

In the name of Allah,
The Stony Brook Minaret
the most Beneficent, the most Merciful.

The official newsletter of the Stony Brook Muslim Students' Association

The Minaret
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"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.

STATE OF THE MSA

Zain Ali, MSA BROTHERS' SECRETARY

Bismillah walHamdulillah wasSalaatu wa Salaam 'Alaa Rasulillah

Throughout my 4 semesters here at Stony Brook, my experience with the MSA, as everyone else's, has been incredibly unique as well as memorable. From the laughs you share, to the knowledge you gain, to the life you live- it's an experience that inevitably has a huge impact on every single person that is a part of it- whether they'd like to acknowledge it or not. While for some, it's simply the next stage in their life, for others it's a completely new beginning into a world they hadn't ever explored. For many, stepping onto this campus may very well have been their first scholastic exposure to a larger community of Muslims their age- resulting somewhat in an inner feeling of completion and the satisfaction of an age-old void. Despite years of trying to fit in, they finally found a place where they were understood. But sadly, as human beings, as we are given privileges many a times we forget to look at the bigger picture.

This address is meant to be a commentary on the state of the MSA as a whole- in no way is it meant to be a tyrannical tirade, a singling out of any people individually nor a mass hating. As Muslims we cannot forget that enjoining good and forbidding evil is a responsibility incumbent on every Muslim and this is my attempt to fulfill that responsibility, to some extent. You have been warned, ya ikhwati wa akhawaat.

Where's our Hayah? Where is our honor?

As Muslims, we learn that Hayaa'h or shy bashfulness, is a part of Iman (faith) as clearly demonstrated in Ahadtih such as the following:

Narrated 'Abdullah (bin 'Umar) (raa) : Once Allah's Apostle (saws) passed by an Ansari (man) who was admonishing to his brother regarding Haya' (shyness). On that Allah's Apostle (saws) said, "**Leave him as Haya' (shyness) is a part of faith.**"

Belief - Sahih Bukhari: Volume 1, Book 2, Number 24

"Faith (Belief) consists of more than sixty branches (i.e. parts). And Haya is a part of faith." (Bukhari)

Understanding that Hayah is an integral part of imaan without which one's imaan cannot be deemed 100% perfect (and Allah knows best), we need to really get with it. How many times do we see brothers running around and raising their voices drowning out the sounds of nearly everyone else in the Student Union? How many times do we see or hear our sisters giggling voraciously loud and raising their voices with one another? What has happened to our concept of Hayaa'h? Have we forgotten where we are? Being that we are in State University and that we live here as a minority, as Muslims living amongst a majority of non-believers, we cannot forget the added responsibility we have as individuals and as an MSA. Every single person living in such a context has no choice but to become a daa'iyah, a caller to Islam, to some extent. Now the question may be posed, "but I don't explicitly give Da'wah, nor do I really know how to- how am I a daa'iyah?" The answer is simple. Being that we are a minority in this country and given the current socio-political face of Muslims in general across the world, eyes are on us. A lot of eyes are on us. So we as Muslims have to step up our game and live according to the Sunnah of the one who was sent by the Creator of the heavens and the earth in order to teach us our Deen- the Sunnah of Rasulullah (saws), not only as an act of obedience but to convey to the people this Deen, for the sake of Allah. If we, the ones whom Allah has entrusted such a responsibility to, don't convey the message, who will?

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR *Chaplain*

Asalam alaikum wa rahmatuAllah wa barakatahu

“And we have not sent you Oh Mohamed but a Mercy to all creations”

The ultimate message of Rasullallah is the journey of all that insures that Mercy encompasses all of Allah's creations. Islam is a faith that derives its roots from the Mercy and the peace that Allah has created within each and every soul, and each and every creation. The element of worship and understanding one’s spiritual responsibility to his soul that will be through the time given to him on this Earth, will allow him to be able to achieve the realization of Mercy and success in this life and the hereafter. Islam requires us to extend Allah's Mercy to all people. From the mother to the father, to the siblings to the extended family, to the family of believers, and to the family of mankind, as well as o the earth and to all creations of Allah—to respect the majesty and the wisdom of Allah in creating different varieties of people and things. To know that piety lies within your soul and your heart. When the Prophet (saws) was asked where piety is he pointed to his heart three times. It is piety that stems into the heart that must carry the wisdom of mercy in all of our actions.

While we stand firm in our aqeedah, knowing that there is no creator but Allah and that Prophet Mohammad (saws) is the seal of prophets and messengers, we give ultimate respect to all the prophets that have come before him: Prophet Abraham, Moses and Jesus (Peace be upon them all). The Qu’ran called the Jews and the Christians people of the book, for they are those who have received heavenly messages from our Creator. We must together understand the power of holding on to the rope of Allah and showing Mercy even when we disagree and know that we will be held accountable before Allah for all that we do.

