



Muslimah Gems

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Bismillah ar'Rahman ar'Raheem (In the name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful)

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The Message Of Ramathan Is The Message Of Islam



Every human being is born good and sinless. But this nature can change when humans have no control over their unlawful desires and whims "Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves" Quran 13:11. Fighting against these desires and whims is a struggle. And whoever stands determined against these forces and committed to obeying Allah subhanh wa ta'ala will be rewarded accordingly " Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds - indeed, We will not allow to be lost the reward of any who did well in deeds"

Quran 18:30.

Ramathan is the month that provides an opportunity for believers to earn infinite rewards from Allah subhanah wa ta'ala as a result of their struggle against unlawful desires and whims for the sake of their Creator.

Ramathan is the month of fasting which is the fourth pillar of Islam , and which has been an integral part of all major religions "O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous" Quran 2:183 . Fasting teaches believers a lot about themselves and life. It gives them a chance to fulfill their moral and spiritual destiny in this world and the hereafter. It is designed to develop in them the ability to practice self-control and patience for the sake of Allah subhanah. It aims to give believers the power to control their unruly desires and tendencies which can lead them into

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Nusaibah bint Ka'b al-Maziniyyah (RA)

One of the most distinguished women who took part in the battle of Uhud, if not the most distinguished of them, was Nusaibah bint Ka'b al-Maziniyyah, Umm 'Umarah (May Allah be pleased with her). At the beginning of the battle, she was bringing water and tending the wounded, as the other women were doing. When the battle was

going in the favour of the Muslims, the archers disobeyed the command of the Prophet (SAW), and this turned the victory into defeat, as the Qur'an described it:

"Behold! You were climbing up the high ground, without even casting a side glance at anyone, and the Messenger in your rear was

calling you back..." 3:153

At this point, Nusaibah went forward, with her sword unsheathed and her bow in her hand, to join the small group who were standing firm with the Prophet (SAW), acting as a human shield to protect him from the arrows of the mushrikin. Every time danger ap-

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*Allahum-maghfirli dhanbi
kullahu, diqqahu, wajillahu,
wa awwa-lahu, wa
aakhirahu wa 'ala-niyyatu
wa sirrahu*

*Oh Allah, forgive me all
my sins, great and small,
the first and the last, those
that are apparent and
those that are hidden*

[Muslim:1/350]

From the Editor

As'salamu alaikom wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu (May peace, mercy and blessings be upon you).

My sincerest thanks and appreciation go to our contributors for helping with this newsletter.

It gives me great pleasure to wish you Ramathan Kareem. Ramathan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, when Muslims world-wide fast during daylight hours and break their fast as the sun sets with Iftar.

During this blessed month of Ramathan, we are collectively reminded to reflect on our mission and purpose in life and what it truly means to be "a believer". The Qur'an states, "The believers are only the ones who have believed in Allah and His Messenger and then doubt not but strive with their properties and

their lives in the cause of Allah. It is those who are the truthful." (Qur'an 49:15).

It is no coincidence that throughout the history of Muslim communities, some of their most important gains have been achieved during this month. Ramathan is a time for increased activism and giving.

We humbly seek your support in helping us increase our work which empowers Muslims in this time of change and opportunity.

Please remember us in your supplications this month and volunteer your time, talent and treasure to supporting the Muslim community. May Allah ta'ala reward you immensely in this most auspicious of months.

As'salamu 'ala man ittaba 'al'huda



(Peace be upon him who has followed the guidance).

Layla/USA/KSA

We are open to your suggestions on how to better serve our community. Please email us at: muslimah@muslimahonline.org if there is a topic you would like to see on our website or have us explore in one of our newsletters.

Did You Know...

...nothing on this earth is created in vain, but rather with wisdom. Understanding this fact depends on the wisdom of people themselves. One of the most important precepts is that we are being tested throughout our whole lives. Allah tests our sincerity and our faith in different situations. He may create difficulties to reveal whether we behave with patience or not. He may give us favors to test whether we are grateful to Him or not.

Did you think that you would enter Heaven without Allah testing those of you who fought hard (in His Cause) and remained steadfast? The Holy Qur'an, Surat Aal-e-Imran, 3:142

Do men think that they will be left alone on saying 'We believe', and that they will not be tested? We did test those before them, and Allah will certainly know those who are true from those who are false. The Holy Qur'an, Surat al-Ankaboot, 29:2-3

Every soul shall have a taste of death: and We test you by evil and by good by way of trial. To Us you will be returned. The Holy Qur'an, Surat al-Anbiya, 21:35

Be sure we shall test you with fear and hunger, some loss in goods or lives or the fruits (of your toil), but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere. The Holy Qur'an, Surat al-Baqara, 2:155



Allah's Apostle said, "When the month of Ramathan starts, the gates of the heaven are opened and the gates of Hell are closed and the devils are chained."

[Bukhari]

The Message Of Ramathan Is The Message Of Islam *(cont. form page 1)*

committing sins and acts of cruelty.

Having control over the body's needs and ascendancy over the everyday habits of life brings joy to the believers. It purifies their souls and strengthens their hearts. It reinforces the good qualities of human nature like fortitude, mercy, kindness, compassion, and generosity.

