




THE BISMILLAH VISION

Birmingham Islamic Society's Newsletter

Our Vision: To become the platform for developing and sustaining a vibrant Islamic community in the Greater Birmingham area. This shall be done in accordance with the Qur'an and Sunnah, in order to help improve the quality of life for all.

March 2008  Safar/Rabi' al-Awwal 1429

Nashville Masjid Board Visits Hoover Crescent

by Ashfaq Taufique

Before the opening of the Hoover Crescent, a Nashville Masjid Board member, Kamel Daouk was passing through Birmingham and spontaneously decided to stop at the Hoover Crescent. The design of the Masjid impressed him to a point that he called the BIS office and wanted to talk to the officials of BIS. After exchange of several emails and phone calls, the brothers from the

community approval of the Masjid in Hoover along with the zoning process was shared with the brothers. Also shared were the lessons learned during the Crescent design and construction progression. Of the great interest to the Nashville brothers was the murabaha Islamic financing of the Hoover Crescent. Brother Hafiz and Lucas provided them with our experiences and



In a nutshell the meeting was mutually beneficial to the member of both the communities and Insha Allah will enable us to

This meeting served to be a reminder of how important it is for communities to work on a broader level to improve their own services.

Nashville board visited the center on March 10, 2008. Needless to say, we were delighted by their keen interest and eagerly accepted the opportunity to exchange information and ideas. Among the members of the Nashville board were brothers Kamel Daouk, Sajid Usmani, Anwaar Khan and Yasser Arafat. Brothers Hafiz Chandiwala, Lucas Gambino, Maqbool Patel and I represented the BIS as the members of the Hoover Crescent Construction Committee.

The process utilized by the BIS board during the com-

mitted to be a resource for them during their financing development. Brother Maqbool was particularly interested in learning about the free internet access that is provided by the Nashville Masjid to its community, as he is trying to put an action to provide a free internet (or "wi-fi") at the Crescent and possibly to the community at large around the Hackberry.

Among other things, Brother Yasser shared with us the successful summer program for the children that is conducted at the Nashville Masjid and promised to send a write up of the procedure utilized.

serve Allah and the communities better in the future. This meeting served to be a reminder of how important it is for communities to work on a broader level to improve their own services. Isolated communities seldom survive, and if they do, the danger of becoming dormant is very real. The exchange of ideas not only fosters mutual understanding, but it is the only way Muslims can gain prominence and distinction in this country. ■

WEEKLY PROGRAM

Friday

Homewood Jumu'ah - 1:15

Hoover Crescent Jumu'ah* - 1:00

Saturday

New Muslim Class - 1:00 PM

Sunday

Weekend Islamic

School - 10 AM - 1:30 PM

Aqeeda Class for Adults - 12 PM

Monday

Qur'an Class - 5:00 - 7:00 PM

Tuesday

Sisters Quran Tafseer Class in Urdu - 11 AM

Qur'an Class - 5:00 - 7:00 PM

Wednesday

Qur'an Class - 5:00 - 7:00 PM

Qur'an Tafseer Class - After Isha salah (7:15).

Thursday

Qur'an Class - 5:00 - 7:00 PM

All events in the Weekly Program are held at the Hoover Crescent, except the of Homewood Jumu'ah.

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RIGHTEOUS DEEDS

O Mankind! Just Think and Ponder

by Muhammad Shareef Ashraf

It has been stated repeatedly in various verses of the holy Qur'an that any servant of Allah whether male or female who is a believer and has done righteous deeds will be admitted in paradise and made happy in the garden of delight and bliss. There they shall have whatever they wish from their Rabb; it is the greatest bounty of Allah. (2/82; 4/124; 14/23; 18/107, 108; 22/14, 23, 56; 29/58, 59; 30/15; 31/8, 9; 32/19; 42/22) Whoever earns a good deed Allah will increase its good for him. (2/25; 42/23) Whatever good a believer will send forth in advance for himself, he will find it with Allah. (2/110) There are ranks for all according to their deeds and the Rabb of the worlds is not unaware of what they do. (6/132) The lasting good deeds are the best in the sight of your Rabb with regard to reward and their end. (19/76)

