

The Minaret

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STATE OF THE MSA

Arslan Rahman, MSA VICE PRESIDENT

We all know it; the MSA helps us grow and develop as individuals. It gives us a place to call home, people to call family, and helps us to become strong and confident with our identities as Muslims. But just as people grow and develop, so do communities. Since I came into this MSA as a freshman, so much has transformed. The MSA I was first introduced to was simply incredible, and since then Allah(swt) has allowed it to steadily grow and improve.

The MSA my freshman year was an incredible opening to the what would prove to be the most unforgettable years of my life, by far. As I had never had the chance to experience what it was like to be a part of a Muslim community before, I was thrilled to suddenly be surrounded by such a large and welcoming community. Suddenly having access to things like a prayer room, halal food, the plethora of MSA events, and of course, the amazing company, was completely new to my world. Then in sophomore year, things seemed to only get better! Our MSA saw an increased amount and variety of really incredible and memorable events, and people began to increasingly participate in MSA activities by means of volunteering their time and sharing their own ideas and perspectives. Now comes my junior year. Alhamdulillah, never before have I seen the MSA so alive and active! Masha'Allah, so many people are contributing in all sorts of ways towards the betterment and overall improvement of the MSA. SubhanAllah, there's so much going on and so many ways to get involved! All of our MSA's committees have seriously grown and improved recently, whereas previously they weren't always as commonly known of. Whether it's getting involved in the regular games and intramurals with MSA Sports or the Community Service Committee's events (neither of which existed when I first came here!), or even working with the Public Relations and Dawah Committees, there's so much that the can MSA offer. Alhamdulillah!

It's very important to realize, however, that the foundation for what our MSA has now was laid by those who came before us. Every year, MSA members work to maintain all the great things that were put forth by previous generations, as well as add to their contributions and make improvements where they can. Were it not for all those who worked so hard to bring this MSA where it is now throughout the years, we wouldn't have much to try to improve and expand. Yet, while we need to acknowledge and appreciate all the hard work and contributions of those before us, we also need to believe in our own potential to continue that process. It's only by trying to implement our ideas and voicing our thoughts, that we can work to lay the foundation for future generations of our MSA to build upon. So if any of us has an idea, we shouldn't hesitate to share it; it may just lead to something incredible! We all have reason to be extremely grateful, because right now it's a **really** great time to be a part of Stony Brook MSA. :)

"The Stony Brook Minaret" is dedicated to expressing the views, concerns, and ideas of Muslims living in America and especially in the Stony Brook community. It seeks to promote and achieve community empowerment and the global success of Muslims by instilling the Ummah with the spirit of Worship, the love of Allah (SWT) and the example of Muhammad (SAWS). It also serves to correct the mainstream media's misinformation about Islam and Muslims and to provide non-Muslims with accurate information about Islam.

The views expressed in letters, articles, cartoons, and advertisements do not necessarily reflect those of *The Stony Brook Minaret* staff, or the Muslim Students Association at Stony Brook University.

Note: We have decided to include Arabic du'as & the name of Allah in this issue of the Minaret, so please treat this newsletter with due respect.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR *Chaplain*

Some thoughts and reflections...

Spending in the Way of Allah

"Who is he that will loan to Allah a beautiful Loan? For (Allah) will increase it manifold to his credit and he will have (besides) a liberal reward." {57:10}

"For those who give in Charity, men and women, and loan to Allah a Beautiful Loan, it shall be increased manifold (to their credit) and they shall have (besides) a liberal reward." {57:18}

"The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is that of a grain of corn: it groweth seven ears, and each ear hath a hundred grains. Allah giveth manifold increase to whom He pleaseth; and Allah careth for all and He knoweth all things." {2:261}

Mercy

"We have sent you (Oh Muhammad) as mercy to mankind"

"Seest thou one who denies this judgment (to come) and this man is then further described as then such is the man who repulses the orphan (with harshness) and encourages not the feeding of the indigent" {107:1-3}

"My mercy encompasses everything" **Hadith**

"My mercy supersedes my anger" **Hadith**

"To spend of your substance, out of love for him, for your Kin" {2:177}

"And spend something in charity out of your substance which we have bestowed on you" {63:10}

"When your brother is out of your sight mention him as you would like him to mention you when you are out of his sight" **Sufyan thawri**

"Sincerity means that one does not seek recompense for what one has done" **Abu Bakr (radi Allahu anhu)**

"He who does not thank people does not thank Allah."

"Patience none shall receive it (paradise) except those who are patient and none shall attain except those with a good chance."

Forgiveness

"Hold to forgiveness; command what is right; but turn away from the ignorant." {7:199}

Humbleness

"Allah does not love those who are vain and arrogant."

"Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said a person cannot enter paradise when an atom weight of arrogance in his heart."

"Righteousness is good morality and wrongdoing is what wavers in your heart and you do not want people to know about."

Love

"For Allah loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean." {2:222}

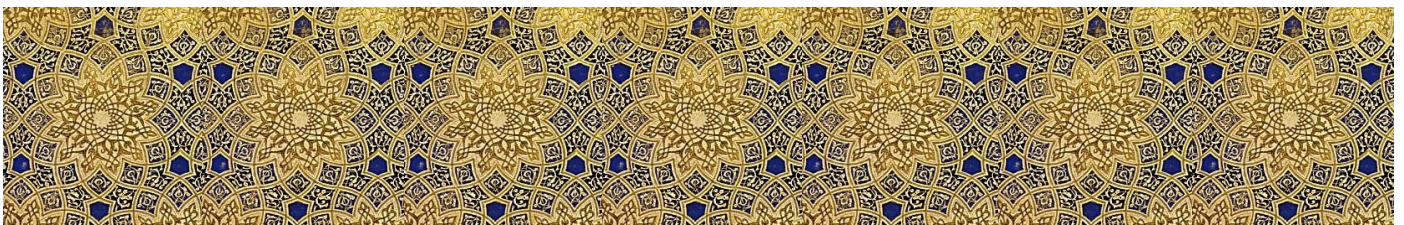
"Allah shall bring a people whom he will love and they will love him" {5:54}