In Ramathan, believers seek closeness to their Creator by obeying him sincerely. They abstain from drinking and eating from dawn to sunset, devote themselves to prayers, doing good and avoiding evil. And during

the nights, they stand in prayers in hours sacrificing sleep and comfort. They struggle physically and spiritually to please Allah subhanah wa ta'ala.

"The month of Ramathan [is that] in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for the people and clear proofs of guidance and criterion. So whoever sights [the new moon of] the month, let him fast it; and whoever is ill or on a journey - then an equal number of other days. Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship and [wants] for you to complete the period and to glorify Allah for that [to] which He has guided you; and perhaps

you will be grateful" Quran 2:185.

Islam is the path of justice, truth, and compassion. It guides people onto the path of eternal life and prepares them for it through praying, fasting, and charity which help them practice control over life and maintain their good nature. This message is the same message Ramathan has. So let us do our best and follow this message and proclaim "I have submitted [in Islam] to the Lord of the worlds" Quran 2:131.

Almaha / KSA

Nusaibah bint Ka'b al-Maziniyyah (RA) *(cont. form page 1)*

proached the Prophet (SAW) she hastened to protect him. The Messenger of Allah (SAW) noticed this, and later said, "Wherever I turned, to the left or the right, I saw her fighting for me."

Her son 'Umarah also described what happened on that tremendous day: "On that day, I was wounded in my left hand. A man who seemed to be as tall as a palm-tree struck me, then went away without pursuing me to finish me off. The blood began to flow copiously, so the Messenger of Allah (SAW) told me, 'Bind up your wound.' My mother came to me, and she was wearing a waist-wrapper, which she had brought, for the purpose of wrapping wounds. She dressed my wound, whilst the Prophet (SAW) was looking on. Then she told me, 'Get up, my son, and fight the people.' The Prophet (SAW) said, 'Who could bear what you are putting up with, O Umm 'Umarah?' She said: The man who had struck my son came by, and the Mes-

senger of Allah (SAW) said, 'This is the one who struck your son.' I intercepted him and hit him in the thigh, and he collapsed. I saw the Messenger of Allah (SAW) smiling so broadly that I could see his back teeth. He said, 'You have taken your revenge, O Umm 'Umarah! Then we struck him with our weapons until we killed him, and the Prophet (SAW) said: 'Praise be to Allah (SWT), who granted you victory over him, gave you the satisfaction of taking revenge on your enemy, and let you see the vengeance for yourself."

On this day, Nusaibah herself received many wounds whilst she was fighting the people and striking their chests. The Prophet (SAW) saw her, and called to her son, "Your mother! Your mother! See to her wounds, may Allah (SWT) bless you and your household! Your mother has fought better than so-and-so." When his mother heard what the Prophet (SAW) said, she said, "Pray to Allah (SWT) that we may accompany

you in Paradise." He said, "O Allah (SWT), make them my companions in Paradise." She said, "I do not care what befalls me in this world."

Umm 'Umarah's jihad was not confined to the battle of Uhud. She was also present on a number of other occasions, namely the treaty of 'Aqabah, Al-Hudaybiyah, Khaybar and Hunayn. Her heroic conduct at Hunayn was no less marvellous than her heroic conduct at Uhud. At the time of Abu Bakr's Khilafah, she was present at Al-Yamamah where she fought brilliantly and received eleven wounds as well as losing her hand. It is no surprise that the Prophet (SAW) gave her the good news that she would enter Paradise, and that she was later held in high esteem by the khalifah Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq and his commander Khalid ibn Al-Walid and then by 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (RA).

Excerpted from the book 'The Ideal Muslimah' by Dr. Muhammad Ali Al Hashimi

Fasting Is A Trust

Alhamdulillah, all praise is do to Allah for He has given us the privilege to witness the month of Ramathan and gave us the strength and willpower to fast this glorious month. Indeed it's a great bounty from Allah the All Mighty. Because it's a gift that Allah granted us to live long enough to see this blissful month, we should hasten to do all good for Allah's sake and abandon all evil for Allah's sake. We should seek the examples of our Prophet s.a.w. and His Companions, and receive Ramathan in the manners in which they received. It's said that the righteous Companions, May Allah be pleased with them, used to spend the six months prior to Ramathan supplicating to Allah that He allow them to reach it and the six months after it that He accept the deeds which they implemented during Ramathan. We should also prepare ourselves and our children for this month, the month of Taqwa, the month of Charity, the month of worship and virtues.

The lecturer of Juma'ah spoke a great deal about Ramathan today, mashAllah, and inshAllah I will try to mention some of the things I'm able to recall. The Shiekh, May Allah grant him abundance of hasanat, categorized people during Ramathan into few groups. The first group, may Allah the Most Exalted make us among them, are those who welcome Ramathan with open arms. They receive it with taqwa and repentance. They are those who spend their nights and days reciting the Qur'an, the dikr /remembrance of Allah and give charity to the poor. They are those

who ask Allah for his forgiveness in day and night, and reflect upon their deeds. They are the ones who chain their soul from the temptations of this transient life and hasten to prefect their worship and relationship with Allah. Then there comes another group, may Allah grant us refuge from adherence of such group. This group as the sheik described is basi-