“And for the righteous are gardens in nearness in their lord with rivers flowing beneath; therein is their eternal home. With companions pure and holy and the good pleasure of Allah those who show patience firmness and self control; who are true in word and deed who worship devoutly; who spend in the way of Allah and who pray for forgiveness in the early hours of the morning” (Ahli Imran 3:15-17).

The Prophet (saws) said “Lose no time to do good work before you are caught up by one the seven calamities” (Al Tirimithi 22). Watch your tongue for it is a very dangerous organ. As Rasullallah said, people will enter the hellfire by what their tongues have uttered. Watch your temper- Allah says that those who will attain paradise are those who are patient, and those who hold their anger and give glad tidings. Tolerance is to harbor good thoughts and is a part of well-conducted worship [Abu Dawud].

“Whoever desires to purify his heart, then let him prefer Allah to his desires.” Ibn Qayyim

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate those of the MSA board who are graduating and thank them for a job well done and may Allah reward them, President Nabiha Zakir, Vice president Arslan Rahman, and Secretary Nazia Rahman.

Also all those who have worked with me this year, thank you- Sumaiya, Arsalan, Zain, Roman, Mohammed and anyone else I have not mentioned.

And for good news, the first Sony Brook student to win the Harry Truman Scholar Award is a member of our own community. His name is Yaseen Eldik, and his topic was about combating Islamaphobia—specifically, how we as Muslims and non-Muslims would be able to combat prejudices toward minorities and Muslims. InshaAllah all of you and all your successes will help make this world a better place. That is the best dawah.



Why Me? - A Friday Khutbah

By Tamoor Ilyas

Allah says in the last ayah of Surah Baqarah: *La yu kalif Allahu nafsan il la wuss aha.*

Allah does not burden a soul more than it can bear. Insha'Allah in this khutbah I'll explain what this means for our position and purpose in this life and the next.

First, I want us to take a moment and ask ourselves why Allah chose us to be Muslims. Whether we were born into Muslim families or found Islam ourselves, nothing can happen except what Allah wills and there are no coincidences. Think of it this way: if the world was a village of 100 people, 21 would be Muslim. That's one out of five so far. If that doesn't seem like much, remember this is counting only the people alive right now. Since Adam and Hawa, throughout thousands of years of human history and more than a hundred thousand prophets, we were picked to follow the last and greatest prophet and be part of the last and greatest ummah for the final chapter of human history. Impressive right? It gets better.

Allah chose to shield everyone in this room from poverty, hunger, violence and disease and gave us an education. You know that village I mentioned before, 50 out of the 100 would be malnourished, and if you can speak and practice your faith without harassment, imprisonment, torture, or death then you're luckier than the 48 who couldn't. And out of that whole village only 1 would have a college education.

How would we act if we got the honor of medical school or graduate school? I know I would be running up and down the halls and writing on Facebook in all caps. But what about the honor of being that 1 percent with an education? What about the honor of food and of safety? And what about the honor of Islam? Ask yourselves, why did Allah pick us for these and not someone else?

If you're thinking, "alright I get it, Allah picked me. Now what?" Think about this - there was a scholar who once said, the worst question Allah could ask him on the Day of Judgment was "I gave you knowledge, so what did you do with it?" If Allah asked us, "I gave you college, what did you do with it?" would we remember working as hard as we could, or would we remember sleeping through our classes and making jokes about our bad grades? The same goes for our health, our time, and our faith. The point of this khutbah is that our Islam and our existence are mercies not rights. Allah can take them away whenever He wants. This is why we need to use these blessings to the best of our ability to worship Him sincerely.

I'm not saying that we have to be perfect. None of us are. But that's no reason to lower our standards. Ideals aren't meant to be reached, but rather to guide us. It's on the path to our ideal, where we find reward. Like the mystic poet and sheikh, Rumi, said, the one who dies on the path, is counted as if he had arrived. Even if you don't believe you can step up, remember what I said before. No soul is burdened beyond what it can bear. If Allah gave you this challenge, then you at least have the potential to meet it. And when Allah believes in us, who are we to disagree? Though, there is always the other option. We can ignore all this and be like the ummahs who were given scriptures before us and failed to live up to their obligations. Allah describes them in the fifth ayat of Surah Jum'ah as "a donkey who carries books on its back." Like the animal, these people simply carried around their knowledge, neither benefiting from it nor acting on it. Insha'Allah, on the Day of Judgment when Allah asks us what we did with our lives, we can have an answer that pleases Him.

The path to Allah can be hard. Imam Ahmed, one of the greatest revivers of the Sunnah, lived a life of poverty, hardship and trials. One day, his son asked him, "Father when will we ever relax?" The imam looked him in the eye and said, "With the first step we take into Jannah."

But to make our path easier Allah has given us a billion and a half potential allies. Like the Prophet (saw) said in a hadith: The believers are to one another like a building whose parts support one another.

