

## **The Minaret**

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# STATE OF THE MSA

*Nazia Rahman*, MSA SISTER'S SECRETARY

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem  
(In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful)

Assalaamu 'Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh!  
(May the peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be upon you)

Welcome back to another semester! For all the returning students, we're glad to have you back with us, and to any mid-year transfer students, welcome to Stony Brook University and to the Muslim Students Association! We welcome you to our community and invite you to join the family that we have formed on campus.

I'd like to take you all back to the moment when you were first introduced to the MSA. Perhaps you met a brother or sister in the prayer room. Maybe you stumbled upon a flyer and made your way to an event. Maybe you were even brave enough to sit with a random group of Muslims on the balcony or in the lounge on the second floor of the Union. But ask yourself this question: What made you stick around? What stopped you from never coming back? Usually, it's because of that one friendly person—the person who first smiled at you, or stopped to make conversation with you, or invited you to hang out with him or her. We have all had that experience. At some point or another, we have all felt the warm feeling of being welcomed and included. That's why we have friends in the MSA and can't seem to get enough of the Union.

But it is time for us to be that person for someone else. Allah (swt) blessed us with people who welcomed us and made us part of this beautiful family that we call the MSA. It is time for us to return the favor to all the other Muslims out there who do not feel like they are a part of this community, who are too afraid or who do not feel like they would fit in. Now, I am not saying that we are an unfriendly community—not by a long shot. This is simply a reminder to always have this notion of being welcoming in the back of your mind. Also, sometimes we hear people say things like, "If they really want to get involved in the MSA, they'll come around by themselves. It depends on how badly they want it" or similar statements. This is an attitude we should never have. We should always make it an obligation upon ourselves to reach out to other people, whether they are Muslim or non-Muslim. Trying to become involved in a new group can be very intimidating; by reaching out, we can make it a little bit easier.

Consider it a form of *da'wah*, or invitation. If you see a new face at an event, around the prayer room, or even in one of your classes, talk to him or her. Jump at the opportunity to smile and introduce yourself. And never underestimate the power of this simple gesture – it often goes a long way. As the Prophet (saw) said, **"Do not think little of any good deed even if it is just greeting your brother with a cheerful face."** Think of all the amazing and beneficial times you have had with everyone and think of how exciting it would be to let other people share in that as well.

This MSA changed my life. By simply being a friend to others, you may change someone else's. SubhanAllah, Stony Brook has really been blessed with a tight-knit and strong community. There are so many of us alhamdulillah, but communities always have room for more.

Insha'Allah this upcoming semester will be a great one and we will see many new faces. May Allah grant us success in all our relationships and help us to treat people in the best of ways. Ameen!

"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*

Assalaamu 'Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh.

Welcome to the new spring semester, Inna' fathan laka fathan moubeena.

May Allah open your hearts to his love and to the path of the siratal moustakeem and may He open your mind to further your knowledge in this life and the hereafter.

Let us remember the Prophet sallallahu alayhi wa salaam in the month of his birth (12th of Rabi al-Awwal) and send peace and blessings upon him while maintaining and upholding his sunnah.

In this article I want to share with you some verses regarding sacred relationships amongst family members.

Family - a heavenly order connecting the relationships of the womb

"O people keep your duty to your lord, who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same kind and spread from them many men and women. And keep your duty to Allah, through whom you demand your mutual rights, and reverence the ties of relationships. For Allah ever watches over you." (Surah 4:1)

Gender relations - there is a gender equity in Islam, the relationship between men and women must be adorned with righteousness and pure intentions and must always be under the guidance of Allah and his messenger as marriage is a bounty from Allah.

"And among his signs is this, that he created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquility with them, and he has put love and mercy between your hearts. Verily in that are signs for those who reflect." (Surah 30:21)

"And Allah has made wives for you and your own mature, and made for you out of them sons and daughters and grandchildren, and has provided you with good things. Will they believe in falsehood and deny the favor of Allah?" (Surah 16:72)

Think of everyone around you and the rights they have. Whether it's asking them how they're doing or even helping them. If you owe anyone an apology, take care of it while you can and while they are around.

"Allah does not change the status of a people unless they change of themselves."