cally heedless of the virtues of Ramathan. Ramathan, though they've fasted, passes them as quickly as it came and they have no recollection of its presence and sweetness. Another group spoils their Ramathan by reserving their nights for entertainment and idle-games so much that they miss their salat and spend their days sleeping. Thus, no time remains for them to do any good deeds and they are engrossed with all the things that keep one far away from remembering Allah. Another group, whom are referred to as Ramathaniyin or the people of the month of Ramathan

acquired this title because they've exclusively limited their deeds only to the month of Ramathan. They might be the first in line in the masjid, spend their nights reading Quran and other righteous acts during Ramathan; but needless to say when Ramathan departs so do their efforts to do good deeds. It's almost as if they're worshipping Ramathan as opposed to the Creator, Allah. They are indeed those whom the Prophet s.a.w. described in the following hadeeth: "*How many there are that fast but attain nothing from it but hunger and thirst.*" [An-Nasaa'i and Ibn Maa-jah]. Another group, and perhaps the worst, are those who have no fear of Allah. None whatsoever! SubhanAllah. These people do not have an idea as to when Ramathan began and ended. In fact, they are so heedless of the month of Ramathan that their only realization of it is when they see people celebrating Eid; wherein they ask, for what are you celebrating. Indeed they have transgressed greatly and indeed Allah is the one who Guides. May Allah guide them (and us) to his path and grant them the power and determination to fast and do good deeds. Amen.

The Prophet, (sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam), also said: "*Fasting is a trust, so let each one of you protect his trust.*" [Al-Kharaa'iti, graded Hasan].

We have to bear this responsibility and do so in the manner most sound, the manner in which the Prophet and his companions sought. We have to protect this trust not merely by abstaining from certain acts such as eating, drinking, and sexual relations, but by consciously struggling to fulfill it to make our fast count. Fasting has much significance. It purifies the soul by increasing

Fasting Is A Trust *(cont.)*

the person's faith in Allah. Because fasting is a secret act between the person and Allah, the person can any-time choose to nullify his fast by doing acts that will break his fast secretly or openly. However, by abandoning and giving up those acts for Allah's sake it show that he's indeed fearful of Allah and knows that Allah's watching him at all times. Fasting is a fourth of faith, as the Messenger of Allah, (sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam), said: *"Fasting is half of patience,"* [At-Tirmithi] And also, *"Patience is half of faith."* [Abu N'aym in Hilyaa, graded Hasan].

Additionally, fasting is the only act in which Allah spoke about in the following hadeeth *"All the deeds of the children of Aadam are for them, except fasting, which is for Me and I will give the reward for it."* [Bukhari]. In stressing the importance of the fast and its direct relations to Allah, Allah's The Exalted said the following hadeeth as Allah's Messenger relates to us on His behalf: *"By the one in whose Hand is my soul, the breath of a fasting person is more fragrant before Allah than the fragrance of musk. Allah Almighty Says: 'He has abjured his desires, his food and drink only for me. Fasting is for Me, and only I shall reward it. Every righteous deed is rewarded by as much as ten times its worth, up to as much as seven hundred times. Except fasting, which is for Me, and I shall reward it."* [Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Fasting is also a protection for the tongue. Those who fast are ordered to protect their tongues and stay away from arguments and false testimonies. The Prophet (sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said: *"Fasting is a shield. So when one of you is fasting, he*

should not engage in foul speech (Rafath), impudent and thoughtless acts (Jahl), and if someone fights or abuses him, he should say: 'I am fasting, I am fasting.'" [Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

In another hadeeth Prophet Muhammad, (sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam), said: *"Whoever does not give up forged speech and evil actions, Allah is not in need of his leaving his food and drink (i.e. Allah will not accept his fasting.)"* [Al-Bukhari]

Ramathan is also a unifying factor for the ummah. Knowing that Muslims all around are fasting makes it easy for the person to fast and be in sync with the ummah.

InshAllah, we the Muslim world should hasten to prefect our deeds in this month with sincerity and in pure hearts. We should relinquish that which is loved to us –our foods, drinks idle-gaming, spousal relations, and all other acts not in-sync with righteousness—for the Beloved, The Almighty. InshAllah, then we may attain tranquility and peace in this world and the hereafter. The Prophet, (sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam), said: *"He who fasts the month of Ramathan out of sincere belief and seeking Allah's reward of its fasting, will be forgiven for all the sins he has committed prior to it"*. [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]. Also, Al-Bukhari, may Allah have mercy upon him, has reported that the Messenger of Allah (sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said: *"Paradise has eight gates and one of them is Ar-Rayyaan through which none will enter but those who observe fasting."*

InshAllah the above serves as an advice first for me than to you. May Allah make us those who implement the above in its entirety and wholeheartedly. I ask Allah to make us those who take FULL advantage of this month and devote ourselves to the call of our Lord, the most merciful. Ameen.

May Allah grant us refuge from the Hellfire. Ameen. May Allah grant us Mercy. Ameen. May Allah grant us the taqwa/piety and devotion to continue our good deeds past Ramathan: and may Allah make us those who overcome their shortcomings. Ameen. And May Allah (s.w.t.) make us those who live to see the next Ramathan with peace and protection. Ameen.

May Allah Bless you and your families with peace. Ameen.

Assalamu alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu.

Ruwi/Somalia/USA

"Fasting is a shield with which a servant protects himself from the Fire."