The Muslims sitting next to you were picked by Allah just like you were. We're here to work with each other and not to put each other down. You know when Allah sent Musa and Harun to Pharaoh, He told them to "Speak to him courteously." This was the same man who enslaved the children of Israel, tortured them, and claimed he was a god. Yet Allah told the messengers to be courteous to him. How much MORE do your brothers and sisters in Islam deserve?

Muslims, Islam is not a one person show. So if we want to segregate ourselves by meaningless things like race, remember we all came from Adam and Hawa. If you want to do it according to who's Sunni and who's Shia, even if you both say *la ilaha il Allah*, remember there are people who aren't even Muslim who would love to see the Ummah cannibalize itself on sectarian differences. And finally, if you want to do it based on who you think is pious and who isn't, remember this hadith: During the lifetime of the Prophet (saw) there was a man named Abdullah whose nickname was Don-

key, and he used to make the messenger of Allah (saw) laugh. But the Prophet (saw) punished him because the man used to drink alcohol. One day, he was brought to the Prophet on the same charge again, and punished again. On that, a sahaba said “O Allah, curse him! How often is he brought to the Prophet on this charge!” The Prophet (saw) said “Do not curse him, for by Allah I know he loves Allah and His messenger.” This was a sahaba that misjudged the alcoholic man. What do we think about one of us who wants to decide who is a good Muslim and who isn’t?

Muslims, we’re on center stage right now. There are revolutions in the Middle East and North Africa for human rights and everyone wants to know who we are. There are congressmen like Peter King who want to single out our community for so called radicalization hearings and who want the government to monitor Muslims in ways that parallel the treatment of the Japanese during World War 2 and the way a paranoid government hunted communists in the 1950s. If there were ever a time to get our act together, it would be now.

May Allah allow us to wake up and live up to the potential He gave us because an Ummah asleep can never help itself. May Allah allow us to recognize the people around us as our friends and allies, not enemies because an ummah divided can never stand.

Diary of a Mad ~~Man~~ Senior

By Farooq Zafar

Friday, April 1st, 2011

Dear Diary,

Lately, I have had only one thought running through my mind: when will this winter end? When can we bust out the knee-length shorts and hit the beach? Will we be able to? Or will we have to wear down jackets and Himalayan sheepskin bodysuits to the annual spring picnic? Okay, I lied. I have several thoughts running through my mind. As the ghoulish spectre of graduation swiftly advances, as the grains of sand representing the number of days in the hourglass representing my time as an undergraduate are both discernible and dwindling, that nauseating feeling of nostalgia hits me anywhere and everywhere I go on campus. The fountain by the Administration Building? That’s where we tried to do wudu. The balcony of Javits 100? If and when I did ever go to lectures, that was where you would find me snoozing next to the gunners, who are like most species: they are more intimidated of you than you are of them. The MSA balcony? Ah, hallowed hallway of such cherished memories and wasted downtime, a place I have a love-hate relationship with, one that’s witnessed so many friendships made, many a viral cat meme video watched, host of the occasional argument and

the even rarer ‘Wrestle with Raad.’

And that got me thinking. To whom do we owe all of this to? Firstly, and ultimately, all blessings and favors come from God, the Generous and Gentle. Moreover, the opportunity to seek an education is a privilege—like everything else, even life—not a birthright, and to do so at a prestigious public university that happens to be climbing up the national rankings in everything quantifiable, if that sort of thing means anything to you, is even more reason to be grateful. We have got it good, folks. This couldn’t be truer if you consider just how easy it is to be a Muslim on campus nowadays. And that leads me to my contention: we should thank Sister Sanaa.

As our beloved Prophet Muhammad (may the peace and blessings of God be upon him, his family and companions) once said, “one who has not thanked people has not thanked God.” The tireless advocacy, spirited activism and maternal concern that our chaplain has for each of us, the prayers she makes for our well being and continued academic and personal success every single day, are truly heavy things to reflect upon and show gratitude for. The prayer room; the space for Friday prayer; the wudu stations; the halal food on campus; all the amenities of our club—from the iftars we had, to

the logistics behind every committee that’s behind every event, to the newsletter you are presently reading—and if that were not enough, having a spiritual advisor and surrogate mother on campus...the list goes on and on. I count myself amongst the lucky few who have been able to have conversations ranging on life, politics and religion with her, and have been luckier still to receive her timely advice and sincere counsel. *Alhamdulillah.*

So what should we do for her? Like any mother, whatever her children in Islam offer will never truly suffice. Start with gratitude. Let it be spoken. The next time you see Sister Sanaa—and this is a polite reminder, first to myself before others, come to the general body meetings!—verbally thank her for all her hard work and dedication. I’m a firm believer in the hidden mechanisms of the Unseen, and I always have a certain peace and ease of heart and mind whenever I am in her company. Next, be sure to attend the upcoming chaplaincy fundraiser. Finally, earn the best grades possible and succeed in your studies. Like any proud parent would, that is all she expects of us. So from the bottom of our hearts, *jazakAllah khayr*, Sister Sanaa!

