. When you do this, you'll realize that other people most likely aren't being evil, unkind, stubborn, or unreasonable – they're probably just reacting to the situation with the knowledge they have.⁹

¹Harper Lee, To Kill a Mockingbird

²Quran 2:183

³Quran 59:9

⁴Prophet's practical teaching method, Sadaf Faroqi

⁵Emotional Intelligence – From an Islamic Perspective, Mohammad Awais Tahir.

⁶Saheeh Bukhari: Volume 1, Book 2, Number 12

⁷Bukhari

⁸Deborah Hecker, “Who Am I Without My Partner?”

⁹Empathy at work, url: <http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/EmpathyatWork.htm>

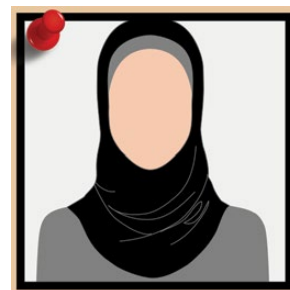
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By Maheen Pervez | BAIS | 6th Semester | Fall 2014

SHAYTAN: A CLEAR ENEMY

*I*bn Kathir in his tafsir states, “Iblis, the enemy of Allah, envied Adam because Allah honoured Adam. He said, ‘I was created from fire, and he was created from clay.’ Therefore, the first error ever committed was arrogance, for the enemy of Allah was too arrogant to prostrate before Adam.”

Further, it has been recorded in the Sahih,

“No person who has the weight of a mustard seed of arrogance in his heart shall enter Paradise.”¹

Iblis had disbelief, arrogance, and rebellion, all of which caused him to be expelled from the holy presence of Allah, and His mercy.

Allah says,

“Did I not enjoin upon you, O children of Adam, that you not worship Satan - [for] indeed, he is to you a clear enemy - And that you worship [only] Me? This is a straight path.”²

The kufr of arrogance and pride was the kufr of Shaytan because he did not deny or reject the command of Allah, but he met it with pride and arrogance. From this arose the kufr of those who knew and believed that Allah’s Messenger ﷺ had come with the truth from Allah but did not acknowledge it out of pride and arrogance. The mufasssireen say this was the kufr of the Jews,

“...then when there came to them that which they had recognized, they disbelieved in it.”³

Iblis was expelled from Paradise over pride. A proud person considers himself self-sufficient and not in need of Allah. Kibr (pride) builds one’s ego and this is a bad trait which is detestable to Allah.

Allah says in a hadith qudsi,

“Pride is my cloak, and glory is my wrap, so he who competes Me in either of these, I will cast him into the Fire.”⁴

Every action has a time and a place in which it occurs and we, as humans, do not possess either. Mankind does not have the power to maintain his own or any other’s life. So how can any man or any creation take pride in anything? There is only One Absolute; that is Allah:

“He is Allah, other than whom there is no deity, the Sovereign, the Pure, the Perfection, the Bestower of Faith, the Overseer, the Exalted in Might, the Compeller, the Superior...”⁵

Hence, pride, which is in fact self-praise, is forbidden for the servants (abeed) of Allah.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

“Indeed, Allah revealed to me, humble yourselves until none is proud over another and none is oppressive over another.”⁶

In the tafsir of Ibn Kathir, the following is related:

“The Jews used to invoke Allah to send a prophet so that they would gain victory over the Arab disbelievers. But when Allah sent Muhammad ﷺ and they saw that

he was not one of them, they rejected him and envied the Arabs, even though they knew that he was the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Hence, Allah said,

‘Then when there came to them that which they had recognized, they disbelieved in it. So let the curse of Allah be on the disbelievers.’⁷

Shaytan hates mankind, the children of Adam. He is hostile towards them because he is cursed and has been banished from the Mercy of Allah due to his refusal to prostrate to their father, Adam.

‘For he had said, 'I will surely take from among Your servants a specific portion. And I will mislead them...'⁸

Iblis already knows that his destination is the Fire and he is eager to mislead and corrupt mankind, so as to increase the number of his followers to share his fate. He hopes to take everyone with him to Hell; out of envy, hatred, kufr and stubbornness.