[Ahmad, Saheeh]

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Companions and Leading Imams in Ramathan

The Qur'an was sent down, a guidance for mankind, clear proofs for the guidance, the Criterion; so whoever amongst you witnesses this month, let him fast it.' (Surah al-Baqarah 2:185)

The month of Ramathan has an important place in the hearts of all muslims because of its attributes that were illustrated by Prophet Mohammed pbuh. So the companions as well as tabi'in and the leading imams were keen on making best of this sacred month to increase their good deeds and elevate their degrees.

Therefore in order to follow their example and to seek inspiration through them it is beneficial to know how the righteous muslims would act in this holy month. Indeed, we should do so since they are the best of all generations and the followers of the first teacher; Prophet Muhammad pbuh.

Abu Bakr. It was reported from Malik that `Abdullah ibn Abu Bakr said, "I heard my father saying, "Upon finishing our night Prayers in Ramathan, the servants would hasten to serve food for fear that the Fajr Prayer would be due" i.e. so he could have the suhur (predawn meal) before Fajr Prayer as he would finish the night Prayer a short while before the Fajr.

Umar ibn Al-Khattab. Abu `Uthman Al-Nahdi said, "Umar ordered three reciters of the Qur'an to be brought along in Ramathan. Then, he ordered the quickest in recitation among them to recite 30 ayahs (in each rak`ah in

Prayer), the one with average speed in recitation to recite 25 ayahs, and the slowest to recite 20."

Uthman ibn `Affan. `Uthman ibn `Affan would complete the recitation of the whole Qur'an on a daily basis (he would recite it all in one rak`ah every night throughout the year).

In addition, It was reported from Al-Sa'ib ibn Yazid that he said, "They (Muslims) would recite two hundred ayahs (in each rak`ah on the night



Prayers) and they would lean on their sticks (while standing up in prayer) during the reign of `Uthman ibn `Affan due to the lengthy standing during night Prayers."

Abdullah ibn `Umar. Ibn `Umar would not break the fast in Ramathan except in the company of the orphans and the needy and perhaps he would not break his fast at any night whenever he knew that his household turned them away from him.

Imam As-Shafi'i. Ibn Rajab and Abu Bakr ibn Abu Taher (may Allah have mercy on them) mentioned that As-

Shafi'i would recite the Qur'an (in Ramathan) 60 times apart from the recitation of Prayers (meaning that he would recite the whole Qur'an one time by day and one time by night).

Imam Abu Hanifah. Ibn Rajab said, "It was reported that Abu Hanifah would do the same (recite the whole Qur'an 60 times in Ramathan other than recitation in Prayers)."

Imam Malik. When Ramathan approached, Malik ibn Anas would escape preaching and discussions with scholars, and would engage in recitation of the Qur'an. Hence, he would not issue fatwas or teach in Ramathan. He would rather say, "This is the month of the Qur'an."

Imam Ahmad. Imam Ahmad would close all books in Ramathan and say, "This is the month of the Qur'an."

Imam Al-Bukhari. Musabbih ibn Sa'id said, "Muhammad ibn Isma'il Al-Bukhari would complete recitation of the whole Qur'an once every day in Ramathan, and would complete recitation of it during the night Prayers once every three nights."

May Allah let us follow them all, ameen. Have a happy, blessed Ramathan. Assalamualaykum Wa Rathamatu Allah Wa Barakatuhu.

Meryem Turkiye

Source : Al Katheeb M., Aspects of Guidance in Our Life Sahabah and Leading Imams in Ramathan

Racism... Dead or Still Alive?!

Believe it or not, racism is still alive, even though 'we' Muslims are very talented in mentioning this hadeeth: 'There is no higher status of an Arab over a non-Arab except through God-consciousness.'

What is racism?!

Let me share with you some definitions I read about Racism...

"Racism is the belief that a particular race is superior or inferior to another, that a person's social and moral traits are predetermined by his or her inborn biological characteristics. Racial separatism is the belief, most of the time based on racism, that different races should remain segregated and apart from one another."

"Racism is treating someone differently or unfairly simply because they belong to a different race or culture."

"Racism is when someone thinks different skin colour or religious beliefs make some people better than others."

"Racism is not just a black and white thing. Many children are picked on because they look different, speak a different language or have different religious beliefs."

Some people have to wear certain styles of clothing because of their religion and very often get bullied because of this. Racism includes picking on people who are from a different country too."

Effects of Racism on People...

"As a matter of fact, when some nations practiced racism this only

brought about destruction and war. Take the Nazi racism and what followed it. In fact it destroyed the claimants of superiority, namely the Nazis in the first place. The world today still suffers from racism, which continues to exist on different human levels."

"Racism is man's gravest threat to man - the maximum of hatred for a minimum of reason."



"Racism does not limit itself to biology or economics or psychology or metaphysics; it attacks along many fronts and in many forms, deploying whatever is at hand, and even what is not, inventing when the need arises."

"There is a strange kind of tragic enigma associated with the problem of racism. No one, or almost no one, wishes to see themselves as racist; still racism persists, real and tenacious."

Let us now see what Islam has to say on this issue and how it solved it for

good...