With genuine gratitude,
Farooq Zafar

A Review on “Stones into Schools”

By *Shamayal Jamil*

My mother is one of eleven siblings. She is one of seven sisters, the second youngest daughter, and third youngest child in the family. Living in a joint family where it was customary for the daughters to be married, my mom was one of the few girls who had a strong head on her shoulders. As a child, some of her best friends were her boy cousins and she would never hesitate to beat them at any sport, game, or contest. Today she would be referred to as a classic case of a regular tomboy.

My mother’s education was handled as many other things in her life. With a very rigorous attitude. Her education was primarily in an all English school. The school itself was built by her grandfather. Her early school years went by with ease and she got decent grades. But when it came to her attaining further education, there was unease and turmoil. My mother’s own father and grandfather were against her going to college. Her father, who had become a better man because of education, was against her. Her grandfather, a man that was distinguished by the British Army, a man who was nothing short of a diplomat at the time, was against her going to college. Her elder brother and mother were the only ones who dug in their heels and never let down. With their support, her father and her grandfather were swayed, and she was allowed to go to college.

As of today, she is the first girl in her family to go to college. She is still one of the few girls in her family to have gotten a college degree. Out of all of her seven sisters, she was the first to get such high education, and coincidentally, was married the latest in her family.

Greg Mortenson is working

for a goal similar to what happened to my mother. He is looking to educate children, particularly girls, who may not be in the best circumstance to go to school. It is true, my mother may not have gone through the extent of what some of the kids in Pakistan and Afghanistan, whom Greg Mortenson is dedicated to help, have gone through, but the story has relevancy. They are both facing hurdles that need to be crossed, all in the name of education. And Greg Mortenson is still trying to reach education throughout Asia in the various places across the continent it is seldom seen.

In this sequel to Three Cups of Tea, Greg Mortenson explores further into the depths of Asia to bring education to parts that desperately need it. In 1999, Greg Mortenson was approached by the Kirghiz Tribesmen. Then he made a promise to the tribesmen that he would come to their land and build them a school - a promise that almost took ten years to complete. Multiple times, he traveled to Afghanistan trying to fulfill the promise he made, but his plans were delayed in 2005 by a horrific event.

In 2005, the region known as Azad Kashmir was hit with a terrible earthquake. At this moment, Greg Mortenson had to put everything on hold and try to help in this tumultuous area of land. He sent his associates and staff to the region first, and later arrived there himself. What he saw then was complete utter destruction all around him. Many people had lost loved ones, and lost many precious things amidst the rubble that followed the quake. One of the things that many people lost in the aftermath was order and structure in their daily lives, especially the children. The way that

Greg Mortenson brought order back

into their lives was by rebuilding schools. And he didn’t just build schools, but built schools that were up to regulation and were able to withstand earthquakes. He helped with the aid that the people very much required and needed.

In 2007, Greg Mortenson was able to return to Afghanistan and establish schools in the depths of the Taliban region and build schools across the country to get to the Wakhan to fulfill the promise of the Kirghiz tribesmen. He, along with his staff, were able to establish schools where many had thought was impossible to. In places where it seemed most unlikely to establish schools for girls, he was able to establish schools. In only a few years, he was establish so much, changing many lives, and give people something that would help them for generations: an education.

There is a difference between the narration of this book and the previous book. The narration is by Greg Mortenson in one book, while in Three Cups of Tea, it varied between narrations. Also in this book, the story is revolved around many other characters and introduces the interactions between Greg Mortenson and these characters. His staff, or the “dirty dozen” as Greg Mortenson calls them, are the main people besides Greg Mortenson that the story revolves around. Referring to his staff, Greg Mortenson says: “If there was a Muslim version of *Entourage*, it would probably be modeled on my staff”.

If anyone is interested in fundraising for the education of girl schools talk to the MSA with your ideas. We would love to see some fundraising ideas for this amazing cause.