‘Indeed, Satan is an enemy to you; so take him as an enemy. He only invites his party to be among the companions of the Blaze.’⁹

Shaytan is a deceiver, a corrupter. Thus, Shaytan cannot do more than call people to misguidance and make it look attractive to them. He has no actual power over them to force them into doing what he wants. People who respond to his call do so because it suits their whims and desires. Hence, the blame is attached to only those who respond to him. On the Day of Judgment, the qareen¹⁰ will testify against man and disown his actions, saying that he, himself, was misguided. He will claim that the man was receptive to the falsehood and resistant to the truth. Allah says,

‘His [devil] companion will say, 'Our Lord, I did not make him transgress, but he [himself] was in extreme error.' [Allah] will say, 'Do not dispute before Me, while I had already presented to you the warning.’¹¹

The Pact

‘And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins -

their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], ‘Am I not your Lord?’ They said, ‘Yes, we have testified.’ [This] - lest you should say on the day of Resurrection, ‘Indeed, we were of this unaware.’¹²

A proud person considers himself self-sufficient and not in need of Allah.

This surah is a reminder of the primordial pact, which Allah made with all human beings prior to their entrance into this world. Thus, “to not worship Shaytan” means, “to not obey Shaytan”

because the obedience of others in areas prohibited by Allah is a form of ibadah. Ali ibn Abi Talib relates the following hadith in the sahihayn, where the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

‘No obedience is due to anyone if it involves disobedience to Allah. Indeed obedience is in what is good.’¹³

One can also not legalize the unlawful and declare the unlawful to be the lawful as a result of ijihad. However, if done with sincerity in which he was striving to follow in the footsteps of Allah’s prophets and messengers, but he failed, he will not be held responsible for his mistake. According to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, he might achieve the reward for his efforts at ijihad based on the hadith of Amr ibn al-Aas, who related that he heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say,

‘If a ruler makes a ruling striving [to find what is correct] and is correct, he gets two rewards. But if he rules striving [to find what is correct] and is mistaken, he gets one reward.’¹⁴

However, if a person knew that monks or rabbis were mistaken and despite this followed them and rejected the statements of the prophets and messengers of Allah, he would have fallen into this type of shirk and the rejection of Allah. Moreover, he will receive his due share of punishment if he supports this mistake with his strength and power while knowing that it is wrong. This form of shirk and the one who commits it, deserve the penalty and punishment.

The Prophet ﷺ said,

‘Shaytan lies waiting for a person in all his

paths. In the path of Islam, he will tell him, ‘Will you become a Muslim and leave the religion of your fathers and grandfathers?’ If the person disobeys him, and becomes a Muslim, he will meet him on the path of hijrah. He will tell him, ‘Will you leave your land and your sky? It is not wise.’ If the person does not submit and continues on his way, Shaytan will wait for him on the road to striving in the path of Allah, saying, ‘Will you go to struggle putting yourself and your wealth at risk? You will fight and be killed. Your wife will find another partner, your money will be divided,’ (and in another version, ‘and your children will be orphans’). If the person disobeys Shaytan, and is killed, Allah will owe him the right to enter Paradise.” [Musnad Ahmad]

¹Sahih Muslim, Book 1, Hadith Number 16

²Quran 36:60-61

³Quran 2:89

⁴Sunan Abu Dawud, Book 33, Hadith Number 4079

⁵Quran 59:23

⁶Sahih Muslim, Book 1, Hadith Number 602

⁷Ibn Kathir, Tafseer Ibn Kathir for Quran 2:89

⁸Quran 4: 118-119

⁹Quran 35:6

¹⁰Our jinn companion who encourages us to do evil deeds.