"None of you believe unless you love for your brother what you love for yourself." **Hadith**

In this issue, I just wanted to share the words of Allah (swt) along with a few words of wisdom. The holiday of sacrifice is approaching and with that in mind we should remember the story of Prophet Ismael (alayhi salaam). When Allah (swt) tested him, commanding the Prophet to give up his son for sacrifice. Prophet Ismael (alayhi salaam) put his trust in his Lord and submitted to the will of Allah (swt). And the moment he completely surrendered to the will of Allah (swt), he was rewarded. Allah (swt) saved Saydna Ismael (alayhi salaam) and relieved Saydna Ibrahim (alayhi salaam) from his painstaking test. They were both rewarded for their faith and servitude, and were then highly respected amongst all of mankind. They were revered for building the Kabah, where the revelation of Islam was established, and may Allah (swt) be pleased with them both. Peace be upon you all. Eid Mubarak! May our lives be filled with peace and harmony. May our faith be strong and our hands extend to one another with acceptance and tolerance. May the love of Allah (swt) bless us every day.

Eid Mubarak!

Sanaa Nadim



Are you on Allah's Side?

"...No one knows the soldiers of your Lord except He."

"...They would recite the Qur'an but it would not go beyond their throat, and they pass through religion without a mark."

Words of Wisdom...

“ From a fellow senior... ”

Let's see if you can guess this one. You find two Muslims, one of which who has a great amount of the Qur'an memorized, prays to no end, and fasts like he or she is allergic to food, while the other is a person who has been punished over and over for their alcoholism but still cannot resist the temptation. Who do you think is the better Muslim?

Before you answer, consider a hadith where the Prophet talks about a nation of people that when seen, one would think their own prayers, fasts, and Qur'anic knowledge were mediocre compared to their own. These people seemed to be model Muslims – people you could trust when it comes to anything and everything related to Islam. But Prophet warned that "They would recite the Qur'an but it would not go beyond their throat, and they pass through religion without a mark." In other words, these people who looked perfectly pious on the outside, were in actuality utterly insincere and deceiving. Contrastingly, there is another hadith where when one man cursed an alcoholic who was repeatedly punished, the Prophet responded by saying "Do not curse him, he loves Allah and His Messenger." How about that question again? Things have gotten a bit more interesting! According to these hadiths, looking pious (or not) is only skin deep. Even if that brother has a huge beard, a kufi, and a pair of dhikr beads around his neck or if that sister is in a full niqab, we as Muslims can still never truly know what their real relationship with Allah is. Neither can we assume that the non-hijabi, for example, has any less of a relationship with Allah than the sister who wears a hijab. Of course, you should always try to think positively about each and every one of them, and try and follow the injunctions of Islam as closely as possible. The crucial point to be made here is that we can never achieve certainty and can never act as if we know who is definitely on Allah's side and who is not.

Let us turn back to the initial question one last time. It turns out there is no right answer. You've been stumped. Islam belongs to each and every brother and sister as their own and unparalleled to anyone else's. The question itself isn't one we should even be entertaining in the first place. Nothing tears apart the unity of the Ummah like assumptions and accusations about Islam of others. Allah says in the Qur'an that, "No one knows the soldiers of your Lord except He." So let us leave the judgment to Him and save the criticism of ourselves the only one in hand.

”



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Over Simplifying Dawah

A message from SBU Dawah Committee

Your heart beats faster. Trying to avoid eye contact is not going to work. The victim is onto you. Your palms are sweaty, and you try to crack a smile to break the tension, but that doesn't work either. You see him try to avoid you, almost like two positive sides of magnets, but you studied his movement patterns for half a block now and you're ready to intercept his sway. He's within arms length, this is your chance. You extend your arm to reach the prey. Using the wrist action you've been practicing for a while, you've put the bait out there. Now, the waiting game! Will he take the bait? The victim's arm starts moving in the right direction. You can almost hear Chris Berman exclaiming "AND LOOK AT HIM GO! HE - COULD - GO - ALL - THE - WAY!" And there it is!

You have just handed out your first Islamic pamphlet. The crowd goes wild, and now you too can join the rest of the people who have turned this activity into their habitual way of Dawah. You too can count how many leaflets you've handed out while Dawah mode was in the on position.

Yes, unfortunately, there is a state of mind called "Dawah Mode". This concept has percolated throughout the fabric of the Ummah in America. Somehow, somewhere, some people got the idea that others would love to read about their way of life, especially if printed on glossy paper with "exciting" colors. Add in a few grammar and spelling mistakes, take away as much human interfacing as possible, replace "keepin' it real" with prepared Islamic statements and memorized explanations, mix it with a "pick-your-own-hours" schedule, and you have "Dawah Mode". You can be sure that you were in Dawah Mode if, once you are out of Dawah Mode, you can relax, think back, and say, "Boy, that was good Dawah".

One brother I know recently related a story to me that will further elucidate my point. He and another person had just walked out of his building, and they saw a man snatch a purse from a lady and jet faster than I run to food (and once again, you could hear Chris Berman's voice, but we won't get into that here). Taking quick action, the brother started running to his car so that he could chase down the purse snatcher, but was stopped by the other person who screamed, "No, wait! I have a better idea!" He quickly ran inside. The first brother stood there comforting the lady, thinking that his friend is calling the police or hopefully something better. The man came running back with a big smile on his face and dawah pamphlets in his hand. He hands the lady the Dawah literature and requests that they be on their way.

Yeah, great idea buddy! Why do what's right when we can have people read about it. I mean sure, you could have at least gave chase, but that would be going a little overboard, don't you think? Especially when a pamphlet can explain what they should have done. Isn't that what really counts?

I don't know what enrages me more. This story or the fact that falling coconuts kill more human beings than sharks, and The Discovery Channel has NEVER done a special on "Killer Coconuts".