Why They Hesitate to be Our Friend

By Sarah Rooney

*“It is urgent to stop blaming ‘society-that-does-not-like-us’ or ‘islamophobia’ or ‘racism’ and thereby justifying guilty **passivity**. That such phenomena exist cannot be denied, but Muslims must tackle them by getting involved as citizens and by fighting against injustice, racism, discrimination, populist stigmatization discourse, and hypocrisies.” -Tariq Ramadan*

Honestly, this type of discussion is venturing out of my Minaret-comfort-zone a bit. Yet it has become so glaringly obvious – more glaring to me, perhaps, after 4 years here– that I would find it remiss to not say a word or two about it. The “it” I will break into 3 parts:

The “conservative/liberal shift” within this MSA:

(Disclaimer: I am not here talking about the political connotations of those words.) Some of us are very conscious of which side of the extreme division we belong to. And some of us are in a confused middle ground, or remain electively neutral like Switzerland. In this MSA, apparently your position largely depends on your opinions regarding intermixing, though not limited to that. It causes many of us discomfort to see how the gender divide in the Union and outside it somehow blur, no doubt. Yet, it does little good for those of us in that spectrum to constantly lament and reminisce over “the good old days,” or for the more liberal side to unabashedly mix, being free from the “watchdogs (aka *haram police*) of the past.” What we desperately need right now is the understanding and respect for differences in beliefs. As the Prophet (may peace and blessings be upon him) said, “Islam is not about compulsion.” So, just as the conservatives should not bark censures and impose their beliefs in that manner, neither should the liberals cause an uncomfortable environment for their fellow MSAers, which is also imposing in its own right. As to the extent of the propriety of interactions, I leave that subject to someone more qualified to speak on it.

Topic a) reminded me of a recent incident in which I had a minor debate with a few brothers on feminism. To be quite honest, I became a Women’s Studies major out of the sole desire to be an OB/GYN; therefore I initially never quite, and still have reserves now to, nestle the subject of feminism in its full Western, secular sense within my bosom. Yet I was incited to “enlighten” the brothers, if you will, on the subject because I am concerned that many Muslims’ idea of feminism betrays something greater: the mentality of our Muslim youth, or as Tariq Ramadan eloquently words it, **the contemporary Muslim psyche**:

“The psychological dimension in the debate over women should not be downplayed...This has fostered a kind of reflex reaction in the contemporary Muslim psyche: the less Western the discourse about women, the more it is perceived as Islamic, and conversely, the more Islamic it is, the more it should be restrictive and oppose Western permissiveness whose objective is supposed to be to undermine religion and morals” (64)

If you were deterred by the size of the quote to read it the first time, read it again. Because this kind of mentality will inevitably keep us close-minded, and hinder us from integrating with this society. Realize that what is “Western” or “American” is not necessarily antithetical to Islam. If it was so, you are probably in agony every second you spend in this country. If the Prophet (pbuh) was able to come to terms with non-Muslims in his time and location, I really fail to see how we cannot agree on far greater subjects here and now, where there is a diversity of beliefs. I learned from my WST classes, for example, that Jewish women make ghusl/tahara just as Muslim women do after menstruation. And that there is a branch of feminism called “maternal feminism,” which urges women to embrace their maternal side and not endeavor to be like men – something I believe Muslims can appreciate.

Another excellent point Tariq Ramadan brings up in his book What I Believe is that Muslims need to get rid of the “**victim mind-set**” :

*“It is urgent to stop blaming ‘society-that-does-not-like-us’ or ‘islamophobia’ or ‘racism’ and thereby justifying guilty **passivity**. That such phenomena exist cannot be denied, but Muslims must tackle them by getting involved as citizens and by fighting against injustice, racism, discrimination, populist stigmatization discourse, and hypocrisies” (58).*

While this particular mind-set may not be so prevalent in our MSA, I do, however, see the danger in our MSA (which a brother pointed out as well in a recent *khutbah*) of its members finding themselves too content in the Union bubble. Don’t wait to start joining other clubs (on a side note, joining other clubs that have majority MSA members anyway does not count – that’s just MSA part II) in your junior year. The world recognizes people like Yaseen Eldik, who although is not in the 2nd floor of the Union 24/7, is nevertheless using his time to make changes for our Ummah, and arguably more effectively too. What Muslims need is to “broaden their interests to include social problems beyond those related to Islam” (59). Be proactive; make people WANT you to be their leader or an integral member of their community.



The Story of Yusuf

Part Three

Missed Part Two? Read it online at <http://www.stonybrookmsa.org/minaret/>

He is Innocent!

(When the wine-pourer returned with the meaning of the dream) the king said, "Bring that young man to me."

The messenger went to the prison to release Yusuf, but he refused to leave his cell, saying, "Go back to your master and ask him, "What are the ladies who cut their hands up to?" My Lord is aware of their trap." (50)

The king then ordered the ladies (who were involved to be gathered before him) and asked, "What were your intentions when you tried to seduce Yusuf from his own self?"

The ladies answered, "God save us!" We don't know anything bad about him!"

Then the wife said, "The truth is now clear to all. It was I who tried to seduce him from his nature. He is indeed true and virtuous."

(When Yusuf was informed of the proceeding) he said, "I wanted this (public hearing) so that (my previous owner) would know that I was never false to him in his absence and that Allah will never guide the plan of the betrayers. Nor do I absolve myself (of all blame); the human soul is certainly prone to evil unless my Lord gives His Mercy. Certainly, my Lord is Forgiving and Most Merciful." (51-53)

Then the king commanded, "Bring him to me; I will take him as my special servant."