¹¹Quran 50:27-28

¹²Quran 7:172

¹³Sahih Muslim, Book 91, Hadith Number 363

¹⁴Sunan an-Nasa’i, Book 49, Hadith 5383

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By Mohamed Tariq Ekeramodien Kahn | BAIS | 5th Semester | Fall 2014

THE CONCEPT OF

JUSTICE

IN ISLAM

Alhamdulillah rabbil-'alamin was salatu wasalamu 'ala ashrafil anbiya wal-mursaleen nabiyyina Muhammad wa 'ala alihi wa sahabihi ajma'in. Amma ba'ad:

Introduction:**Meaning of Justice**

Justice is a relative term. It very much depends where you stand, as what seems just to one, might be an injustice in the

eyes of others. Hence, the concept of justice varies from person to person, culture to culture, state to state, religion to religion. The concept of justice has also various levels such as personal, social, environmental, community, legislative, etc. The Western society is always portrayed as the example of the just system, giving rights to all citizens equally, while Islam is considered to be an unjust religious system. Unfortunately, the Muslim societies today are not the example of the Islamic justice system and many Muslims are looking for the justice outside.

In this paper, we will analyze justice as a whole, compare the meaning and concept of justice in Islamic and non-Islamic backgrounds, and look at the concept of ultimate justice.

Definition of Justice:

The concept of justice has been a subject of

discussion in the Western world for thousands of years. Since the Western society has its roots in Greco-Roman, Judeo-Christian tradition, the early debates on the concept of justice fall back to Plato, Aristotle, Socrates and other philosophers of Ancient Greece.¹ Two prominent features of justice were present at that time: retribution and hierarchical power, which are also reflected in the Hebrew scriptures.²

Recent definition of justice includes the quality of being fair and reasonable, and conducting just behavior or treatment.³

Islam is the only system that brings comprehensive justice to all living beings in this life and the next.

The literal meaning of justice in the classical Arabic is a combination of moral and social values denoting fairness, balance, temperance and straightforwardness.⁴

Ultimately, justice means treating others with respect and fairness, and giving them their rights.

Justice in Islamic Sources:

Islam is a religion of justice. It is a religion of the Just God⁵. Subsequently, even the Islamic legislation is based on justice. God has given everything its rights: nature, animals and humans. Every living being has a right and respecting that right means following justice, and consequently, following the Islamic teachings. Many verses of the Quran speak of justice, here are only few examples:

“O you who have believed, fear Allah and speak words of appropriate justice.”⁶

and

“Say, [O Muhammad], 'My Lord has ordered justice...!’”⁷

Nevertheless, it is very important to point out that no one in this world can be absolutely just and only God is truly Just. Even the Prophet ﷺ said,

“I am only a human being, and you people (opponents) come to me with your cases; and it may be that one of you can present his case eloquently in a more convincing way than the other, and I give my verdict according to what I hear. So if ever I judge (by error) and give the right of a brother to his other (brother) then he (the latter) should not take it, for I am giving him only a piece of Fire.”⁸

The Quran also often speaks of the Day when fairness and justice will prevail and everyone shall have what they have earned. It is the Judgment Day.

“That Day, Allah will pay them in full their deserved recompense, and they will know that it is Allah who is the perfect in justice.”⁹

Hence, justice in Islam is not an abstract term; it is very real and defined by the rights of each living being. It is a reality applicable to this world and the next.

Political Justice in Islam:

God is the Legislator and He has conveyed His message, which contains just and fair treatment, to His prophets and messengers. Thus, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ acted not only as a messenger but also as a judge. After his departure, rulers remained judges and later on, wise and knowledgeable people were appointed to the positions of judges.

Aristotle points out that the scopes of political justice belong to the state who will decide what is just and unjust.¹⁰ In Islam, state is viewed as a vicegerent who should distribute the Law of God as conveyed by His Messenger ﷺ. While there is room for adjustments according to the needs and situations, all such rulings have to relate back to the principles contained in the main Islamic sources. Hence, whatever has been set by God as being just and fair 1,400 years ago, is still considered to be just and fair today. In contrast, the Western society boasting about its justice system, which is based on the decisions of people, has seen some major developments and what has been seen as just and fair just a hundred years ago is no longer

just and fair today and vice versa.¹¹ This stability is unique to the religion of Islam.