Qur'an has stated: Worship Allah and do not associate anything with Him and do good to parents and close relatives and orphans and indigent and neighbors both close as well strangers, and the companions by your side and the way-farers and your slaves / servants. Surely Allah does not love the arrogant, the vainglorious. (4/36) If you do a good deed openly or secretly or forgive evil, verily Allah is Most-Forgiving Most-Powerful. (4/149) The believers who do righteous deeds, Allah will surely make them live a pure life and He will reward them according to the best of their deeds. (16/95; 40/40) The Most Gracious will love them. (19/96) They shall have no fear of injustice nor shall they be deprived of their rights. (20/112) Allah shall blot out their evils and reward them for the best of their deeds. (29/7; 64/9) He shall admit them among the righteous. (29/9) There is a great reward for them and forgiveness and honored sustenance. (34/4; 35/7) Neither the wealth nor children bring you nearer to Allah except those who believed and did good deeds. For such people there will be double reward for their deeds and they will be in peace in high mansions of paradise. (34/37) O prophet! Tell My servants who have believed to fear their Rabb. Good is for those who do good deeds in this world. (39/10)

There is a famous proverb: Ker Bhala so Bhala, ant Bhalea ka Bhala. Its English translation can be: Do good get good; the end of goodness is goodness. Whoever does good he will do it for himself and whoever does evil it will be on him. (45/15)

By the time! Man is certainly in loss except those who believe and did righteous deeds and exhorted one another to truth and exhorted one another to patience. (103/1- 3) Indeed Allah does not wrong anyone in the least. If anyone does a good deed, He doubles it and gives from Himself a great reward. (4/40) Allah does not waste the deeds of any doer whether male or female. (3/195) But anyone who turns back from his faith and dies in disbelief, his deeds will be wasted in this world and the Hereafter. (2/217) Those who disbelieved and denied the verses of Allah and the Hereafter, they will be the people of hell to dwell therein forever and that is an evil place to return. (5/10; 30/16; 64/10; 67/6)

Basically the belief (Emaan) and the righteous deeds (Aamaal-e-Saleh) are the two prerequisites for entry into paradise.

There are three kinds of righteous deeds of the believers that may last long even after death and are written in the Deed Book to be given to them on the Day of Judgment are:

- Beneficial knowledge imparted by teachers and speakers or contained in printed matter that is imbibed by students or readers and exhorted to others
- Charity and public works of lasting benefit to humanity and

Rightly brought up children who may pray for forgiveness of their elders.

These deeds may be small, large or big. It may be a shady or fruit tree, construction of a mosque, a religious school, (including donations) providing them copies of Qur'an and books on the life of prophet Muhammad, (pbh) carpets, fans, air conditioners; a dispensary, a hospital, donation to charitable institutions, writing book(s) for spreading the word of Allah, other books containing benefi-

cial knowledge, proper up-bringing of children and other lasting works for the benefit of humanity.

All the righteous deeds are ordained in the holy Qur'an that requires reverence and respect, recital and understanding, conveying its teachings to others and putting into practice its injunctions. The Qur'anic guidance broadly consists of Salaat and social life containing commandments about marriage, dower, divorce, Halaal and Haraam, rights of parents, husband, wife and children, close relatives, orphans, neighbors, indigent, human dealings, morals and ethics, fasting, sustenance, sacrifice, Riba, (interest) Zakaat and voluntary charity, Hajj and Umrah. If the believers regulate their Salaat, observe the fasts of the month of Ramadan, pay Zakaat with the happiness of heart and perform Hajj and Umrah, if means allow and lead life within the bounds set by Qur'an, they can earn immeasurable rich recompense and pleasure and paradise of Allah through these righteous deeds. It has been ordained to strive for virtues as in a race. (5/48) Everyone should try to excel others in good works. (2/148) Be ever ready and hasten in emulating all righteous deeds. (3/114; 21/90) The believers must strive for good deeds to attain Allah's bounteous rich recompense leading to His pleasure and paradise.

Praise of Allah is the greatest virtues. Allah loves His praise that is why He opens the holy Qur'an with His praise: Praise is for the Rabb of the worlds, the Most Merciful, the Most Gracious, the Master of the Day of Judgment. (1/1-3) It is His indirect commandment to mankind to praise Him quite often. All the praises, the first and the last, suit Him and are for Him alone. If we praise someone for beauty, intelligence, honesty or bravery, it is His praise, being the Creator and the Sustainer. Praise is the best form of His gratitude as narrated by the holy prophet. The one who does not praise Allah is not graceful to Him.

The holy Qur'an has enjoined: Glorify Allah greatly for His greatness. (17/111)

> See **Righteous Deeds Pg 4**



COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

Births

Br. Rebhi Awad's daughter, Somar has given birth to a boy and named him Ameer. Please make dua for the family and that the father Adel Abu-Awwad gets to join his new son and wife very soon, inshaAllah.



Sicknesses

Br. Mustafa Ocak is sick and in the hospital. Please make dua for his recovery.

Job Openings

BIS is currently accepting resumes for the position of Office Manager. Please mail or email your resume to the BIS office.