When Yusuf was brought, the king reassured him, "Be certain that today you are before me and that your position is firmly set with your honesty fully proved!"

Yusuf said, "Put me in charge of all the storehouses in the land. I will guard them like one who knows their importance." (54-55)

Thus, We put Yusuf in the position where he could take anything in the land he pleased. We give our Mercy to whom We please and We never let the reward of those who do good be lost. Certainly, the reward of the next life is the best for those who believe and are constant in doing good." (56-57)

The Brothers Come Forth

(The foretold famine struck, forcing people from far and wide to go to Egypt to buy food). Among these came Yusuf's brothers. When they came before his (court) to buy things, they didn't recognize him, although Yusuf knew instantly who they were.



After he had given them the supplies they had needed, he told them, "Bring to me the youngest brother you have from the same father as yourselves. Don't you see that I give generously and that I provide the best hospitality? Now, if you don't bring him to me, you will not get any more (grain) from me nor shall you ever come near me again." (58-60)

They answered, "We will certainly get our way from his father. Certainly we will do it." Then, Yusuf secretly told his servants to put their money back into their saddlebags. (And that it should be done in such a way) that they wouldn't find out until they returned to their people. (When they reach home and find their money) they would surely want to come back (for more



food.) (60-62)

When the brothers returned to their father, they said, "Father! We won't get any more grain unless we take our youngest brother with us next time. So send (Benjamin) with us so we can get our supplies. We will take good care of him."

"Shall I trust you with him when I had already trusted you with his brother (Yusuf) so long ago?" He replied. "But Allah is the best to take care of things, and He is the Most Merciful of all." (63-64)

Then, when they were unpacking their supplies, they found their money (in the grain). They said, "Father! What more can we ask for? Our money has been returned to us, so we can go and get more food for our family. We'll take good care of our brother and add a full load of grain (for him) besides. It's only a small amount extra." (65)

Yaqoob said, "I'll never send him with you unless you swear a special promise with men, in Allah's name, that you will be sure to bring him back unless you yourselves are trapped." After they had sworn their promise he said, "Allah, be the Witness and Guardian over all that we say!"

Then he instructed his sons, "Don't enter the city all from the same road, but rather each of you pick a different gate. Not that I can help you against Allah's plan with my advice. No one can command except Allah. In Him do I put my trust, and let everyone who trusts put their trust in Him." (66-67)

And when they had entered the city in the way their father had told them to, it did not help them in the least against (the plan) of Allah. It was just something Yaqoob felt he had to say. For he was, by Our teaching, very experienced. But most people don't know that. (68)

Now, when they came into the royal court, Yusuf received his younger brother (Benyamin) and let him stay in his house. He said privately to him, "Listen! I'm your brother, so don't be afraid of what the (older brothers) do."

Do the brothers find out who Yusuf really is? Is Yusuf ever reunited with his family?

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

Cherish What You Have

By Arslan Rahman

"The angel of death asks permission from no one" (brother Muhammad ElShinawy, speaking about 'Death and Taqwa' at an MSA event last year). If MSA announcements over the past two years have had one undesirable yet common trend, it's that loved ones pass on. Last year, a vigil was held on our campus in memory of a Stony Brook student whose father murdered her, along with her mother and sister before he ultimately took his own life as well. The evening of that vigil, I was in the Union with another brother who expressed interest in attending, referring to a narration where our Prophet (saws) stood up out of respect to a passing Jewish funeral procession. When we arrived, there was a slideshow presentation rolling, which showed a number of pictures of the student who had been killed. One by one, her friends were coming up on stage, recalling fond memories they held of her and mentioning how much they would miss her.

It was then that a thought dawned on me; why is it that most of the time it seems as though we realize how much a

loved one means to us, after they've already gone? We all know that one day, death is something that everyone we know and love will have to face, and we also know that the time and means of one's death isn't something that can be seen in advance. And yet despite knowing this, it can be difficult for us to realize that this is something we can unexpectedly encounter at any random day. Do we want to wait for that time, before realizing how much we truly value the people in our lives? There is a phrase common in our society which says "You never realize how precious or important something is until you lose it." Unfortunately this ends up being the case much of the time, but insha'Allah it doesn't have to be.

We all need to remember to set aside some time and truly try to reflect on our many countless blessings. Just think about the many people in your life: your friends, your family, your teachers, anyone else who has had a positive impression on you, and think about what they mean to you. Reflect on the times you've spent together and the memories you've shared.

Ponder the lessons that you've learned from them, and how they've helped to shape you into who you are. Cherish the moments where they made you smile and helped you find peace within yourself. And of course, always remember to thank Allah (swt) for His numerous blessings upon you. We need to keep in mind that the blessings we have been given aren't guaranteed to stay with us forever, and so it's important to cherish them and make the most of them while we can.