I'm sure if I could speak to the person who first used dawah pamphlets, they would explain to me that it was used complementary to all the other efforts that were happening. This was not supposed to turn into the main form of invitation. And even if it did, someone out there would be observant enough to see that it can only be used at specific times and places, and that it has the potential of turning more people off than on. Some people have taken this creative and informative idea, and overdosed on it. The situation has gotten so bad that the terms "giving dawah" and "giving pamphlets" can be used synonymously. These people believe that handing out pamphlets is the *raison d'être* of the existence of the opposable thumb in human beings.

The idea of dawah is being debased. People are now looking at it as just an activity to do, words to preach, and finding the right time to do it. Dawah is all these things and much more. The word means to invite. What can invite better than sincerity? Someone giving me a drone-like invitation to an event is not as appealing as a person giving a sincere invitation. Plus, when it's an invitation to something that guarantees to improve life as we know it, it better be evident, in the most real form (as opposed to disingenuous smiles and hypocritical talks about great changes while their life is falling apart because of it), in the person inviting.

Let's play a little game. Think about what comes into your mind when you see the word "inviting", but this time think of the adjective, not the verb. What makes something inviting? Sincere, prosperous, tranquil, peaceful, attractive are some of the usual words that come to mind. When you invite, keep some of these things in mind. You must be inviting while you are inviting.

And that is what really counts.

Fantastic Reads... Three Cups of Tea

By Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin

“Here [in Pakistan and Afghanistan] we drink three cups of tea to do business; the first you are a stranger, the second you become a friend, and the third, you join our family, and for our family we are prepared to do anything - even die”

Greg Mortenson, a gangly, awkward man of over six feet in height, has in his life faced many challenges. After having a secluded childhood in Tanzania with his missionary parents, being the eldest child, and having to take care of his loving younger sister, Christa, who died at the age of 23 in a horrific seizure, in September of 1993, Greg was facing the biggest failure of his life. He was attempting to climb K2, the second highest mountain in the world, in the Karakoram region in Pakistan. His driving force behind climbing the mountain: his deceased sister, Christa, whom he loved a lot, and wanted to immortalize by placing a necklace of hers at the top of the peak. But he ultimately fails, not having enough supplies and encountering severe weather conditions. As he makes his climb down the mountain, he takes a wrong turn into a remote village in Pakistan, and that one wrong turn changes his life forever.

When Greg awoke the next day he awoke to a beautiful village called Korphe. The people of the village were wonderful and kind and nursed him back to health. Even though this was a poor village, they gave Greg no reason to be uncomfortable, and gave him amenities that he knew they seldom received themselves, but would give to Greg because they wanted him to feel at home. One morning, Mortenson requested to visit the local school to see Haja Ali, the village elder and leader, and he saw what the village of Korphe called a school. He saw on the open ground, with the frozen landscape all around them, 78 boys and four courageous girls attempting to learn in the cold environ-

ment. In that one moment, Greg Mortenson knew what he had to do to pay back the wonderful hospitality of the Korphe village; he would build them a school.

Greg Mortenson went back to the States, to raise money. He wrote 580 letters to local businesses and many celebrities who could help his cause. He only got one response, a \$100 check from NBC’s Tom Brokaw. But he was still determined, and there were people who supported him. In River Falls, Wisconsin, an elementary school donated \$623.40 in pennies. But it was really Dr. Jean Hoerni who, through his monetary contributions, allowed Greg to go back to the Korphe village. Once he returned, he learned that the village needed a bridge, or there would be no use of the school. And so he returned to the States and started to raise money again. He returned later on and successfully built the bridge and the school.

Since then Greg has built and/or supports the building of 131 schools in volatile regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan which provide education for 58,000 children – 44,000 of which are girls. He co-founded the Central Asia Institute, a nonprofit organization that funds all of his projects as well as provides salaries for the teachers in all of the schools he has built. He has given a gift to many children that cannot be replicated. He gave them an education, a chance to succeed in life, and the ability to read and write, and make something of themselves, regardless of whether they are a girl or a boy. He has survived a kidnapping that lasted eight long days, has been deferred from his work

many times because of *fatwas* (religious decrees) that religious leaders had established, and has experienced many death threats from people in his home town and country for helping these Muslim children.

Because of Greg Mortenson and the amazing work he has done, many children will not have to become illiterate, ignorant people in the violent climate that they live in. They will be able to think for themselves, and not do things just because they are told to do so. Mortenson believes that because they are receiving an education, these children will be less likely to be swept up by the violent people of their surroundings. They will be able to make decisions for them and not get involved in groups like the Taliban, who target illiterate and ignorant young adults. Mortenson solely believes that if these children are given an education, then that is the most fortuitous way to conquer terrorism and enable peace.

So how can you help? Well for one you can pick up this book and read it. By reading this book you will help spread the word, even if it is to one person – yourself! Another way to help out is to recommend this book to as many people as you possibly can, including your local library, teachers and friends. If you want to help fundraise and donate you can go to the Central Asia Institute’s website www.ikat.org, or talk to your local organization or club to fundraise.

By Shamayal Jamil



Reminders

By Yousra Yusuf



I stare at you running about in your tireless feet. Doing your work, building a shelter, getting food, feeding your family. Day in and day out you have the strength and the motivation to work constantly and never give up till you’ve completed your task. You are not lazy and you do not complain. You do not bask yourself in condescending self-praise, nor do you fall into the depths of unnecessary negativity. You do not take life for granted. You know the importance of time. You understand the power of this blessing called life. Each day, everyday you struggle against all the odds and obstacles in your path to make sure you get your work done. And you do get that work done. And once you do, you sleep peacefully to wake up to another

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day of accomplishing your back-breaking but satisfying duties.

I look at you and I think. How can I be more like you? How can I work so hard, so often to accomplish the goals I’ve set? How can I show my appreciation for this blessing called life through my actions and deeds? How can I be more determined and dedicated to be a better worker? How shall I not waste my time and life in things that in the long run will not matter to me? What do I have to do to stay away from those moments when I lapse into apathy or worse yet sloth?