Mail: BIS Hoover Crescent Islamic Center
2524 Hackberry Lane
Hoover, AL 35226

E-mail: bisoffice@bisweb.org



Mark Your Calendars!



- ◆ Friday, March 7th & Saturday, March 8th - Marital Relationships Khutbah & Saturday Lecture (Please confirm with BIS Office)
- ◆ Friday, March 28th - Muslim Legal Fund: Jummah Khutbah and Evening Seminar

Attention All Thoughtful Readers!

Do you have any **Profound Thoughts** you would like to share with the rest of us?

Inspiring advice?

Constructive criticisms?

Or any other

Practical Suggestions?

Please send them in to bismillahvision@yahoo.com for a chance to get published!

Remember, this publication gets printed and mailed to nearly 800 people! Here's your chance to be heard!

Da'wah Opportunity

Please be advised that BIS is searching for sisters who are interested in spending time giving Da'wah to incarcerated sisters in a prison located in the Montgomery area. Please contact the BIS office if you are interested.





Righteous Deeds

>Cont'd from Pg 2

Glorify your Rabb with His praise and seek His forgiveness. Indeed He is ever ready to accept repentance. (110/3) Glorify the name of your Rabb, the Supreme and the Great. (56/74, 96; 69/52; 87/1) Glorify Allah in the morning and evening. (48/9) Everything that Allah has created is glorifying Him with His praise. The seven heavens and the earth and all those therein are saying His glory. There is not a single thing that does not sing His glory with His praise but we do not understand it. (17/44) The mountains and the birds glorified Allah with David. (pboh) (34/10)

Remembrance of Allah with His praise and glorification is the easiest way of worship but Salaat is its best form. Allah has stated: Remember Me and I will remember you and be thankful to Me and be not be ungrateful. (2/152) It is His Greatness that He also remembers His servants if they remember Him. What an incentive! We should not forget Him at any time so that He may not forget us. It has been ordained: When you are free from your work turn to your Rabb. (94/7, 8) Remember Him in your heart with humility and in reverence in a low voice in the morning and

evening and do not be among those who are negligent. (7/205) Allah loves those who remember Him and ask for forgiveness whenever they commit an immoral deed or wrong their souls. (3/135) The hearts of the believers find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah. Listen! It is the remembrance of Allah with which hearts find satisfaction. (13/28) Allah has stated: O believers! Let not your wealth and children distract you from the remembrance of Allah. Those who do so shall be the losers. (63/9) To remember and glorify Allah recite quite often: "Subhan Allah wabe Hamdehe Subhan Allah hil Azeem." These two verses are very dear to Allah and there is a great reward for their recitation. He who abandons remembrance of the Merciful, Allah sets a Satan on him and he becomes his close companion. The Satan causes him to forget Allah and hinders him from the path and he thinks he is guided aright. (43/36, 37)

The words of wisdom of the sage Luqmaan to his son provide motivation for righteous deeds and morals. As stated by Allah his advise was: Do not associate any partner with Allah as it is the highest inequity; We have enjoined on man to do good to his parents,

particularly mother who bore him in her womb bearing agony upon agony and during weaning for two years; Be grateful to Me and to your parents; Do not obey them if they strive you to make partners with Me but bear company with them in this world; Follow the way of him who has turned to Me; Establish Salaat; Enjoin good and forbid evil; Bear with patience any affliction you face; Do not swell your cheeks to people nor walk proudly on earth for Allah does not love the arrogant boaster; Be moderate in your walk and lower your voice for the harshest of voices is the braying of the ass. (31/13- 19) This advice of wisdom given by Luqmaan was so liked by Allah that He included it in His Qur'an and made it ever lasting for the benefit of mankind. What an honor to Luqmaan! Indeed, every father should give similar advice to his son(s). ■

Brother Muhammad Shareef Ashraf is Qur'anic Research Scholar who is a member of the Birmingham Muslim community. He requests that we all pray for his health. To contact Brother Muhammad for questions and comments, please e-mail him at msa_nsa@hotmail.com.

The Registers of Deeds

In a hadith narrated by Sayyida Aisha, the Prophet said that all the deeds that we perform are written down in three registers:

- ◆ One register contains the deeds of those who have associated partners with Allah. Allah will not forgive those who commit shirk or polytheism. He forgives all sins except shirk.
- ◆ The second register contains those deeds that Allah will not forgive, unless they have been compensated for. These are the ones between fellow human beings.
- ◆ The third register contains the deeds about our personal duties to Allah. They are the deeds between man and his Creator like Salat and Sawm Allah determines whether they are forgiven or not.