Furthermore, rulers and judges in most societies past and present are viewed above the law. Meaning, the justice system does not apply to their actions and they are not responsible in front of anyone for their evil deeds. It is very rare today to see cases of corrupt judges and rulers facing fair trials for their acts. Sometimes, even the officers of the law are not held accountable for their acts.¹² In Islam, everyone is accountable and no one is above the law, not even the daughter of the Prophet ﷺ.¹³ Thus, judges and rulers are accountable in this world and the next. For example, a judge delivering a purposely wrong verdict is going to be severely punished on the Day of Judgment. The Prophet ﷺ said:

“Judges are of three types, one of whom will go to Paradise and two to Hell. The one who will go to Paradise is a man who knows what is right and gives judgment accordingly; but a man who knows what is right and acts tyrannically in his judgment will go to Hell; and a man who gives judgment for people when he is ignorant will go to Hell.”¹⁴

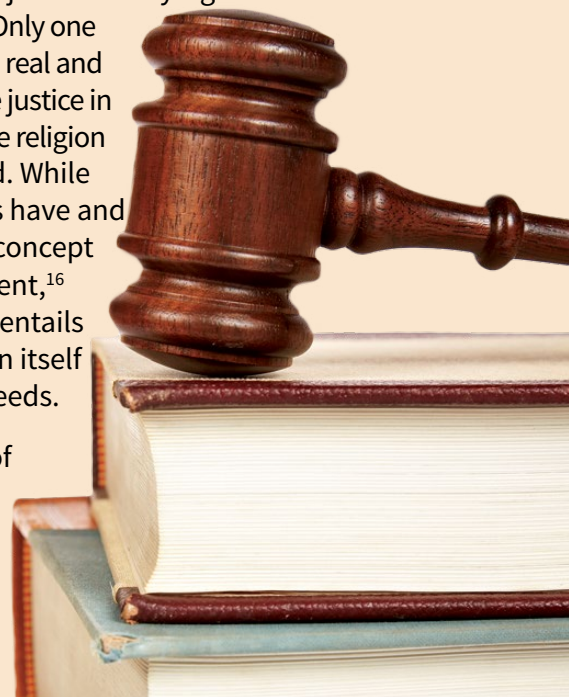
And the Prophet ﷺ also said about an unjust ruler:

“A ruler who has been entrusted with the affairs of the Muslims but he makes no endeavors (for the material and moral uplift) and does not sincerely mean (their welfare) would not enter Paradise along with them.”¹⁵

Ultimate Justice in Islam:

The concept of justice is very significant in the Islamic belief. Only one religion offers a real and comprehensive justice in the afterlife; the religion of the One God. While many religions have and believe in the concept of Last Judgment,¹⁶ this judgment entails only the person itself and his own deeds.

The meaning of justice in the afterlife in Islam is much



broader. On the Day of Judgment, deeds will be weighed and all scores will be settled, even those of animals.¹⁷

An example of settling a score among humans can be seen in the following narration.

“God’s Messenger ﷺ said, “Whoever has oppressed another person concerning his reputation or anything else, should beg him to forgive him before the Day of Resurrection when there will be no money (to compensate for wrong deeds). But if he has good deeds, those good deeds will be taken from him according to his oppression, which he has done, and if he has no good deeds, the sins of the oppressed person will be loaded on him.”¹⁸

The Creator has also His rights and among them is being worshipped alone with no partner. Joining partners with God is the greatest injustice as indicated in the following narration:

“When the following Verse was revealed: ‘It is those who believe and confuse not their belief with wrong (worshipping others besides Allah.)’ (6:82), the companions of God’s Messenger asked, ‘Who is amongst us who had not done injustice (wrong)?’ Allah revealed: ‘No doubt, joining others in worship with Allah is a great injustice (wrong) indeed.’” (31:13)¹⁹

Consequently, violating the right of God will lead to the eternal punishment.²⁰

Conclusion

While human beings are capable of doing great injustice, paradoxically even the oppressors desire their rights to be respected. In other words, all human beings wish to be treated with justice. Justice is an ingredient in keeping people, communities and states happy, content, prosperous and peaceful. The absence of justice brings oppression, depression and misery.

Islam is the only system that brings comprehensive justice to all living beings in this life and the next. The Day of Judgment, the Day of ultimate justice is here to guarantee every being the justice s/he deserves.