It is during these moments that I need you as the reminder – a reminder against the

evils of procrastination, apathy and laziness. I need you as the encouragement to show me that I still have a lot to learn and even more to accomplish and wiling away my time in useless activities and conversations will come back to bite me (no pun intended, dear ant). And it is in these moments that I see the importance of being more than just a student, or just a person. I – we all have a purpose here and I will have to work my very best to get to the purpose so that at the end of the day I can sleep peacefully knowing that I have walked a few more steps towards my goal. Thank you for that invaluable lesson.

My Love Affair... with Myself: The Inner Self and Its Drives

By Sr. Sam

Assalamu 'alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh.

Who do you want to be? What kind of career will you have? What are the reasons behind your decisions? What are our objectives and priorities as students, and as Muslims?

This year has brought a very large and diverse group of students to Stony Brook University, as well as to our MSA. There are also wide ranges of spirituality and religiosity. Hence, I hope whatever is written will be useful to everyone as Islam is such; its teachings are universal and contradict only that which goes against our Fitrah [Arabic, "disposition, also "instinct"]. This is a post-Ramadan overview of the self. InshaAllah, this has started from me and may it be extended to you, my dearest sisters and brothers. Ameen.

As we are still young, we are faced with various social, familial, and academic pressures. These kinds of stressors often result in masking our true selves to fit into the molds others make for us. Stop. In the long run, this is going to become a detrimental force in your life. InshaAllah, if you wish to pursue something, understand yourself first. Of course, this is not to say that you should abandon your family and bury all of your parents' hopes - but seek Allah's Guidance and Advice and proceed to pursue a harmonious venture. Visualization always works: I drew out some of the things I wanted to do with my life and my semester goals (they have lots of smileys and tons of color).

It's always helpful to figure out why we are studying what we are studying. Some pursue pharmacology because they want to drug people, some want to become nurses to put people to sleep, while others become doctors to make tons of money and have their parents brag. Of course we have the engineers, physicists, and computer geniuses, who want to control the world with computers and particle accelerators. Well, that's all great, as long as you can bring it back full circle and ask yourself if that will make Allah pleased with you. It's important to do something that will please Allah, but it has to make you happy too. Otherwise, we will end up seeing all the brothers and sisters who graduate with psychology

degrees from here, having fellow graduates as their clients.

So, to begin this journey, we start with where we are, where our hearts are, and where we really want to be. InshaAllah, this is the love affair with ourselves—I know this sounds weird and creepy, but I promise I have a point!—loving what Allah, Glorified is He, has given us and serving Him for it. Loving our Deen, our Rasul (peace and blessings be upon him), our Ummah (community), and our dear parents, and of course our Lord, Allah Subhana hu wa ta'ala'. Because we are students, we should begin our development with our surroundings, our hearts - the inner self, and our intentions.

"In the long run, this is going to become a detrimental force in your life..."

"He who seeks pearls immerses himself in the sea." – al-Mutanabbi

Just as this quote states, to seek what we want, we need to immerse ourselves into the environment in which those things are found. Our environment affects our inner selves and who we become greatly. Who we choose to accompany us, share our lives with, and the environment we surround ourselves with are such influences. Hence, inspect your surroundings, your flock of friends; how do they affect you? Keep around you those who are better than you. Done consciously, this helps to check one's ego against arrogance, which poisons good deeds and the soul.

"A person is likely to follow the faith of his friend, so look to whom you befriend."

Since our environment affects our hearts, it's a good idea to look into it sometimes and do some introspection. Because college is the launchpad for much of our lives, knowing our hearts is essential to making this an optimized experience. There's a need to constantly refresh it, as in doing wudu to pray. There's a need to purify our bodies to perform prayers and to perform worship, but there's a greater

need to purify our intentions, and thereby our hearts. Our Rasul (peace and blessings be upon him) said, *"In the body there lies a small piece of flesh; when it is good the rest of the body is good also, and when it is corrupt the rest of the body becomes corrupt also: verily it is the heart."*

The manifestation of constant purification is a reflection of our inner selves onto our outer selves. Our Lord, the All Knowing, looks at our hearts before anything else and our Beloved (peace and blessings be upon him) said, *"O God! Make my inward better than my outward, and make my outward virtuous."*

When pursuing something in this Dunya, we should try to remind ourselves that our ultimate abode is in Jannah (Heaven). So why we want to do what we want to do is a good self-analysis. Although many people will give advice and answers, it's not until we're honest with ourselves that we will truly find answers to the ailments of our hearts and the causes for any grief. Regardless of what we wish to pursue, our ultimate goal is to please Allah, the Most Revered. Our Beloved doesn't want us to drudge through our lives and constantly pray in our homes, He wants us to apply ourselves and enjoy our servitude to Him, Most Merciful is He. Therefore, by always refreshing our intentions before doing something, we can make even a meal a form of worship.

As students, we can make our studies a form of worship. I leave you with a poem by Abu Hanifa (may Allah have mercy on him):

"Whoever strives for knowledge for the Hereafter obtains great gain in righteousness. But he is in utter loss who seeks [knowledge] to obtain advantage over people!"

"This has been a product of my "Love Affairs", minus the narcissism, minus arrogance, minus foolishness.

Anything good of this is from Allah azza wajaal and all evil is from myself. Please give me feedback for future issues:

Tell.Sr.Sam@gmail.com



Why can't you see things MY way?

By Omar and Mariam Shareef

"Unifying Dividers"

As salaamu alaikum wa rahmatullah!

You know, if there's one thing I miss about the MSA... it's dividers. They say that there's a lot of fitnas that cause divisions within the Ummah, but if you ask me, the BIGGEST fitna of all is the one that physically separates the Ummah. And those evil dividers do JUST THAT. Okay, I'm kidding. But if there's always one point of contention between the brothers and sisters, it's the "no-man's land" that splits the Prayer Room into two parts. The 2/3 of the room marked the brothers' territory is our gruff, manly, fortress of solitude- where we wrestle, scratch ourselves, wrestle some more, talk about cars and sports, compare beard lengths, wrestle, where our wet socks find a welcoming home, and we also wrestle.