I'd like to bring to attention two valuable statements of immense wisdom, insha'Allah. Firstly, Ali ibn Abi Talib said, "There are four states whose worth is known only by four people: the worth of youth is only known by the old in age, that of peace by those who are afflicted by calamity, that of health by those who are sick, and that of life by those who are dead." Second, it is said that Ibn 'Umar used to say, "In the evening, do not anticipate the morning, and in the morning do not anticipate the evening. Take from your health for your illness and from your life for your death." [al-Bukhari]

State of the MSA, continued from page 2...

In which case again the question must be posed: where is our hayaa'h? When we have brothers and sisters sitting together chatting up a storm, with this perverse buddy buddy mentality that they seem to want to justify with their living here, we need to re-evaluate ourselves on a deeper level. Let's ask ourselves, seriously for the sake of Allah and wanting to better ourselves, rather than for the sake of argument- is this a practice that the Sahabah would readily engage in? Is this what the Tabi'un (the generation after them) did? What about the ones that came after them? Is this really something favored by as-salaf us-Salih (the righteous predecessors)? Being that such cases are in no way alien to anyone human and aren't necessarily something limited to our time-frame, these people had every opportunity to intermix and engage in whatever else that constituted. But did they do it to the degree and with the same intention with which some of us do it today? Are the best generations of all time wrong? How did they understand the honor and respect that goes along communicating with the opposite gender? When Allah commands us in the Qur'an to lower our gaze and guard our chastity, do we really understand what that means? After understanding that, do we really want to follow such guidance or are we playing ourselves and trying to justify our compromising of this Deen? These are just a few questions that we seriously should ponder over when evaluating our actions and intentions. The Hayaa'h that we are to have is to be practically applicable to our interactions between genders today as it was back then. So what do we do? The true limits of interaction are defined by necessity and the like. In which case, especially with what's going on nowadays, we need to have a dialogue between the genders but one that falls under the beautiful guidelines of the Shari'ah. **Not wanting to abide by the law of our Creator in order to propagate and defend His Deen is a bit counter-intuitive, don't you think?** And so the next time you decide to engage in such activity, which at this point for some is not anything out of ordinary- think to yourself and be real- am I sitting with this sister, for the sake of Allah? And for our sisters: what is my intention when talking to this brother? Do I lower my gaze? I cannot judge your iman nor your intention, but when something wrong is going on, as your Muslim brother I must speak out against it, even if you don't like it.

Time- More Fleeting than We May Realize

Another fail that we seem to love to propagate is our own laziness. How many times do we see brothers and/or sisters simply "chilling" on the balcony or court view lounge? How many times do we overhear conversations that have no practical benefit for this dunya nor for the Akhirah? Why do we LOVE to waste time? Allah (SWT) swears by time in Surah 'Asr- telling all of us that we are at a loss in regards to it. Why then do people spend hours upon hours wasting their lives away staring into computer screens jumping from one youtube video to the next, obsessing with things that really just won't help them? Does Islam teach us to be robots, studying the Deen and studying for our classes all the time, 24/7 with no breaks? Not necessarily. But at the same time, we have a responsibility to use the time we have in order to please our Creator. We have to ask ourselves, really- how do we spend our time? Is much of it wasted in arguing over fine points that are at best only secondary to much more important issues? Do we read the Quran? Do we actually study for our classes? The opportunity we have to be students here at a large university like Stony Brook is an incredible blessing. Do we really take advantage of the blessing or rather take it for granted. Allah has given us the opportunity to get an education here and to use that to better the face of the Ummah today with our actions- **so why are we stopping ourselves?** We always claim to want to the 'izza of the past back but do we ever take the initiative to try and bring it back? Do we actually care that at any moment Allah can take our lives and that our time could come to an end? Think about things like this when you re-evaluate yourself. When you take an exam with a fixed time, would you ever concern yourself, before you have finished, with deliberately staring around the room and at other people or at your pencil? Any good student would say, of course not. You would rather invest the most time and effort you could into doing your best on that exam, no? So what about our life? Do we really take it like an exam? At least for exams in school we know when it will end. What about our life? Death does not discriminate and will carry out the order of Allah (SWT) whenever He so Wills. I could die writing this and you could die reading this - such are the realities of this life. What better motivation then to please Allah do we have? For what is the reward for the obedient? Jannah- and I'm sure none of us would ever want to be prevented from entering. Let's take a look at ourselves, really and come back to what is right.

So now what?

What state is the MSA in? Are we really such horrible people? I would hope not. The fact of the matter is that we are a group of kids, and yes I have said kids, who have been slapped in the face with adulthood. Everyone can have great intentions but if we don't know how to act upon them, those intentions may not be carried out. We as an MSA need to work with each other to unify upon that which is right and enjoin the good and forbid the evil. We need to work to show others, bi-idhnillah (by the permission of Allah) the truth of Islam by means of our actions and words. This is our responsibility and this is the state that we are in. Praise be to Allah, the One who has given it to us. May Allah make us of those that know and can act upon that which we know. May Allah purify our intentions and actions and render them solely for His Sake. May Allah send peace and blessings upon His servant and Messenger, Muhammad (saw).