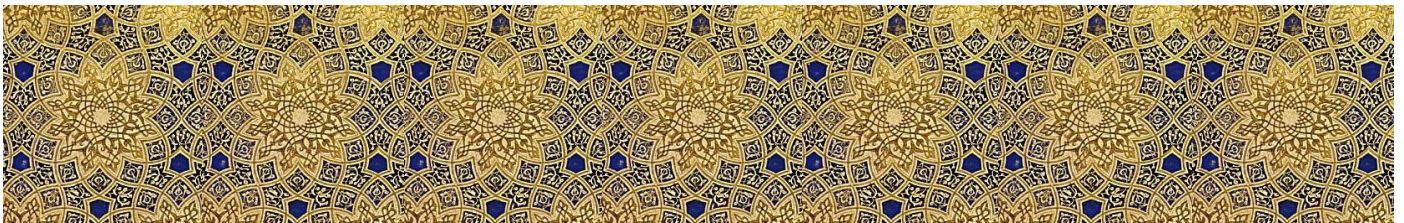
It is only through the jihad of our ego and our nafs that we could attain the salvation we aspire to get on the day of judgment. Allah is all knowing, all seeing, and all hearing. Let us always be in the state of observation. Observing and bettering our intentions, our deeds, and our hearts. Let us perfect our obligations and strengthen our Iman as there are so many fitnas in this dunya. But Allah promised those who believe and those who are steadfast that he will protect them. Wa taqu allah wa yalimakum allah, be mindful of Allah and Allah will teach you.

This will be one of the most special messages that I will write to you in this semester. As I write I am watching the events unfold in Egypt. I pray for the country and for its people. May Allah resolve this situation in the most peaceful of ways.

Please pray with me for peace for the all of the Muslims in this ummah throughout the world.

Peace upon you.

Chaplain Sanaa Nadim



# A Word of Caution

*“...It is said that the shield of a scholar is saying, ‘I don’t know.’”*

*“The Prophet (saw) advised Muslims to speak what is good or keep silent and to avoid speaking without knowledge...”*

*“From a fellow senior...”*

No doubt everyone reading this has already heard of the protests in the Middle East. It’s an emotionally charged issue that has given rise to a whole spectrum of different opinions, with some people supporting the riots while others are against them, with yet others who remain on the sidelines. The point that I want to make is that no matter what your views are, it’s imperative that we utter them with caution. The Prophet (saw) advised Muslims to speak what is good or keep silent and to avoid speaking without knowledge. It’s all too easy to pick your favorite sheikh, snatch up a few quick hadiths, and lobby for your opinion of this matter with other Muslims.

We are quick to overestimate our insight and underestimate the judgment of other people, in the process forgetting that we’re just ordinary students and not scholars, historians, or sociologists. Most, if not all of us, often doubt or second guess ourselves on the simple multiple choice exams we get in class. Yet, as soon as an event or issue pertaining to Islam or the Ummah crops up, many of us fancy ourselves as enlightened intellectuals.

The consequences of being wrong on an exam in class are minor relative to what could happen if that opinion of yours on, say, the protests in Egypt turned out to be Islamically incorrect, leading both yourself and those whom you talked to astray. So please brothers and sisters, I’m not saying you shouldn’t have an opinion. You have to have one. All I’m saying is that we should think twice before spreading it around to other people; especially in a way that makes it seem authoritative. It is said that the shield of a scholar is saying “I don’t know.” Though we may not be knowledgeable enough to use the sword, anyone can use the shield to protect themselves against the consequences of an ill conceived word.

”

Words of Wisdom...



Stony Brook Minaret

# 11 Tips for Giving Dawah to Your Fellow Muslim

A message from SBU Dawah Committee

## **Make your intention sincere and for the sake of Allah.**

Ideally, everything we do should be for the sake of Allah alone, including the task of bringing someone closer to Allah. However, being in this position should not make you arrogant, nor should you think you're the savior and everyone else should consider themselves lucky you've embarked on a campaign to save them. Remember, guidance is from Allah. Make du'a and make your efforts sincere; remember, if He wills, Allah can also allow you to be misguided (we seek refuge in Allah from that).

## **Practice what you preach.**

Not practicing what you preach is hypocritical, wrong, and you will soon lose the confidence and trust of anyone once they figure you out. Don't do it.

## **Use the Qur'an and Seerah (biography of the Prophet [pbuh]) as guides.**

Read and understand those chapters of the Qur'an which detail the presentation of the message of Islam by the Prophets of Allah to their people. Read the Seerah to understand how our Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) conveyed Islam to so many different people, including the youth.

## **Don't judge a book by its cover.**

Don't assume you know someone just by looking at them. You don't know if that Muslim girl in your bio class, who walks down the Zebra Path as if she were on a fashion show catwalk, is not someone you can talk to about Allah because she looks like a snob, or if that Muslim guy, who you've never seen at Jumu'ah (the Friday sermon and prayer), is a "bad Muslim". Maybe he was never taught Islam and is unaware of the obligation of attending Jumu'ah in congregation upon Muslim men.

## **Keep smiling!**

Did you know the Prophet (pbuh) loved smiling? Smiling, being polite and kindness were all part of the manners of the Prophet (pbuh), which we must emulate in our daily lives. If we want to invite others to Islam, we have to first make ourselves inviting and approachable; smiling is key to this!

## **Take the initiative and hang out with them.**

Take the first step, and invite someone, whom you may have spoken to, out to lunch, to attend an MSA event, or invite them to a recreational activity such as basketball. Share their difficulties, sorrows and frustrations; help with homework or class; be a shoulder to cry on when depression hits, or just listen when your friend is upset; discuss common problems and keep their secrets.