Salaamu Alaikum!

Despite the fact that sisters are given an unfair 1/3 of the prayer room, we still see it as our place of retreat, our sanctuary from the outside. It's the complete opposite of what Omar tells me. We actually rest and study in the prayer room as opposed to it being a WWE ring. But what is it that gives a sister peace of mind and a sense of privacy? It's those unstable paper dividers. Despite the weird noises and awkward smells coming from the other side, the dividers serve their purpose... for the most part.

You know, sisters have that sister's room for extra space! Why can't the guys have our own "Brother's Room" filled with food, an XBOX360, and beard trimmers? Unfortunately we don't have that, so we make do with the space we have. We do our best to squeeze in with limited room, because during Maghrib there's just so many guys it's ridiculous. And for the poor brother who comes late to Maghrib, there just isn't any space open for him except for the dangerous divider area, and as a result- sisters have accused us of knocking dividers down on top of their heads! Perhaps occasionally we may do that on purpose, but we definitely sometimes do it by accident when we're praying. You can't blame us for that!

In all honesty, us sisters don't care what goes on over on the brother's side. But when it gets to a point where we can't concentrate during salah, it's just annoying. For example, those late night classes that force us to run to the union in the hopes that Maghrib isn't over, finding an empty spot, quickly jumping in and then joining in the last rakaah. Just like on the brother's side, us sisters run and join the salah when we're late, but the only difference is, brothers tend to totally fill their side which forces the last line of brothers to come dangerously close to the dividers. Yeah, you guessed it, the overdramatic enthusiastic ruckus that ends up in a butt-bump to the dividers. Us sisters nearly have heart attacks every time we see the shaking divider in our peripheral vision during salah. Hard to concentrate? Yeah. Can you guys help it? Who knows?

Aside from the guys and our divider-knocking issue, the other thing sisters ALWAYS complain about is our shoe smells. How is that offensive? I just don't get it. It smells fine to the guys. We make wudu like we're at a waterfall, put our socks on our dripping wet feet, tread back to the prayer room through a hallway of filth, and place our wet sock fragrances on the shoe rack. Okay fine... if it smells a little, just spray some Axe on that, and it's perfectly presentable. Nothing to complain about.

As amazing as dividers are, they can only do so much. Visually they serve their purpose but it's a bit lacking in the protection of our other senses. It's called the "shoe area" so obviously we can expect some uncomfortable smells, but trust me when I say this, glade plug-ins, febreze, and lysol combined won't help the brothers side. Let's be a little considerate, some of us sisters have asthma making it hard to breathe normally. Let's not take the Omar route and spray Axe at the problem.

If there's one thing that the prayer room sets a good stage for, it's wrestling. And I'm not talking about the fake WWE wrestling on TV, but real Sunnah-style friendly sparring between friends. A means for men to pit their strength and dexterity against one another in the spirit of building brotherhood. We're not going to get together and put henna on our hands as a means for bonding, because that's too quiet, too refined, and too elegant for guys. Sisters should understand- we have to wrestle because it's who we are. We're MEN.

Let me start by saying that there's no such thing as a quiet fight. We all know that the brothers like to wrestle each other because sensible conversing just doesn't suffice, but really? In the prayer room? By the dividers? The grunting, floor vibrations, the giggling brothers on the side acting as an audience, and occasional painful shrieks aren't distracting at all, in fact us sisters prefer that you do that while we pray, it's good for our concentration.

All in all, the divider is one of the more interesting parts of MSA daily life. They're always there, and although we're in a never-ending war with the sisters to claim as much prayer room space as possible, in the end what truly matters most is that both sides have the privacy that they need to go about their lives. We go about our business, and the sisters go about theirs. I just hope that someday, somehow, the sisters get a glimpse of our concerns over on this side, and perhaps get a feel for seeing things from our perspective.

Despite the little annoyances that come with our divider in the prayer room, alhamdulillah it serves its purpose and makes us feel secure, for the most part. Maybe through this article, the brothers will pick up on hints that I left and make an effort to better the prayer room for both us sisters AND themselves. Hey, a little bit of personal hygiene never hurt anybody.

Procrastination—Shaytaan’s Infiltration

By Syed Zain Ali

“...What makes us, as human beings, want to go against the natural order of striving for success ...”

Sadly, it is too often that we see ourselves and our peers around us fall victim to the disease – a disease that goes by several names: “procrastination”, “senioritis”, “laziness”. Whichever means whatever to you, in the end, you’re quite familiar with it. Such an affliction, which by far has infiltrated its way into this Ummah extensively, is one of lethargic behavior, lack of focus, lack of effort and a general desire to just “take it easy”. They are that of the disease which lead to false hopes, promises that remain broken, trust that is torn and prospective success that was at one point so very realistic. They all become distant dreams which seems unattainable. They continue to present themselves in circumstances in which every time we try and correct ourselves, we fall into the same traps again.

Being that we are all human, we’ve all experienced laziness in one form or another- whether it was in school, playing a game, praying Salah on time and even more instances than my fingers can count. We’ve all experienced laziness and have suffered because of it (For those of you who haven’t- bi-idhnillah-, just keep reading). But what is laziness and why do we end up just wanting to click that snooze button, or play that video-game or just take a load off? What makes us, as human beings, want to go against the natural order of striving for success - an intent that is, whether or not we notice it, inherent in each and every one of our souls?

One word can sum up the core of laziness- a vice that, of course, is the choice of those who indulge in it, and that is Shaytaan. Shaytaan wants us to be lazy, and all of his boys are on his side. He wants us to waste our time and spend it in the most non-productive ways possible. As the Qur’an says, the shayateen want to sit on the Siraatul Mustaqim – “the straight path of Islam”. They want to convince us into corrupting ourselves to the fullest extent. They are going to Jahannam, and want our company. Those sad, lonely, little, devious and ungrateful shayateen- does it make sense to listen to them? Didn’t think so.