“And We place the scales of justice for the Day of Resurrection, so no soul will be treated unjustly at all. And if there is [even] the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it forth. And sufficient are We as accountant.”²¹

¹Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Western Theories of Justice, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/>

²A Brief History of Justice, David Johnston, p. 15, 22

³Oxford Dictionary of English

⁴Islamic Concept of Crime and Justice, Volume 2, N. Hanif, p. 8

⁵Even though it is not narrated that Al ‘Adl (Justice) is one of the names of Allah in the Quran or in any sahih hadith, Allah has the attribute of being just. He is just in all that He does, as it is narrated in al-Bukhari (3150) and Muslim (1062) from ‘Abd-Allah ibn Mas’ood about the man who objected to the Prophet’s division of the booty, and the Messenger of Allah answered: “Who will be just if Allah and His Messenger are not just?” (IslamQ&A, fatwa no. 104488)

⁶Quran, 33:70

⁷Ibid., 7:29

⁸Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 9, Book 89, Hadith 281

⁹Ibid., 24:25

¹⁰Aristotle, Politics, trans. Benjamin Jowett, p.56-57

¹¹For example, homosexual relations, right of women to vote, sexual relationship of two members of the same family.

¹²Please refer to the USA court decision in the cases of Eric Gardner (NY, 2014), Michael Brown (Ferguson, 2014) and others.

¹³Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 5, Book 57, Hadith 79

¹⁴Sunan Abi Dawud, Book 24, Hadith 3566, Graded sahih by Al Albani

¹⁵Sahih Muslim, Book 1, Hadith 264

¹⁶The Encyclopedia of World Religions, Robert S. Ellwood, Gregory D. Alles, p. 8, 9

¹⁷The Prophet of Allah said, “The claimants would get their claims on the Day of Resurrection so much so that the hornless sheep would get its claim from the horned sheep.” Sahih Muslim, Book 32, Hadith 6252

¹⁸Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 3, Book 43, Hadith 629

¹⁹Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 1, Book 2, Hadith 32

²⁰Quran, 4:48

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By Veronika Matulova | BAIS | 8th Semester | Fall 2014

Differentiated Instruction Method: Implementation in an Islamic Studies Class

What is differentiated instruction?

Differentiated instruction enables a school to welcome students with all kinds of abilities and aptitudes. It allows students of various calibre and even special needs children to not only sit in the same classroom, but also to experience a heightened standard and effective learning with each other in the same group, reading from the same material or working on the same project (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006). In this article, a micro-view of a differentiated Islamic studies classroom shall be presented by choosing a particular grade – providing a deeper look into the procedures of the class and the various activities assigned for the students.

Application in Islamic Studies:

In a grade six Islamic Studies classroom, the following topics can be covered for the whole year:

Aqeedah:

Belief in the Books and the Messengers:

Definition of the terms: Books, prophets and messengers, key points to believe, compare and contrast role of a prophet and a messenger; deeper look at the missions of Prophets Musa, Hud, Salih, Yahya and Eesa (alaihimusssalam).

Belief in the Day of Resurrection:

The signs of the Day, thorough description of the events including resurrection, shade of the Throne, the role of the Prophet ﷺ in interceding for all of humanity and for believers, the bridge, the pond of the Prophet – al Kauthar, Hellfire and Paradise, the Qantarah bridge and believers entering paradise.

Fiqh (Ibadah):

Fiqh of Fasting:

Define fasting, suhoor, iftar; list the conditions of fasting, the exemptions and make-up fasts, moon-sighting.

Haya and Hijab:

Define both the terms, learn the relevant ayat and the correct conditions for fulfilling them, compare and contrast the two terms, identify appropriate hijab and learn to correct various mistakes.

Tafsir:

Tafsir of Surah an-Nur:

Special focus on Ayat un Nur and the ayat on hijab. Learn the ayat by heart, define and understand word meanings, grammatical construction and the lessons derived.