## **Show them Islam is relevant today, right here, right now.**

Many young people may think Islam is too "old fashioned" and not compatible with the modern age. Prove them wrong: show them how Islam is truly a way of life that can be practiced anywhere at any time. Encourage friends to ask for Allah's help during college, during exams, and in dealing with problems at home with parents and siblings.

## **Get them involved in the MSA.**

Invite your friend to the MSA and bring them to our events. Ask them if they would like to join a committee with you, or brainstorm ideas together about activities to hold this semester. This involvement makes them feel like part of the Muslim community and deepens your friendship, since you are now working together on something beneficial for both of you

## **Steer the conversation towards Allah and Islam.**

As your friendship develops, you will notice the topics you discuss may become more serious: you may be discussing, for instance, future goals and plans. Ask questions that steer the topic towards Allah and Islam:

- Where am I going in life, and what would make me happy inside?
- What do I believe?
- To whom should I be grateful?
- Did I get to where I am today without the help of anyone?

## **Emphasize praying five times a day before any other aspect Of Islam.**

A person's main connection with Allah, on a daily basis, is through the five daily prayers. Don't emphasize any other aspect of Islam until your friend begins making a real effort to pray five times a day. Emphasize the direct connection one has with Allah during prayer. If they are facing a problem, counsel them to pray, and to ask Allah for help before, during and after Salah (prayer). Whenever possible, make it a point to pray together during your "hang out time". Your friend's habit of praying will serve as the first step to the other aspects of Islam, like giving up swearing, treating parents with respect, or dressing modestly.

## **Support them even when they start practicing.**

Remember, just because a person starts practicing Islam regularly, this does not mean everything will be okay from this point on. There will still be hard times, difficulties and mistakes made. There may be times when your friend may have doubts about their newfound beliefs and practice of Islam. Be there to reassure them.

## Greetings

By Krystal DeJesus

*“...slow down with greeting people and everything else in life...”*

Do you ever pay attention to how you greet people or how people greet you? I find that most people, including myself, greet people much too quickly, especially when we're at gatherings with lots of people to greet. I find that all too often we move on to the next person before we're even finished with greeting the first. By the time we're done with saying, "how are you," we're on to shaking the hand of the next person in line. Meanwhile the person who is responding to your "how are you" is already looking on to the next person to say hello and shake hands.

Does that make sense? I'm sure at least some of the people who read this will understand what I'm talking about. We're always in a rush or maybe we're just eager; but it's not a good habit to have. Why don't we give people the time of day? Why don't we stop to look at each other and smile and greet them directly? What is it going to take? 10 maybe 15 seconds per person?

I write this because during my time in Jor-

dan I had a complete exposure to a language I had absolutely no familiarity with aside from knowing a handful of words and phrases. I would often greet people very slowly because I was trying to focus on pronouncing words correctly and also looking for facial expressions to make sure I was being understood. It's pretty embarrassing when you're trying to say one thing and a simple mispronunciation can turn it into something else completely different.

*Tangent: A great example was the time I was speaking to my Abuela in my Spanglish and one morning we're making breakfast and she asks me "Como estas, mija?" I simply responded "Ah, bien pero estoy casada." After a very loud WHAT! and her coffee cup hitting the kitchen counter I quickly realized I had said casada instead of caNsada. The big difference is that the first means married and the latter means tired. I was aiming for the latter but in my sleepy slumber I slipped on the "n" and almost gave my abuela a heart attack. Alhamdulillah this miscommunication was quickly resolved.*

But all in all what I'm try to get out of this column for myself, and I hope others will as well, is to slow down with greeting people and everything else in life. Sometimes through the hustle and bustle of life we can be rude, inconsiderate and hurt people even though it was not our intention at all. When we rush we lose ourselves. We become more focused on the task than whom we are dealing with. So next time you're greeting people try to slow down and give them the time of day. Ask them how they are and really listen and look at them when they respond, and if the person is already moving on from you try to stop them. Hold on to their hand or stand in their way in a non-obtrusive way to kind of give the message that "hey, I'm talking to you, that's right **you**."

May Allah subahna wa ta'ala help us all improve ourselves, slow down and give each other the time we deserve.