Dr. Taha Jaber Al-'Alwani, president of the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences and president of the Fiqh Council of North America, with slight modifications:

"Racial discrimination can be looked at in different ways. It can be used as a kind of preference among people on the basis of law and transactions. The matter extends to encompass blood relations as well as biological characteristics related to racial groups."

The Glorious Qur'an asserts that all people come from the same soul. Allah Almighty says: 'O Mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from them twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women. Be careful of your duty toward Allah in whom ye claim (your rights) of one another, and toward the wombs (that bare you). Lo! Allah hath been a Watcher over you.' (An-Nisa': 1)

The Qur'an asserts that differences in race, color, and language exist and must be a vehicle for friendship and harmony. In doing so, all people will cooperate to establish God's message on earth, build civilizations, and utilize the world's resources for the betterment of humanity.

Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) stated in his Farewell Sermon: 'O people, our father is one, and our God is One; We are all from Adam, and Adam is from dust.'

Dr. Su'aad Salih, professor of Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) at Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt, adds:

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Women's Health: Menstrual Cramps

Menstrual cramps are not fun. Dysmenorrhea is the medical term for the painful cramps that may occur immediately before or during the menstrual period. There are two types of dysmenorrhea: primary dysmenorrhea and secondary dysmenorrhea.

Primary dysmenorrhea is another name for common menstrual cramps. Cramps occur when the uterus contracts to shed its blood lining. The uterus, the hollow, pear-shaped organ where a baby grows, contracts throughout a woman's menstrual cycle. If the uterus contracts too strongly, it can press against nearby blood vessels, cutting off the supply of oxygen to the muscle tissue of the uterus. Pain results when part of a muscle briefly loses its supply of oxygen.

All women experience these contractions, but only 50% experience accompanying pain or discomfort. Pain is usually felt in the lower abdomen or back and can be mild to severe. Common menstrual cramps often start shortly before or at the onset of the period and last for one to three days. Worse yet, this time of the month could bring on nausea and diarrhea.

Secondary dysmenorrhea is pain caused by a disorder in the woman's reproductive organs. Pain from secondary dysmenorrhea usually begins earlier in the menstrual cycle and lasts longer than common menstrual cramps. When pain is very intense or cramping that last for more than two or three days, a doctor's visit is recommended.

Conditions that can cause secondary dysmenorrhea include:

Endometriosis, a condition in which the

tissue lining the uterus (the endometrium) is found outside of the uterus.

Pelvic inflammatory disease, an infection caused by bacteria that starts in the uterus and can spread to other reproductive organs.

Stenosis (narrowing) of the cervix, the lower part of the uterus (the hollow, pear-shaped organ where a baby grows), often caused by scarring.

Tumors (also called "fibroids"), or growths on the inner wall of the uterus.



Menstrual cramps, whatever the cause, can be treated, so it's important to get checked.

Once you've discovered the cause, there are some home remedies that can help ease the pain.

Walk/Exercise – Exercise is a muscle tension reducer and mood elevator. Women who exercise regularly often have less menstrual pain. To help prevent cramps, make exercise a part of your weekly routine. Walking may help reduce menstrual

cramps by increasing circulation in the pelvis area and organs. Take a leisurely walk that lets you breathe easily and swing your arms and hips freely.

Yoga/Stretching – Stretch your iliopsoas. These are three muscles on both sides of your pelvis, stretching from your lower spine to upper thigh bone (femur). Tight, unstretched iliopsoas can cause a variety of pelvic organ disorders.

Side lunge: Spread your feet apart and turn your body over the trailing leg, partially bending the knees, then lunge to the other side and repeat. This stretches the musculature of the pelvic area and the iliopsoas.

Diamond stretch: Sit on a yoga mat or carpet with your back straight. Place the soles of your feet together to make a diamond shape with your legs. Inhale deeply. Keeping your back straight, exhale and bend forward as far as you can go. As you inhale again, resume your original position. Repeat several times.

Ginger tea is an excellent way to ease menstrual cramps, as well as nausea. To make it, thinly slice a 2-inch piece of fresh ginger. Bring 3 to 4 cups of water to a boil and add the ginger. Let the mixture simmer for 15 minutes, then strain the ginger pieces from the water. Add honey to taste.

Calcium – Calcium helps to maintain muscle tone, which helps prevent cramps and pain. Calcium is also said to help alleviate the symptoms of PMDD. Aim for about 800 milligrams a day. Good food sources include broccoli, kale, almonds, oranges or spinach.

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Women's Health: Dental Hygiene

Recent health studies show a close correlation between one's overall health and dental health. Those who are healthier tend to have fewer problems with their teeth and gums. It is also known that a clean and healthy mouth can help prevent certain medical conditions. For example, tooth loss due to cavities and gum disease have been associated with an increased risk of heart attack, stroke, pre-term births and poorly controlled diabetes. Therefore, it is wise to include a thorough dental evaluation as a part of your overall health check.

Despite of these findings, few people concern themselves with the importance of oral health. Most people tend to avoid going to the dentist for their bi-annual checkups and sometimes even when a tooth is bothersome. Studies show that fear is usually one of the contributing factors that keeps one from seeking dental care. With this article I hope to, inshaAllah, increase dental awareness and to lessen the fear of sitting in that dreaded dental chair.