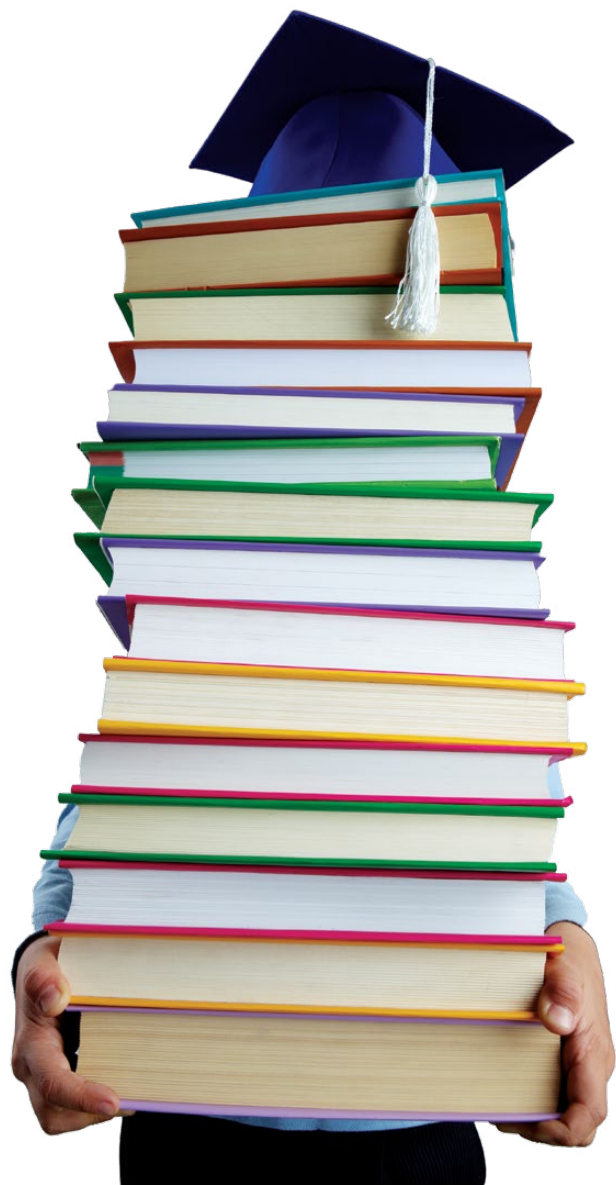
Seerah:

Makkan Period:

Analysis of lessons and teachings from different events of Makkan period, and compare and contrast with some contemporary events.

Books and Materials:

- The Messengers and the Messages by Dr. Umar S. Al-Ashqar
- The Day of Resurrection by Dr. Umar S. Al-Ashqar
- Fiqh us Sunnah by Sayyid Sabiq



- Tafsir Ibn Kathir (for relevant surah an-Nur and al-Ahzab tafsir)
- The Prophet of Islam In the Light of the Original Sources: An Analytical Study by Dr. Mahdi Rizqullah Ahmad
- Video series on surah an-Nur and hijab from Bayyinah TV and YouTube video of Dr. Yasir Qadhi.
- Handouts on fiqh of fasting and hijab.

Pre-Assessment Method:

In order to understand the students' prior knowledge of the topics to be covered in the syllabus, various methods shall be applied throughout the year at the beginning of new topics. Students will be individually assessed using pretests, surveys, KWL charts, and journals. Whole group pre-assessments like brain storming, thumbs up and down will be conducted. Quizzes, observation by the

teacher, quick write-ups, and individual white board will bring out more details about students.

Differentiation: What and How?

Lessons will be differentiated according to a combination of content, process and product during different sessions.

The differentiation method used throughout the year will be based sometimes upon students' multiple intelligences, sometimes upon their interests where they have the choice on who they would like in their groups and sometimes upon their readiness; yet at other times, differentiation may be based on random grouping.

A sample lesson plan shall be discussed below, for a one-hour class period (two days) wherein I have chosen the topic of 'Haya and Hijab.'

Day 1

Objectives:

This lesson will enable students to:

1. Define the terms: "haya," "khimar," "hijab," and "jilbab" in the Quranic context
2. Know the verse of surah an-Nur 24:30
3. Know the conditions of hijab
4. Identify khimar and jilbab from pictures

Differentiation:

The content and product will be differentiated in this lesson. The grouping will be based on interest. Group leaders will be picked by the teacher first who will then choose the rest of the members. For the paired activity, students will pair up with the person next to them.