## Fool am I, Oh Beloved

Sr. Sam



Reflecting on the gaping emptiness in my soul, only  
Nothing but tears do flow as much of the pain can't really be  
shown, 'cuz  
Embedded like burning coal and fueled by regrets and woe, now  
don't tell me there ain't no cure for  
this *ruh*\* to become pure, so  
i ask not him, her, or them, but i ask if *You* can see, even  
if i can't really know when the end to this misery that  
shadows my smiles will be... but  
then i remember You're my Knight, my Guide, my Light  
The fool am i that forgets Thee, the One and only Being that  
Will indeed ever be this closest to me for  
Closer are You to me than my jugular vein, now  
learning that this Dunya ain't got much things to gain  
Naught but that which sprout from  
good intentions and deeds, even  
just a little pain but no need i to fret they're  
good things sowed, like

Divine seeds that'll on that Day bear fruit and raise us  
to heights so that  
Now if the things we've been in pursuit of cause  
a little hurt even a tadbit  
And if every day this, that, and it gets difficult to do  
to feel or to embody, I  
know the fool am i that would have forgotten Thee, but  
will remember that You are closest to me, oh!  
my Beloved don't forget this fool I, who  
now just for a bit breathes a relieved sigh, in  
seeking You out in my heart and soul,  
the places my love do reside, even  
while fearing the voluminous Fires' hiss, yes  
oh how i hope for an eternity of bliss, i...  
[\**ruh*': the spirit aka soul]

Production of *My Love Affairs*.  
Sr. Sam | [TellSrSam@gmail.com](mailto:TellSrSam@gmail.com)

## World: Crazy Note to ME

By Sr. Sam

Sometimes I sit and think, “Is it me?” We tend to do things and say things that don’t make sense to people or sometimes we look around and things don’t make sense to us. I was talking to a friend out of distress over how thinking against the societal norms is overwhelming – “So am I the one who needs to make a change?” He responded, “Don’t you know the world is crazy?”

We live in a society where the norm is teenage pregnancy, but abnormality is young marriage. Even arranged marriages are odd from societies with lasting relationships as opposed to rampant divorce rates invading growing in a number of societies. In this society of evolving thought processes and technology, rationale is absurd. While drinking causes myriads of accidents, deaths, broken homes, and health hazards, it remains a noted social symbol and status. Somehow, non-drinkers are considered oddities. Recently, I encountered a number of events that are so contradictory to my [or any sane person’s] principles that it’s mindboggling.

I’ve come across people who do not understand the reason behind using water to wash ourselves in the bathroom, but have the audacity to jeer and regard it *unsanitary* – really? There are people who think considering religion in every aspect of life is *unnecessary* – really? There are people who behave mysteriously different the next time you meet them because they’ve heard something about you without even confronting you about it. There are Muslims who change after they’ve gained some administrative control over a small organization. There are *Muslims* in well-known western organizations who think it’s ok to steal zakat! Subhanallah, may Allah protect us from falling into the path of destruction. Ameen.

We are Muslims who should embody the ways of Muhammad (peace be upon him), the most noble creature ever created by Allah. Hence, everything we do and hold dear are reflections of what *he* (peace be upon him) held dear. In turn, he relayed to us what our Creator endears in us. When the prophet (pbuh) came to his own people, who knew him and trusted him, with the message, he was branded a lunatic. He brought to them a message from their Creator; he eventually established a nation far reaching and influential than any other in the world.

We all have heard, history repeats itself, do you see the evidence of a time that think *our* practices are odd? In a society where modesty, so-

cial responsibility, and righteousness are being slowly thinned out to strengthen the individualistic ideality, where do we stand ourselves? Perhaps this is a very narrow approach that’s driven by sentimentality, but is it just me and my experiences? We’ve come across the tall-tale clique in our lifetimes and surprisingly still do in college. I am surprised to find it still amongst Muslims and especially sisters. Recently I’ve come across a really amazing event in Somalia via TEDtalks [focused on “ideas worth spreading”], YouTube.

The video is titled, “Mother and daughter doctor-heroes: Hawa Abdi + Deqo Mohamed”. The duo manages a hospital that sees over 19000 patients. They provide care for mothers and children and are willing to help you but they have only two

...thinking against societal norms is overwhelming...

rules. The first rule is, that there will be no division among the women. The second rule is, if any woman is abused by their spouse then the husbands will be jailed and remain there indefinitely. How beautiful and simple? Of course the west isn’t a monopoly on absurd practices; even Muslim countries have rigid backward cultural practices. However, it isn’t the practices but their venue that makes them graver. One, Muslims should know their Deen, if not seek to do so for it is a *fard*, a requirement of their practices of Islam. Why are injustice and tragedies so overly reported just from Muslim countries? Second, the west is a major source of intellectual collaboration. It also has the means to do so by ubiquitous means. So how are these two spheres the main sources of conflict and disarray? Contradiction is indeed quite mindboggling. The places that are ironically wealthy in many areas are the nations lacking in religious presence and homogenous societies [check data on these countries]. You’d think, we have to be like them to be better, but you know what? At this point, we need just need to re-evaluate our priorities.

The things that bring me back to reality – no not the one that makes you remember the five deadlines and the two days to do the required work – the reality we need to remind ourselves of is the *Akhira*, the Hereafter. Even though we can’t predict it, death calls on everyone at one point or other. We all need to remember that *every single* thing we do on this earth will be accounted for.