Do you suffer from the white coat syndrome? Does the word "dentist" give you goosebumps? Can't stand the noise of the dental drill? Find it difficult to keep your mouth open for long periods of time? If you answered yes to these questions, you are not alone. Here are some suggestions to reduce your anxiety and to improve your overall dental experience.

If you are looking for a new dentist, ask family and friends for a referral. You can also go online to search for dentists in your area and read the

reviews from current patients.

Schedule the first appointment for a general visit and checkup. Mention your concerns to the dentist so that the dentist and staff can do all that is possible to make treatment as comfortable as possible

Take the opportunity to ask questions about the recommended treatment. A good understanding of the procedure to be performed will reduce your fear and anxiety. Be sure to ask for informational materials regarding prevention and treatment of oral disease.



For treatment appointments, bring headphones and or earplugs so that the noise of the drill is not as bothersome. It may also be a good idea to bring sunglasses to keep the light away from your eyes and prevent any aerosol from entering your eyes.

During treatment, ask the dentist or dental assistant for a bite block to help you keep your mouth open without tiring your jaw joints.

Alright now that the anxiety is somewhat taken care of, what can you do to improve your oral health? The following are some suggestions for a healthy smile:

Brush twice a day with FI toothpaste, and if possible brush between meals,

floss thoroughly at least once a day—this prevents plaque and tartar buildup, cavity formation, and gum disease.

Avoid consuming foods with a high carbohydrate/sugar content —chips, cookies, milk, icecream, sodas, etc. — constant exposure to sugar put teeth at a greater risk for developing cavities

Visit your dentist every 6 months for checkup and professional cleaning-- fractures and cavities that are caught early can be restored much more conservatively than larger cavities and deeper fractures lessening the time you have to spend in the dental chair.

You may now be wondering...what exactly is a cavity? What exactly is gum disease? Plaque? Tartar? Here is some information to enlighten you!

What is a cavity?

We all have natural bacteria that live in the mouth. These bacteria when combined with saliva and food debris form colorless deposits on the teeth. In the absence of good oral hygiene these bacteria interact with food debris from sugary and starchy foods and produce acids. These acids demineralize the tooth enamel over time which ultimately leads to tooth decay and the formation of a cavity,

What is gum disease?

Gum disease consists of gingivitis and periodontitis. Gingivitis is the earliest form of the disease and affects a majority of individuals worldwide. Symptoms include red and swollen gums that bleed upon brushing and flossing. Gingivitis can easily be treated by maintaining good oral hygiene and

(Continued on page 15)

Muslimah Fashion: The “Hijab Trends”



And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty... [24:31]

Hijab is often a controversial issue; some individuals believe it to be a mandatory act, while others tend to disagree. The above Ayah actually highlights what the Quran states, and all scholars do agree that hijab is mandatory, some even leaning towards the niqab.

The issue that seems to be rising is that of ‘hijab fashion’ or ‘hijab trends’. Sometimes we forget *why* we wear the hijab, or *why* dress modestly, and we get sucked into the so called mainstream mentality of fashion. It happens to most of us. We might be at the mall and something might catch our eye, and we purchase it, wear it, and focus on the fact that it was something trendy and attractive. We might not dress up for other people; it might just be for ourselves, due to the fact that certain clothes raise our confidence or make us feel better. At the same time however, let’s not forget that what we end up wearing might end up being for somebody else – this

is one of the points at which we start heading off into the wrong direction.

We might have worn or seen others wear inappropriate clothes with hijab. But some people take it too far. The tank tops. The skinny jeans. The cleavage. The erm...other details we wish we had not seen. And all the previously mentioned items have been, and continue to be - worn with hijab.

What we need to focus on, is the fact that we can look professional and trendy, with the *proper* hijab. We don’t have to wear black abayas forever (though nothing is classier than the perfect black abaya). We can add some colour to our wardrobes, and at the same time, abide by the Islamic rules that apply to our dress code.

Let’s discuss some Do’s and Don’ts about hijab fashion.

Don’t Wear:

- Spandex
- Tank tops with hijab
- Short sleeves and hijab
- Half hijab (where some hair shows at the front)
- Dark make up (I think people can pull off something that looks natural, i.e. foundation for bad skin etc)
- 4 inch heels
- Skinny jeans
- Too much colour (bright pink top, pink skirt, pink hijab, pink bag)

Do Wear

- Maxi dresses (with a shirt/jacket)
- Long skirts
- Tops should be below the hips
- Dress pants
- Trench coats (they go well with most tops and look good)
- Smaller heels or Flats (they are trendy and look great with hijab)
- Jackets esp. for Autumn (they never go out of style)
- Darker colours
- Abayas (pair them with a nice colourful bag and hijab)
- Leggings under skirts
- Under scarves

Saimah/Canada



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Muslimah Fashion: Kuwaiti Hijab Style



One of the most popular hijab-wearing styles is Kuwaiti hijab's style. Muslimahs in the West are fond of this. Kuwaiti hijab is a combination of style and convenience. It provides some elegance to the wearer. It would be ideal for a working woman who needs to dress formally. Amongst Kuwaiti hijabs there are three styles how to wear or wrap hijab: Mona (one-piece al-amira tube with attached shayla at one end - the shayla is wrapped around the undertube), Twister (one-piece al-amira tube with attached shayla at both ends - gives a twisted or hooded look) and the Open or Hat and Wrap style (two separate pieces, a large undertube and a separate shayla - good for easy adjustment).