What’s the purpose of life again? To serve Allah. So what are we doing with our time when we are being lazy? Are we benefiting society in any way? Are we serving our Creator? Are we even benefiting ourselves? We are simply wasting time that is unimaginably precious. Some people say, “time is money.” The truth is, time is hasanaat – good deeds. Every second is an opportunity to please Allah even more by obeying him. Why waste it? Learn to live in moderation and suppress your desires for that which Allah desires of you. It’s easy to be lazy; but if we understand the purpose of our lives, what can stop us from pursuing what Allah wants of us?

Distress

This is for the distraught
Who hear the Qur’an, feeling naught

Hearts worried and tense
Minds questioning His existence

Your Lord has not forgot
Knowing you even as a clot

He endowed you with a heart and mind
Quick to rust and hard to remind

Know that the Qur’an you fear is untrue
Is a gem the world has yet to outdo

Poets who dismissed it as a madman’s tale
Tried to imitate it, but would always fail

You ask why you only know the material
But forget your limits in knowing the ethereal

To see the unseen that’s hidden by His command
Is like trying to know color by feeling with your hand

You say you’re sincere but at every trial
You falter, then sulk, then increase in denial

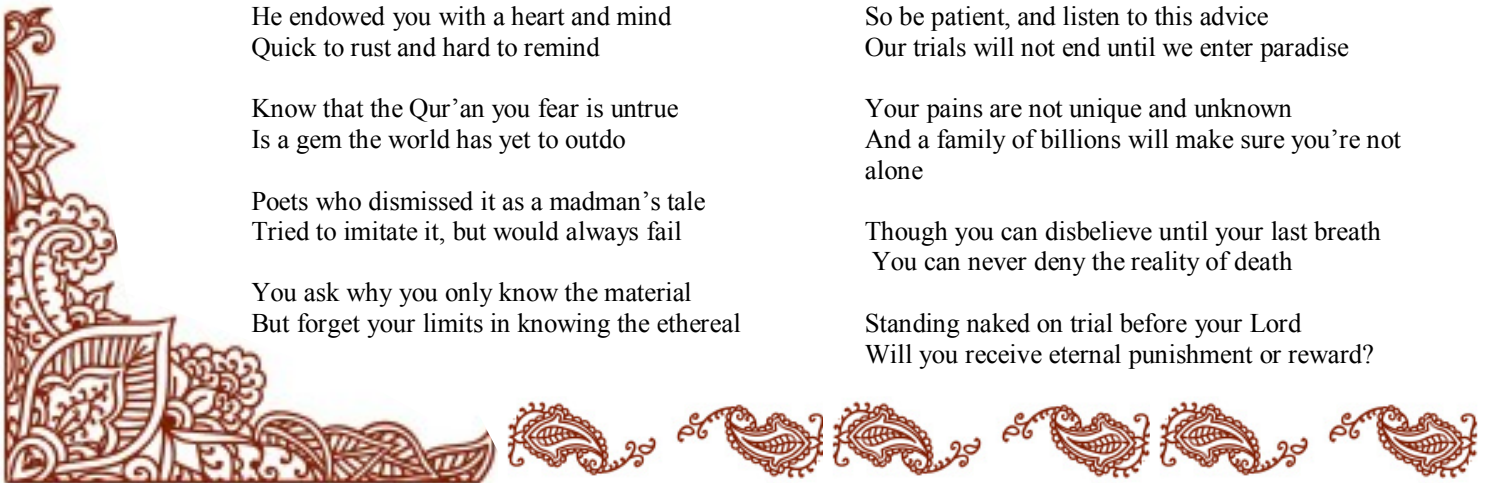
You can’t recognize faith without knowing doubt
What is abundance without knowing drought?

So be patient, and listen to this advice
Our trials will not end until we enter paradise

Your pains are not unique and unknown
And a family of billions will make sure you’re not alone

Though you can disbelieve until your last breath
You can never deny the reality of death

Standing naked on trial before your Lord
Will you receive eternal punishment or reward?



Strangers Know Too...

By Khushbakht Chaudhary

Sometimes you find yourself sitting in a crowded room of cousins, friends, strangers and you panic at the unrest of a corn chip in a bowl or the distressed thread sticking out of the rug, and you don't know why you're dumbstruck at the idea of the flow with which events continue on, and you're the only one standing still. Perhaps you really are the only one who can feel the impact of the box of a room in which you reside. The worst is when you can hear the stagnant voices of the conversations floating back and forth in a room, and you hear a pin drop or a chip crack underneath a shoe and it instantaneously turns into your breaking point. Has the world gone mad? No, it's you.

Profundity becomes a part of your vocabulary and you think to yourself, "I'm mad deep. Mad deep nowadays," every time another person just doesn't see where you're coming from. Get over it quickly, and move on even faster, love.

Complexity comes with abstraction in the simpler things, and that's not only a part of everyone's vocabulary ("No, I don't understand what you're saying either") and to be quite honest, it's in what you do too that the mystery lies and does this thing where it just sits and collects dust around itself like it's nobody's business to give a care. It takes a moment when you're waiting on that long Starbucks line or right before your name is called at the beginning of class that the revelation unravels messily out of a deep, wet compost of a ditch and sits there for you in some barren hallway away from the interfaith center, away from the prayer room, away from the tangible means by which minds escape, hearts explode.

I lose my wallet, you trip over an uneven sidewalk, they smell something terrible

down the hallway. Simplicity is what allows for us to take it all in and understand the magnitude of the bigger things that not only make me laugh, make me hurt, make me immobile for minutes at a time, but the effortless ways in which these moments that are looked past one too many times without a second glance, that also make you laugh, make you hurt and make you immobile for even a few more minutes than the struck state it left me in. It is simply sitting across from another individual on a slow and quiet day that you come to understand that there's a roll of film which is on constant play, tucked back somewhere beneath the mess of a brain which contains the heavy, the light, the in between. It's a translucent strip of film which is pressed up hard against the skull, with the brain pushing it up against



its form even harder as we age. It's flushed in a fluid of something sweet, something sour – it's got flare.