Do we ever reflect on the things we do every day? Do we consider what we did wrong that day, or whom we’d wronged? My most beloved sister and brother, I am not preaching, but noting to myself the severity of *going with the flow* from day to day without reflecting on my misdeeds. A previous MSA president had said once, quoting a noteworthy Muslim, if we do not improve something every day it is a step back for us from reaching perfection. As Muslims we seek to achieve perfection in everything, so that we can become more like the most perfect being (peace be upon him), who was perfect in every aspect.

So the next time a person is whispering in a gathering, gently remind them it’s a gathering so refrain from excluding others or speak in private. The next time a group of people speaks of an absentee with disregard, speak of that person’s good qualities and keep from dishonor. As a matter of fact, I am super sensitive when it comes to reading behavior and expressions, so I told a friend, “*oh my god she made a face at me, can you believe it? What’s her problem blah blah blah.*” She put me in my place by saying, “*Dude, you’re just too sensitive about these things.*” Your closest friends are a huge influence on you, believe it or not, so inspect them closely [as I mentioned in earlier issues]. It doesn’t matter if you do not fit in with the most prominent set of individuals or anywhere, if those you know you have good hearts and positive influences in your life, then that’s all that matters. Of course the people in the world aren’t evil... well just their thoughts and their actions [I like to believe]. Firmly hold onto your principles and question everything that challenges it. Do not allow fleeting forces to sway your foundation as Muslims.

When we realize we have problems, take it as a blessing from Allah because there’re people in the world who have no clue how they’re really projecting their personalities. He [AWJ] tells us these things so we can fix them, not to beat us into the depression we usually end up in. He loves us more than anyone else on this earth. It makes sense; He’s the only one with the Power to do anything about our states anyway. If anything upsets you, don’t go haywire and blame the world, confide in Allah ta’la and surely He will resolve your problems with no fail. The best of advisors, the best of confidantes, the best of listeners, the best of friends, and the best of judges is the most Beloved, Allah. If ever in doubt just make dua.



## 9 Out of 10 MSA Members...

Sarah Rooney

...are pre-med. You knew this before I told you. As such, I feel obligated to share some of what my experiences taught me as my parting gift. If you're a junior, you're most likely under the impression that "unlike my seniors, I will take my MCAT in April, and submit my AMCAS applications on the first day of June." If you're a senior, then you have either decided not to go to medical school after all, or, like me, have grudgingly come to accept that you would have to take at least a year off. What is true of every (serious) pre-med, though, is that we are only ever really eager to do things that can be checked off the extensive premed checklist. "Why are you volunteering?" "Because it looks good to have had patient interaction on the application." "Why are you doing research?" "Because it makes me more competitive." And so on, and so forth.

To be sure, part of the recipe of success is to have a battle tactic. In fact, you would need to have an iron gut to be able to stomach looking at how much loans you racked up throughout your medical education, and to attend to the bloodiest patients. But the medical field is unique in that it relies more on passion than on abilities. As the heads of the Mt. Sinai medical school committee told me and other volunteers, "we're not looking for the applicant with a GPA of 4.0 and MCAT score of 45. It'd be nice but we're like your parents: "We want to see you go to the right field for you, and so we look at your passion more than anything."

For your own sake, I would recommend that you start narrowing down your passion now. "I want to help people" is nice, but that can be accomplished through many other ways – cheaper and quicker means at that. To help you find that specific goal, I would like to give a reminder of the special position we are in.

I was in Indonesia last summer with the primary goal of attaining a "hands-on healthcare experience." But due to unforeseen circumstances (Allah gives us what is best for us), I found myself doing somewhat different activities than expected with a nursing institute. My first task was to give a presentation to nursing students – older than myself – on the differences between nursing homes in the U.S. and in Indonesia. At the end of the discussion my mentor brought up the point that Indonesian healthcare professionals, such as herself, work relentlessly to improve their standards up to the U.S. and European level. Like a typical American, I commented, "*Asal ada maunya*" or "If there's a will, there's a way." She gave a little laugh and said, "You mean *asal ada uangnya* – as long as there's the



money." After all, with the dire lack of governmental support, it's difficult to make meaningful progress, no matter how much "they will." That made me realize how privileged we are: In the U.S., it is not "audacious" to hope for a change- to think that our best effort will count. But how do physicians in Indonesia, Bangladesh, or Haiti improve their nation's healthcare system? They cannot even realistically hope.

Furthermore, who becomes the physician in such countries? If you cannot afford to pay at least \$80,000 a semester in cash, you cannot joke about going to med school – unless, of course, you have that 4.0/45 combo I mentioned. And we may grumble about the laborious process of applications, but the doctors I spoke to there, wished they had that system. "Here we don't conduct interviews. So we have many doctors that are actually socially inept, and even psychologically very disturbed." I'm not saying that all our American doctors are mentally sound; however, thanks to that process, we can have sufficient trust in our physicians.