Kuwaiti hijab is two different style hijabs joined together. Portion one of the kuwaiti hijab is in the form of a tube or a sock that is worn over the head and reaches the shoulders or just

below in the kuwaiti hijab. Portion two of it is a long hijab attached to the first portion between the neck of the kuwaiti hijab. Portion one of it is usually made of cotton and in some cases polyester. Both materials for the kuwaiti hijab are in a stretchable form. Portion two of the kuwaiti hijab is almost always in polyester the trademark of the kuwaiti hijab. The second portion of the kuwaiti hijab is also in the form of a net and usually



has a satin lining around the netted area.

How to wrap scarf following the Kuwaiti traditions: Slip the under scarf cap on, pull the shawl under the chin and around the neck, and pin it on the other side or let it drape.

The Kuwaiti hijabs you can buy in online stores:

1) <http://www.hijabs-r-us.com/index1.html>

2) <http://www.almuhajabaelaniqa.com/kuwaiti-al-amira-hijabs.html>

Elena (Russia)



Allah says: "The good deed and the evil deed are not alike. Repel the evil deed with one that is better, then lo! he between you and whom there had been enmity will become as though he were a bosom friend."

[Quran Fussilat: 35]

Recipe Corner: Creamy Red Lentil Soup

Ingredients

1 medium onion
 salt to taste (as much as desired)
 pepper (as much desired)
 25ml-35ml vegetable oil (for healthier choice use olive oil)
 3 cups of lentils
 1 cube chicken stock
 25ml cream (for healthier choice use half and half)
 paprika (for garnish)
 Parsley (for garnish)
 1 tea spoon curry (spicy or non-spicy to taste)
 1 tea spoon cumin (for the colour to change) Optional.
 1 tea spoon lemon juice (optional for citrusy/fresh taste)



Directions:

Start off by washing the lentil, and placing in a medium pot of water to boil.

In a medium pan, get the oil going. Chop the medium onion and place in the pan. Add salt and pepper to the onion and the 1 cube chicken stock. Close the lid of the pan so that the onion cooks gently. As soon as you see the onion turning transparent, it is done.

You can tell when the lentils are ready if they have broken into liquid consistency. Add the onion to the lentils.

Add the other ingredients, such as the curry, cumin and cream. Allow to boil to a nice and velvety texture.

Pour the soup into a bowl , garnish with the paprika and parsley (as desired).

Tip: For richer and creamier texture, use a cake mixer or hand blender to mix the soup while boiling at medium temp on the stove.

Did you know: This is a dish that is rich in taste, yet very healthy. It contains a very high source of iron for those that are low in iron (anemic) and feel weak and pregnant women.

Makes 4 Serving

Dunya/Canada

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What's With Her?

There comes a time in every woman's life when she has to take a close look at herself. Not at her circumstance, not at what she did, not how unfair life is or not at whom made you do it. She has to just look at herself in all her glory and imperfection.

For many women this is a scary thing because often times they don't want to know the truth about themselves. Virtuous women know what I mean.

As women, we have a tendency to water one another down. Maybe it makes us feel good or look better than the next woman. Or maybe we just don't know how to tell that woman how we admire her. In reality we really need to look at ourselves and the pain we project towards other women.

Have you ever admired a woman who has been through changes in her life? Or have you made up in your mind that she is just messed up. Before you make this mistake, take a closer look. A woman who has endured the most unusual life is someone of wisdom, someone who has been chosen by God to go through things that have made her stronger.

Have you ever admired the strength of a single mother? Or have you made up your mind that it's too bad she had to raise children on her own. A single mother knows no bounds when it comes to her children. She is strong and durable. Single mothers are strong, not because she has to be, but because it comes naturally for her to protect the extensions of her very being. Her love for her children is like that of fuel to a car. Most mothers keep their tanks full because

they understand that if it runs low you could jeopardize the car and have problems in the long run. Other women only fill it when it is needed. Their cars usually break down.

Have you ever wondered why some women are not approachable? Or have you made up your mind that she is just mean. A quiet woman is a smart woman. She is valuable. She doesn't go off randomly and she won't be the one to argue with you over nothing. She just may even let you go on "setting her straight" and politely back out without



a fight. She doesn't let many in her world. After all, she has probably been through the fire and had to rebuild. So why let just anyone in? This is usually the woman that only has "small talk" and knows her place, which is away from all the unnecessary things in life.

Have you ever wondered why that woman is so loud? Well, hey she has a lot to say. These are usually our younger women who have to learn restraint. They are eager and unsettled. They do before they think, and they do not think before they talk. They just go.

Have you ever wondered about that woman who appears to have everything, yet is still very unhappy? Well,

she doesn't have everything. She doesn't have personal validation. This is something that cannot be bought. This is something developed over many mistakes and challenges that have taught lessons of the unbearable.

Women are so quick to beat the next one down instead of trying to hold her up. Before you wonder, "What's up with her?" ask yourself, "What's up with me?" Why do I beat down another woman to build myself up? That woman could be my mother, sister, aunt, in-law, stepmother, niece, grandmother, great-grandmother, neighbor, friend, co-worker, etc. That woman could just be me. Women are the carriers of life, not the channels of death. Let's build and encourage each other.