You think it's a mistake when you continue to sit across from – no longer a stranger – that feeble-handed girl, too young of a boy and watch their cheeks flush a slight pink and there is a slow gathering of a moist haze around their precious lashes, sweeping away, rolling back and forth, sweeping away – sweep! sweep! sweep! that blur away as you open your

mouth and utter something so foul. Your breath seems a little sour – but you just popped in a mint. You're at moment 50 when you were just at the first a second ago, and you can't find an extra mint in your pocket. So you continue on with the simple utterance of a fall out, a pass out – "They're no longer with us--?" and go with the flow. It changes them forever. But do they know that it changes you too?

Your heart turns at an unfamiliar angle, forgets to beat once or twice. It's forever turning and shifts from one second to the next because you really just don't know how to feel. The betrayer of words – you wish you could take a few steps back and, maybe you should have just kept it to yourself and with time—with time they would have known, right? Auntie would have called, or maybe a forgotten cousin.

And just know that you'll never know what channel of emotion is tunneling its way through the veins of the sister or brother on the other side of the divider. It funnels back and forth, in and out, around and about. And when you prostrate in submission, you won't ever know the seconds by which they kneel down, powerlessly weighed down by everything that is absolutely nothing to your neighbor. And they'll continue to kneel and push harder and harder against the stained rug of submission, hopes, dreams, pains and more dreams. You won't know. But it will roll. It rolls. There's a roll of film in there. And it rolls. With a hand resting upon your shoulders, you'll have some reassurance. You won't be alone when you hear a chip CRUNCH! or see another thread come loose from a once perfect textile. We will continue to roll.

In memory of Wasay Mujtaba's mother and Waquas Yaqoob's father.

"A man served God for seventy years and then committed a sin which canceled the merit of his service. Afterwards he gave a loaf of bread to a poor man, so God pardoned his sin and gave him back the merit of his seventy years' service. His alms are vain who does not know that his need of the reward for giving is greater than the poor man's need of the gift."



Diary of a Mad Man Senior

By Farooq Zafar

Monday, November 1st, 2010

Dear Diary,

I am not behind schedule. I am not wasting time. I am not running late. I am not running in place. I have not penned this entry during the eleventh hour. I definitely do not have writer's block. I have been repeating this inner monologue for quite some time, between every round of midterms, when the sine curve, pitting my penchant for productivity against my propensity for procrastination, dips in favor of the latter, conceding any hopes of finally practicing half-way-decent time management, along with the few waning vestiges of one's self-respect, dignity and future... but let's not open that can of worms, shall we?

If the bracing autumn winds and piles of dry, crunchy leaves strewn over campus are any indication, this October went by quickly, as all months do. Still, I remember a few events that I'd like to share, with the hopes that my reflections might serve as food for thought, rather than sounding like the fodder of a late-night, caffeine-fueled, vitriol-filled rant; let it be known, I make no promises. While the rest of the month now seems like a blur, three dates stand out clearly: Monday, October 18th, 2010; Wednesday, October 27th, 2010; and Sunday, October 31st, 2010. Namely, they are the "Platters for Pakistan" event; the recent campaign visit by former United States President William Jefferson Clinton; and Samhain, the Celtic New Year and Gaelic harvest festival known to us modern-day, Twitter-following, Facebook-updating, Islamophobia-refudiating, uncultured Westerners as "Halloween".

It has been two weeks since the "Platters for Pakistan" event took place on our campus. The event, founded by myself and your favorite brother's favorite brother, Usman Aslam, was sponsored by Stony Brook UNICEF Campus Initiative, and raised over two thousand dollars for the UNICEF Fund for Pakistan Flood Relief. From its humble beginnings as a hypothetically improbable, would-be-nice-if-it-could-be-done pipe dream to its realization as the greatest experience of my undergraduate career so far at Stony Brook University, this was a labor of love.

Alhamdulillah. First and foremost, all thanks and praise are due to God, for allowing us this opportunity to serve Him through serving His creation, the victims and survivors of the worst natural disaster in UNICEF's history, on a scale unimaginable and perhaps not yet truly understood. We pray that our intentions remained sincere for His sake alone, and that the donations may rebuild, rehabilitate and rescue lives, homes and families.

Next, the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is said to have stated, "Whoever has not thanked people, has not

thanked God". Therefore, I would like to first thank Usman Aslam, for being as ambitious as he was in sharing my vision, for being patient with me through a month of collaboration, advertising, marketing and especially during the last phone call, text message, email and anxiety-filled hours leading up to and through the event including delivery and quality assurance. Further, we were able to challenge each other to better outcomes in brainstorming and fundraising, and I believe our friendship has been strengthened by that.

Together, we entertained several accusations against ourselves, as well as the absurd notion that selling platters for charity was a proprietary method of fundraising solely reserved by other anonymous campus service organizations. My only observation on this would be to counsel everyone, that we must examine our intentions in the service of others, and ponder whether what we claim to be doing is seeking others' praise, some divine reward, or fulfillment of the duty one feels to be his brother's keeper. Lastly, I would like to thank each and every volunteer involved; from posting flyers and marketing to collecting and distributing orders, not to mention the gamble of a lifetime on delivering them on a donut tire—you know who you are—the team functioned like clockwork and turned a plan into reality. May God reward you all.

A week later, former President Bill Clinton visited our campus to campaign as part of the final rally before the national midterm elections tomorrow. Anyone present observed his attempt to cover three bases in one speech. First, he sought to defend the policies of the current administration, under President Obama—currently in its midlife crisis—which he accomplished. Second, he sought to criticize the alternatives offered by the Republican platform, which he also accomplished. Third, he sought to endorse Representative Tim Bishop (D-NY) and convince the presumably Democratic electorate in attendance to re-elect him as the Representative for the First Congressional District of New York. This was Clinton's vaguest accomplishment, as his celebrity status—and Secret Service security detail—clearly overpowered Bishop's presence.