Now let us go back to us, the MSA pre-meds. Since we have the privilege to hope, what do we wish to change? What will we do with the trust that will be bestowed upon us? There's no simple answer. We do, however, have the obligation to put in twice the work, because unlike the physicians in Third World countries, we had our road paved for us.

# The Story of Yusuf...

Allah describes the story of Prophet Yusuf as the most beautiful of all stories. But who was Yusuf and where did he come from? Prophet Ibrahim's son Ishaq, who lived in present-day Palestine, had a child named Yaqoob. In turn, Yaqoob had twelve sons and many daughters. One of them was named Yusuf. He and his baby brother, Benyamin, were from the same mother, while the other ten brothers were from a different mother.

To tell the story of Yusuf in words other than Allah's would be a great injustice. So we will find out what happened to Yusuf directly from the **translation** of Surah Yusuf. Prepare yourself for the most beautiful story!

## The Strange Dream

We are now going to tell you, [O Muhammad (s)], the best and most beautiful of stories in our revealing this portion of the Quran. You did not know this story before. (3)

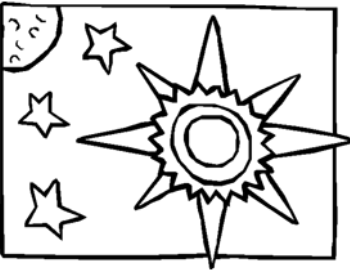
Yusuf told his father, "Father! Certainly I have seen [in a dream] eleven stars and the sun and the moon all bowing themselves to me!"

"O my son." His father replied. "Don't tell your brothers about this dream because they might plan against you (out of jealousy). Undeniably Shaytaan is a clear enemy of people! Your Lord will choose you and teach you how to understand dreams. He will complete His blessing upon the descendents of me, Yaqoob, just as He completed it to your forefathers Ibrahim and Ishaq in the past. Certainly, your Lord is all Knowing and Wise." (4-6)

Certainly, in the example of Yusuf and his brothers are lessons for people who look for the truth. (7)

One day, Yusuf's older brothers complained amongst themselves, "Our father loves Yusuf and his younger brother (Benyamin) more than us, even though we are just as good! Our father is obviously out of his mind!"

Then one of the brothers suggested, "So let's kill Yusuf, or send him away to some far off land. Then our father will give us all his attention. There will be plenty of time to be good later!"



But one of the other brothers (who was not as bad) said, "Don't kill him! Instead why don't we throw him down into the bottom of the well? Then some passing caravan will find him and take him away." (8-10)

After they all agreed to this plan the brothers went to their father and asked permission to take Yusuf out for a day of fun. When their father hesitated, they whined,

"Father! Why don't you trust Yusuf with us? We really love him. Send him with us tomorrow to enjoy himself and play. We'll take good care of him."

"It saddens me," their father replied, "that you want to take him out. I'm afraid a wolf might eat him while you are not looking."

"Together, we are such a big, strong group, that if a wolf does eat him, then we must be real losers" (11-14)

So they took Yusuf out with them (and assured their father everything will be okay.) But secretly, they had all decided to throw him down the well. When they grabbed Yusuf and threw him down the dark hole, We (Allah) told him in his heart, "One day you will bring the truth about this plan of theirs when they won't even know you." (15)

They returned to their father at night crying. "Oh father! We went racing with each other and left Yusuf to watch our things and a wolf ate him. But you'll probably never believe us even though we are telling the truth." Then they pulled out his shirt which they had secretly stained with false blood.

Their father, Yaqoob, said, "No! Rather, your souls have made you to something to him, so patience is most fitting. Only Allah's help can be asked." (16-18)

## The Journey to Egypt

Later that day, a caravan of travelers was passing by and decided to send their water-boy to the well for some water. When he let down his bucket into the well, he shouted, "Hey! Look! Good News! There is a boy in here."

Then they hid him like a treasure! But Allah knows what they were doing!

They sold him (in Egypt) for the miserable price of a few silver coins. They considered him of little value. (19-20)

(The man who brought him took him home and said to his wife,) "Treat him well because he might bring us some good, or we could even adopt him as a son."

In this way, We (Allah) settled Yusuf in a new land, so We could teach him how to interpret dreams. Allah has full power and control over His plans, but most people don't realize it. (21)

When Yusuf (grew to be a young man.) We gave him strength and knowledge. This is how We reward those who do good. But Yusuf's owner's wife was attracted to him and wanted to seduce him and change his nature.

One day she bolted the doors shut and said to him, "Now come to me (my sweet)! I seek refuge from Allah!" "Cried Yusuf. "Your husband is my master! He's the one who gave me this good place to live. Certainly nothing good comes to people who do wrong!"

But she desired him greatly, and he would have desired her, but he remembered the signs of his Lord. We turned him away from (all) shameful deeds. He was one of Our sincere servants. (22-24)

They both raced each other to the door, and she tore his shirt from behind. (When Yusuf flung the door open) there, in front of them, stood her husband.