May peace and love be upon you.

There are in the month of Ramadhan in every day and night those to whom Allah grants freedom from the Fire, and there is for every Muslim an supplication which he can make and will be granted."

[al-Bazaar, Ahmad, Saheeh]

Racism... Dead or Still Alive?! *(cont. form page 7)*

"Islam is a religion of unity; it unifies its followers under one nation. Allah the Almighty says: "Ye are the best community that hath been raised up for mankind. Ye enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency; and ye believe in Allah." (Al `Imran: 110)

Allah the Almighty has made the criterion of distinction among people in the Hereafter according to their degree in consciousness of Almighty Allah.

Allah Most High says: "Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is

(he who is) the most righteous of you." (Al-Hujuraat: 13)

Therefore, making discrimination and distinction among people on account of their color, race, etc. has no basis in Islam. It leads to the disintegration and disunity of the Ummah. It also contradicts the command of Allah the Almighty to Muslims in the Qur'an: "And hold fast by the covenant of Allah all together and be not disunited." (Al `Imran: 103)"

In conclusion let me quote this...

"As Muslims, we do affirm the worth of every person, emphasize the need for compassion, join in the call to reconciliation, and assert the desirability of cooperation. Differences between us should be the reason we come together, rather than the reason we drift apart." Dr. Taha Jaber Al-`Alwani.

Shireen/Egypt

Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet (S) said : "The time between the five prayers, two consecutive Friday Prayers, and two cosecutive Ramathans are expiations for all that has happened during that period, provided that one has avoided the grave (major) sins."

[Muslim]

Women's Health: Menstrual Cramps *(cont. form page 9)*

Magnesium – Magnesium helps to optimize the body's absorption of calcium. It also helps decrease menstrual cramps. Good food sources include beans, whole grains, shrimp, tofu, scallops and peanuts.

Bath – Take a hot mineral bath. This is one of the easiest and most relieving home remedies for menstrual cramps. Add one cup sea salt and one cup baking soda to a warm tub of water. Submerge the body, particularly the abdomen, and soak for at least 20 minutes to relieve menstrual cramps.

Heat – Use a heating pad on the lower abdomen and/or back. This is one of the most common home reme-

diaries for menstrual cramps, and for good reason. It works! Plug in the heating pad, and making sure it is properly covered, place it on the pained areas. The heat will soothe the muscles and provide relief. A hot water bottle may also be used in this manner, if necessary.

You should also rest when needed, avoid foods that contain caffeine, and smoking. Massaging your lower back and abdomen also helps

If you use tampons and develop the following symptoms, get medical help right away:

- Fever over 102 degrees Fahrenheit
- Vomiting

- Diarrhea
- Dizziness, fainting or near fainting
- A rash that looks like a sunburn

These are symptoms of a condition called toxic shock syndrome, which can be life-threatening.

Home remedies for menstrual cramps encompass a wide range of treatments, from applications of heat, to specific exercises, and herbal remedies. Not every treatment will work for every woman; you'll have to determine which helps you the most.

Layla/KSA/USA

Women's Health: Dental Hygiene *(cont. from page 8)*

having your teeth professionally cleaned every 6 months. If left untreated, gingivitis can proceed to periodontitis, the more advanced form of gum disease. Periodontitis is the chronic inflammation and infection of the gums and surrounding tissue. It is a major cause of adult tooth loss. The process that leads to periodontitis is as follows: Plaque hardens to tartar when left unattended. The bacteria in plaque produce and release toxins which irritate the gums and breaks down the fibers that hold the gums tightly to the teeth. This breakdown

leads to formation of periodontal pockets that fill with even more toxins and bacteria if not detected early on. As a result disease progresses and bacteria continue moving down the pockets until the bone that holds the tooth in place is destroyed. This lack of tooth support leads to tooth loss.

Periodontitis is not always symptomatic which it makes it important to watch for signs that may be indicative of the disease. These signs include: red, swollen, tender and re-

ceding gums, and persistent bad breath.

I hope that you have found this article not only informative but also motivational. So pick up the phone and make an appointment with your dentist for that long overdue checkup. After all, our body is a gift from Allah (SWT) and we must do all that is possible to maintain a healthy one.

Maheen/USA/Pakistan

Abu Umama said he heard Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) say: Recite the Qur'an, for on the Day of Resurrection it will come as an intercessor for those who recite It. Recite the two bright ones, Al-Baqara and Surah Al-'Imran, for on the Day of Resurrection they will come as two clouds or two shades, or two flocks of birds in ranks, pleading for those who recite them.

Recite Surah al-Baqara, for to take recourse to it is a blessing and to give it up is a cause of grief, and the magicians cannot confront it. (Mu'awiya said: It has been conveyed to me that here Batala means magicians.)

Sahih Muslim Hadeeth.

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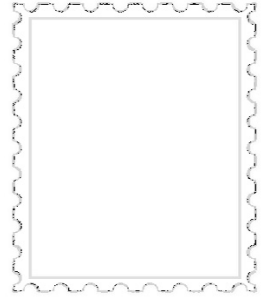
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Say: He Is Allah, The One And Only. Allah, The Eternal, Absolute. He Begetteth Not, Nor Is He Begotten. And There Is None Like Unto Him. [Holy Qu'ran, Surat 112]



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