Procedures:

1. Pre-assessment:

Ask students about the terms "haya," "khimar," "hijab," and "jilbab" and check their prior knowledge using thumbs up and down for what they knew and what they didn't know. Duration of this activity: 5 minutes.

2. Introduce surah an-Nur and surah al-Ahzab briefly:

Then discuss the aforementioned terms from a Quranic perspective and the conditions of hijab from excerpts of Tafsir ibn Kathir from Darussalam and "What is Hijab?" series from Bayyinah TV – for a total of 15 minutes. It will be a lecture for the entire class. The whiteboard will be used to write the definitions and conditions.

3. Small group activity:

Students will be broken into groups according to their choice as mentioned above. From the choice board, they will choose their reading materials or video lecture. They have to take notes in class and discuss with group members about “haya,” “khimar,” “hijab,” and “jilbab” and the conditions of hijab. This activity will be for 15 minutes.

4. Paired activity:

Students will memorize surah an-Nur:30 and recite to each other. Duration of this activity: 10 minutes.

5. Group discussion about what khimars and jilbabs look like:

Ask students to come to the board and draw sample pictures of khimar and jilbab. Other students will identify the correct ones and point out the problems. Time length for this activity will be 10 minutes.

Reading Materials (mentioned serially, beginning with the most advanced one):

1. Excerpts from Tafsir ibn Kathir (Kathir, 2003)
2. "Why Should I Wear Hijab?" (Muhajabah, n.d.)
3. "The Question of Hijab: Suppression Or Liberation?" (n.d.)
4. "Hijab is not a piece of cloth on your head" (Shameem, n.d.)
5. Copies of the Quran for memorizing the ayat

Video Material:

1. "What is Hijab?" series from Bayyinah TV (Khan, 2014)
2. Tafsir of Ayat An-Nur (Qadhi, 2014)

Evaluation:

There will be peer assessment of the memorized ayah from surah an-Nur, observation by the teacher during their memorization and small group activity time. Students will also show their notebooks to the teacher where they took notes. A group activity of pictures on the board and other students' responding to their arts will be a form of informal assessment for this class as well.



Objectives:

This lesson will enable students to

1. Define the terms, "haya," "khimar," "hijab," and "jilbab" – lexical meaning in classical Arabic.
2. Know the verse of surah an-Nur:31 (partially).
3. Analyze the relationship between "haya" and "hijab".

Procedures:

1. Review the terms, "haya," "khimar," "hijab," and "jilbab" from previous lessons. Different students in class should be asked about their meaning. They can choose to describe in words, draw on the whiteboard or put on a scarf and show how a scarf is worn for it to fulfill the conditions of a khimar (they will pick it from choiceboard). This activity will be for 10 minutes.
2. A whole class lecture on lexical meanings of the terms. The connection between haya and hijab will also be discussed, including the fact that for the first sixteen years of prophethood, haya was explained and ingrained in the believers. Hence, when the command of hijab came, the believing women accepted it wholeheartedly (Khan, 2014). Duration of lecture will be 20 minutes.
3. Paired activity: Students will memorize surah an-Nur:30 (partially) and recite to each other. Duration: 10 minutes.
4. Students will be divided into small groups like in the previous lesson. They will choose from a choiceboard to write a story about haya and hijab, a short report, graphic presentation or perform a skit. Activity duration will be 15 minutes.

Evaluation:

The first evaluation will take place during the review session. The teacher will take observation notes and peers will assess memorization. Group presentation of a story, report, or skit will be assessed by the teacher, which will take place the next day when the students are ready.

In this way, the rest of the lessons can be planned and worked through. This lesson can be wrapped up the next day with a review session, memorization of rest of the ayah and surah al-Ahzab:59, a summary by students and then their group presentations.

Differentiated instruction provides all the students an opportunity to actively participate in class and engage in effective learning. The students in the example above were grouped according to their choice, so they will be in mixed ability groups. This will allow the more able students to teach and share their understanding with the students who have some weakness and those students can thus benefit from their peers and improve themselves. Differentiated instruction procedures and activities can therefore benefit students of various backgrounds and levels to best utilize their potentials.

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