(Thinking quickly,) the wife said, "What other punishment can there be for a man trying to seduce and rape your wife but prison or a painful beating!"

"But she's the one who tried to seduce and rape me!" cried Yusuf.

(Yusuf's owner couldn't make up his mind on who to believe), so one of the maids suggested a solution, "If his shirt is torn from the front, then her story is true, and he is a liar! (Because that meant that he was coming at her and she ripped his shirt out of defense.) But if his shirt is torn from the back, then she is the liar and he is telling the truth!" (Because that meant that she grabbed his shirt from the back as he was trying to run away from her.) (25-27)

When he saw that Yusuf's shirt was indeed torn from the back, he scolded his wife, "No! It's your trap! Your trap is strong!"

Then he looked at Yusuf and said, "Yusuf, forget about this incident!" Turning back to his wife he said, "Ask forgiveness for your sin. Certainly you were sinful." (28-29)

Does the wife seek revenge against Yusuf?  
Is Yusuf ever reunited with his parents?

FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENS NEXT IN THE STORY OF YUSUF, NEXT ISSUE!

# *Diary of a Mad Man Senior*

By Farooq Zafar

Monday, January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011

Dear Diary,

Isn't it funny how every new year begins with the same joyous fanfare? The same icosahedral crystal ball at Times Square, hovering over the massive crowds of excited tourists—Twittering proof of their attendance amidst their spasmodic shivers—with millions more couch-surfing at home, tons of confetti waiting to be strewn over midtown through an archaic exercise in futility, only to be removed from sight after a few hours; the same lists of resolutions about diet and exercise, now relegated to the convoluted interface of a productivity app or two that will be promptly hidden or deleted after the now-energy-efficient icosahedral crystal ball drops, abandoning resolve for habit; the same intentions before God, that this year will be different?

Yet soon after the clock strikes midnight, perhaps upon waking the very next morning (or that afternoon, for those readers who, like yours truly, generously overslept) and checking one's email inbox, or perusing the headlines of one's favorite paper/blog/rant/newsfeed, one realizes that the mundane realities of life are ever present, the dregs of circumstance at the bottom of one's glass-half-empty year

already begun to settle. There is another natural disaster somewhere, another celebrity scandal, the recession continues. What, then, makes this year any different?

I suspect that it is the psychological incentive of embracing the unknown, unwritten and untold events



and history of the year-to-happen, that every single person is given a new pen by which to write their life as it unfolds, one second at a time. I'll spare myself the headache of debating the reconciliation between fate and free will, commenting only that it is a mercy from the Almighty that we understand such a powerful incentive—though in truth, merely an annual, albeit arbitrary, earthly position amongst the cosmos—what we now call a new year, as another fresh start and blank slate.

Still, I think we can do better. If you think about it, isn't every dawn

another fresh start? Don't the days in the lunar calendar begin at sunset? Therefore, don't we have two new opportunities every single day? Perhaps this is why the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was especially given to supplication after the morning and evening prayers. This is relevant: as a month of the new year has already come and gone, we are now met by the blessed month of Rabi' al-Awwal, the month of the Prophet's birth. Therefore, it would be wise and beneficial for all of us to revisit the biographies that detail the trials and triumphs of his life, that we may learn how to properly live our own, sending our peace and blessings upon him constantly along the way.

Let us follow his noble example then, and choose to see every day, twice a day, perhaps even every ticking second, as yet another fresh start, so that we may be in a state of constant renewal, spiritual growth and the chase for His acceptance and forgiveness, such that the seemingly arbitrary positions of our individual souls follow a trajectory that slopes ever more Heaven-bent, in the proximity of God, the Exalted.

Yours in faith,  
Farooq Zafar

“There are five remedies for the heart: The company of the pious, recitation of the Qur'an, emptying the inner self (of vices), praying during the night, and crying at dawn.”