Casting aside my personal politics, as well as my general disdain for bandwagoning of any kind, most odious of which is the overnight bleeding blue by apathetic college students, the most objective observation I can make is that in this particularly volatile, uncertain midterm election, many voters will be using the ballots as a premature referendum and job evaluation for the President and his fellow Democrats. I also think that the present state of a slowly-recovering, still feverishly-coughing-sniffing-wish-you-had-Nyquil-for-this-kind-of-recession economy further clouds the purpose of an election, which, in the words of Mr. Clinton himself, "is a choice between two different sets of ideas". If the pun-

ditions are correct, by the time this entry is read, we may have a Republican House (and Senate, too!). I think such a nightmare would be history repeating itself, which in itself is cliché: let's not forget that in 1995, a Newt Gingrich-led GOP takeover effectively shut down the federal government, forcing then-President Clinton's hand on matters ranging from Medicare reform to foreign policy, alienating him from his party faithful as he moved further center-of-left. I fear the same may happen to President Obama, with the exception that his audacity of hope and call to "change we can believe in", amongst other optimistic campaign slogans, may come to haunt him if and when he seeks reelection, despite his grassroots background, peerless oratory and elegant aspirations.

Finally, Halloween was yesterday. I did not dress up; I never do. I briefly considered wearing a chicken beak this year, due to receiving the honorific "Chickenguy" moniker from customers during my coordination of "Platters for Pakistan". If you were looking for a fatwa, you won't find one here. I will share my thoughts, however. The Halloween I remember is one where children with childish imaginations play make-believe while competing with their peers to accept candy from strangers, the only time they can break that age-old caution; perhaps it becomes a gateway to vandalism and a life of egg-ing the principal's house for teenage punks. Sadly, what you'll find amongst most adults, including college students, is yet another drinking party, except everyone is wearing a costume, with the unspoken acknowledgement that the dress code for women dictates the garb of various 'naughty' occupations, while the male participants look to Hollywood, pop culture, or word-play for their cues in buffoonery. Call me old-fashioned. I still believe that all holidays, Halloween being no ghoulish exception, have undergone cultural adaptation and capitalist interpretation, becoming perennially reinvented and grossly commercialized along the way. As far as the discussion within orthodoxy goes, concerning the permissibility of wearing costumes and whether its roots are in pagan festivities or sacred divinations, I'll sit out on this one. For me, Halloween will forever be the date of my sister's wedding. Therefore, I have an excuse to celebrate, eat sweets and wear a traditional costume, with matching pointy shoes and turban. Eat your heart out, Aladdin.

Trick or treat,
Farooq "Chickenguy" Zafar

P.S. Haram-o-ween? More like Halal-your-deen!
This was too good not to share.

Happy Thanksgiving from myself and the Stony Brook Minaret staff!

Prayer Times

November	Day	Fajr	Sunrise	Dhuhr	Asr	Asr (H)	Maghrib	Isha
1	Mon	6:07	7:23	12:37	3:25	4:07	5:49	7:06
2	Tue	6:08	7:24	12:37	3:24	4:06	5:48	7:05
3	Wed	6:10	7:25	12:37	3:23	4:05	5:47	7:04
4	Thu	6:11	7:26	12:37	3:22	4:04	5:45	7:03
5	Fri	6:12	7:27	12:37	3:21	4:03	5:44	7:02
6	Sat	6:13	7:29	12:37	3:20	4:02	5:43	7:01
7	Sun	5:14	6:30	11:37	2:19	3:01	4:42	6:00
8	Mon	5:15	6:31	11:37	2:19	3:00	4:41	5:59
9	Tue	5:16	6:32	11:37	2:18	2:59	4:40	5:58
10	Wed	5:16	6:32	11:37	2:18	2:59	4:40	5:58
11	Thu	5:18	6:35	11:37	2:16	2:57	4:38	5:56
12	Fri	5:19	6:36	11:37	2:15	2:56	4:37	5:55
13	Sat	5:20	6:37	11:37	2:15	2:55	4:36	5:55
14	Sun	5:21	6:38	11:37	2:14	2:54	4:35	5:54
15	Mon	5:22	6:39	11:38	2:13	2:53	4:35	5:53
16	Tue	5:23	6:40	11:38	2:13	2:52	4:34	5:53
17	Wed	5:23	6:40	11:38	2:13	2:52	4:34	5:53
18	Thu	5:25	6:43	11:38	2:12	2:51	4:32	5:51
19	Fri	5:26	6:44	11:38	2:11	2:50	4:32	5:51
20	Sat	5:27	6:45	11:39	2:11	2:50	4:31	5:50
21	Sun	5:28	6:46	11:39	2:10	2:49	4:30	5:50
22	Mon	5:29	6:47	11:39	2:10	2:48	4:30	5:49
23	Tue	5:30	6:49	11:39	2:09	2:48	4:29	5:49
24	Wed	5:30	6:49	11:39	2:09	2:48	4:29	5:49
25	Thu	5:31	6:50	11:40	2:09	2:47	4:28	5:49
26	Fri	5:33	6:52	11:40	2:08	2:46	4:27	5:48
27	Sat	5:34	6:53	11:41	2:08	2:46	4:27	5:48
28	Sun	5:35	6:54	11:41	2:07	2:46	4:27	5:47
29	Mon	5:36	6:55	11:41	2:07	2:45	4:26	5:47
30	Tue	5:37	6:56	11:42	2:07	2:45	4:26	5:47

Interested in Writing for the Minaret?
 Email Submissions to minaret@gmail.com

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First 'Asr Time: *In the standard method (which is used by Imams Shaafii, Hanbali, and Maliki) the Asr prayer time starts when the shadow of an object is equivalent to its height.*

Second 'Asr Time: *This is used by Imam Abu Hanifa, where the Asr prayer time starts when*

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- Khush =]