Let's ask ourselves, seriously for the sake of Allah and wanting to better ourselves, rather than for the sake of argument- is this a practice that the Sahabah would readily engage in?

Didja Know?

By Sister Sam

i wish i could tear out my heart and
Clean it with water, bleach, soap, and
burn it in the sunlight to
Purify the flesh and remove the dirt,
the taint, the stains that
Seem to have settled in the crevice of
every fold and layer, ok
Hold on, why this here sudden rage,
epiphany, blood rushing to my brain?
no
It's not insanity, delusion, a wild craze,
or momentary obsession that's
Running me blind with a vision of the
imminent future, the future of this um-
mah do
You know our history? – no not the
glorious past where a man* had
Once raised the flag of victory over a
people conquered by their hearts not
Brainwashed or lied to, but a people
who were inclined to
Realize and acknowledge the simple
Truth of
The One Mighty Lord Who Rules
Over the lands, from east to west from
north to south, beyond the cosmos and
Time without constraint or human per-
ceptibility so

Do you know? – the history i speak of,
well
Neither do i for i am as ignorant as you
and blind as you and grieved as you
about
The state of this once glorious Um-
mah, now ailed as a body for
It's limbs, heart, soul, and mind have
been cast into a slumber, a slumber
Suddenly disturbed by a jolt in a tiny
piece of flesh within the heart of
A once glorious nation, so do you
know how we came to be so ailed?
Because
If we do not know – how will we rise
from the slumber we've put ourselves
into
How will we heal the grievances and
account for the injustices like in
Philistine, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Al-
geria, Egypt, Libya, and previously in
bosnia do
We know? – even Microsoft Office
auto-correct momentarily forgot it is
Bosnia, not bosnia so
We do not know huh? – today i shed
some tears and had my blood rage
against my

Veins but maybe later today i will say
focus child, study for that exam, are
you hungry, or
Will you go to that rally? – what do i
know, i don't even know how to say
no to
The barrage of continuous assault on
my singular mind and soul of
Constant acoustic, verbal, and visual
diversions and even social
Distractions complemented by calls
from my nafs with every deviation
forming
A stronger dose of sleep medicine,
away from what we do not already
know so
Are we ever gonna know *enough*
To wake up, to get up, to say no more
for
I am *not* a slave of *this* here place or
that there man, but
A *friend* of the *above* there King of
that there man and this here place
*peace and blessings be upon him
Production of My Love Affairs | soft-
ware4thesoul.blogspot.com

My Brother...

By Nazia Rahman

....goes to this school. But that's not
the brother I'm going to be talking about.
This is going to be about the dozens of
brothers (if you're a male, read: "sisters")
that Allah swt has blessed us with through
this deen here at Stony Brook MSA.

We often hear each other referring to
Muslims of the opposite gender as
"brothers" or "sisters." For those of us who
weren't used to that, it may have seemed
strange at first. But with time you realize
that this is a truly beautiful way to refer to
the people with whom we share our relig-
ion. Alhamdulillah, Allah (swt) has be-
stowed Islam on all of us in the MSA. This
deen, it's more than a religion, it's a com-
plete way of life—and it ties us all together.
We are all striving towards the same thing,
the same end goal—to earn the pleasure of

Allah (swt) and to enter into His highest
gardens. We struggle, sacrifice, and perse-
vere all together, almost, you could say,
like a family.

And so we use these terms of endearment
to refer to one another, as we would to
members of our own family. But at times,
these words are used so often that they lose
their meaning. No longer do the words hold
the same depth as they are meant to; rather,
they become synonyms for "guys" and
"girls." We use these words so lightly and
so casually, saying things like, "Wow the
brothers/sisters are so dumb"- that we for-
get what the actual meaning of the words
entail. We disregard the love and respect
that we are supposed to have for someone
who we call our brother or sister. We say
things about our fellow Muslims that we

would **never** stand for, should someone say
the same thing about our *blood brother* or
sister.

But my brothers and sisters... **deen is
thicker than blood.** Take the regard that
you have for your siblings and multiply it—
that is how we should feel about our fellow
Muslims. Anyone who says "La ilah ha il
Allah, Muhammadur Rasoolullah" should
automatically receive a level of respect and
love that cannot be compromised. And we
need to be aware of that always. Let us
watch what we say and consider the weight
of the words that we use. May Allah (swt)
help us to treat each other as the brothers
and sisters that we truly are, and help us to
appreciate the beautiful bonds that He has
established between us.

Prayer Times

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

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

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- Khush =]