-Abdullah Anaki



## *Editor's Note*

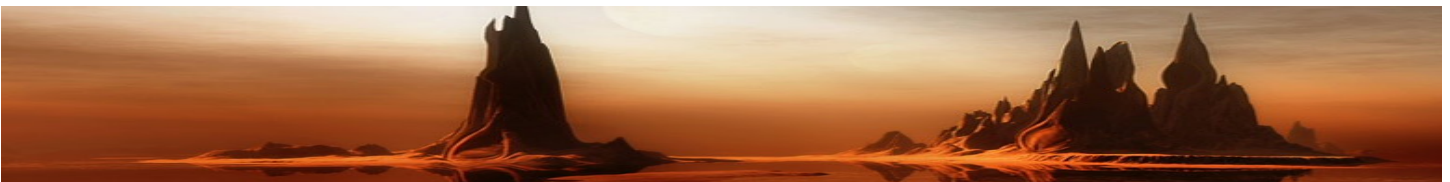
*By Khushbakht Chaudhary*

Winter break lacked pressing obligations. It was the first time in a really long time that I was able to revisit the tiresome but rebellious youthful feel of staying up until Fajr catching up on *House* and my growing list of fiction reads, as well as movies that were past due years, and then sleeping into the late, cold afternoons as I dove right back into the same routine the very next evening. But I can safely say that I spent a very small portion of my winter break sorting through several relationships that were on the verge of doom and destruction with a very dear friend of mine – most of which were difficult to salvage under the circumstances which were explained to me in fine detail. I spent the larger part of my winter break understanding my own relationships with the countless people in my life – near and dear, and then those on the inside, outside and sidelines – friends who lived a life of their own with me being a vacant territory – “Hey, haven’t seen you in ages. I need your help with something. Do you mind?” We’re both the enemy and victim. I am someone’s best friend. I was someone’s best friend. I’m a pocketbook friend – “Where you been, girl? Let’s grab coffee so YOU can update me on YOUR life.” Some days I was the, “Gotta invite her if I’m inviting *her*” friend. Other days I was definitely the, “I’m hungry, make me a sandwich” comrade. Though most days I usually got, “You got a minute? I’ve got something on my mind.” Sadly, it doesn’t work the other way around. I’ve tried. “Hey, so something was bothering – “ “Mhmmm... so I was talking to this guy the other day.” Okay. I guess you really don’t have to hear me out then. Okay. That works too. I guess.

Relationship markers were always very vague and at a blurring point in which distinction of certainty and thorough understanding of the companionship (if there ever was any) was misunderstood and I, seeing my dear friend having to give up a number of individuals in her life, was pushed to – not evaluate... it wasn’t some step-by-step process I resorted to – let’s say... I ‘thought through,’ and reached out to a number of individuals who moved on to other stages of their lives. Truth is, I missed them. Sometimes it takes the witnessing of another’s pain in losing the weight of a relationship to realize that you too may have a void that you really have gathered into a dustpan and left in some barren region of your insides. We hear it all the time. “With every loss, comes one or more gains.” Relationships are ever-changing, and so know that if one walks out, many more walk in. I lost one friend, maybe two. I reconnected and gained that one or two, times ten. Loss. The heartache becomes old news after a while and to be quite honest, I’m appreciative. The grievance period attached to it feels unfamiliar and new every time it revisits – something my friend admitted to. It makes the experience much more ‘fair’ to each passing of a partner, friend, significant other. It’s pretty damn romantic too when you’re trying to process the rush of feelings and other little trinkets of forget-me-nots and BFFs-for-life that they may have left behind. My favorite? Our favorite? “Love you, forevs.” Yeah. Pretty romantic, if you ask me. What happens initially when someone really does decide to check-out? Not their fault? Okay. What happens initially when you make someone check-out because you had a moment of being a human and made a mistake or two?

You try to understand where you went wrong. You feel alone and are desperate to not fall back into the “BFF” category – maybe make it back to the make-me-a-sandwich category which is a step underneath and pocketbook friend? Well that’s two steps under the first. But that’s okay. You’ll take it.

“No,” is what rolls of your tongue amidst staring eyes, but deep down, I know it’s not true. When you find yourself in front of a mirror, and you then find yourself romanticizing the lines that make up a shape, the indents and creases of a yesteryear. When you find yourself practicing your smile, lifting your left eyebrow in excitement and then your right. You find yourself practicing what never truly was you, but was rather an impression all witnessed that yesteryear and held so near and dear to themselves as being the young image they adored in every which way. Hours spent in front of these numerous mirrors in dust-lined rooms, heavy curtains, an uncomfortable musk of a scent. Debonair but never quite striking. It is a romance we created for ourselves as we sat across from a mirror and peered into eyes that we lied to but we believed ever so desperately in. Pouting our lips, laughing silently, tapping our fingers, pinky, ring, middle, index. Take two – raising one eyebrow, loosening the other, vice versa. Again. It’s the love I have with the box which tucks away the seconds that ring in your ear of every minute, hour, quarter, halves, days. It never fills. Really. Let’s be alone. I and I. Let ‘I’ grow old and build a temple of moments sweet and tart, some shrine that we can call my own. Our own. “I” shrine. You can be as ugly as they want you to be. Or you can be as show-stopping as your heart lets you. Don’t leave the choice of freedom completely dictate to the thing that beats, but rather Romance. Regardless of the type, relationships are always romantic and so you take the “R” out of the Romance and make it one with an “r” because there’s always a light at the end of a terrible falling out. It usually flickers, too. Don’t be mislead. Opportunity—romance.



## Prayer Times

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

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 the shadow of an object is twice its height.*

***Interested in Writing for the Minaret?***  
 Email Submissions to [minaret@gmail.com](mailto:minaret@gmail.com)

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- Khush =]