The second register of deeds is especially important for us to consider because there is no Divine pardon in cases where personal rights have been violated. Forgiveness can only come from the person concerned - either directly or when Allah makes it possible for that person to grant a pardon. The Prophet Muhammad said in this regard:

Whoever is guilty of doing some wrong against a fellow human being, whether in regard to his honour or anything else, he should obtain his forgiveness before the Day of judgment, when there will be no money to pay for it. If he has any good deeds to his credit, they will be taken away from him to the extent of his wrongdoing. And if he has no good deeds, the sins of the wronged-one will be taken and put on him. (Bukhari.)

Source: "In The Early Hours" - Khurram Murad



Community Watch

Local People Examining Local Events

Open House Opens Hearts

by Sakeena Ahmed

The foliage adorned the doorways; the floors were waxed and shined; the new direction signs were hung in the empty hallways; the Discover Islam posters were framed and mounted to the bare walls; and the Hoover Crescent Islamic Center awaited its first non-Muslim guests to attend its Open House held on Saturday, February 16, 2008. The Masjid was literally transformed overnight. Two-thousand seven hundred invitations had been sent out to the neighboring churches and homes! Not knowing how many guests to expect, the anticipation and fervor

was high amongst the Muslim community members who diligently planned the event. A beautiful refreshments' table was arranged with a variety of finger foods and embellishments. A table full of newly ordered English translations of the Holy Qur'an and brochures were arranged for dawah materials available for the guests. Masha'Allah, the Hoover Crescent Islamic Center looked splendid!

The guests arrived one after another with eagerness to find out who their new neighbors were and to tour the

beautiful, new Masjid in their neighborhood. Muslim community members, Br. Sammy Kanpher, Br. Hafiz Chandiwala, and others stood by the entrances greeting the guests into the Center. Some guests mingled amongst the Muslims and exchanged welcoming words. Others took self-guided tours of the facility before the program was to begin. While others patiently waited in the musallah on the neatly lined chairs for the official meeting to begin. Alhamdulillah, approximately 200 guests had accepted our Open House invitation. Among the guests



included an elderly, White couple who had visited Jordan and were touched by Muslim hospitality they experienced on their trip; priests from local churches; and families living right around the corner from the Masjid. Guests were asked to remove their shoes before stepping into the musallah area, which later was amus-

> See **Open House** Pg 6

Crescent's First Fundraiser as a Masjid

by Mayyda Qureshi

As many know, Saturday March the 8th, the Hoover Crescent Islamic Center had a fundraising dinner. It was one held at the facility after it was officially converted into a masjid. A personal thanks to all that came, a bigger thanks to all that donated! It was a huge success, and an overall job well done.

As a volunteer, I, along with a few others, had to be there early. The night started out hectic, as most functions do; babysitters looking for their rooms, food being rushed to the dining tent, people hurrying to pray. After the minor chaos had settled, dinner was served. A dining tent had been set up outside the masjid, in the parking lot, to accommodate everyone. To keep it more organized then have a mass of people attacking the food, food was served to individuals, and plates had been made beforehand and brought to them. After food had been served and everyone had eaten, we returned to the masjid for the fundraising. Before it began, a presentation was given on the need for the money, which included day-to-day masjid funds, phase 2 comple-

tions (which included plans for a permanent dining hall), and a possibility for a gym.

Our guest speaker for the night was Sheikh Abdullah Idrees. His words of wisdom and knowledge helped the entire event come together and motivated many of our fellow brothers and sisters to donate. His inspirational stories included the reward for donating not only money but skills as well. Although money is a strong necessity, not everyone can afford to donate it. It would be just as appreciated to donate a helpful skill or supplies. As the Prophet (SAW) said, "Whoever builds a masjid, seeking the pleasure of Allah, Allah shall build a house for him in Paradise." There was one story of his that I personally liked: he was once at a fundraiser with a group of medical school students. He encouraged them all to donate some money, about 500 dollars all together. A few years later, he came to another fundraiser and saw the same group of medical school students, now doctors. They, remembering what he had said to them,

each donated \$50,000 to the masjid.

We ended the night with a total of 255,000 dollars given in pledges and donations, halfway to the goal of 482,000 dollars. Though we have come very far in the past two years, there's still a lot more to do. InshaAllah this masjid will not only serve as a place for prayer, but a place that will create an environment of healthy socialization between family, friends and community members. Please help us get there!■

Mayyda Qureshi is a fifteen year old member of the Birmingham Muslim community. She is currently a student at the Alabama School of Fine Arts High School.



Hoover Crescent Fundraising Dinner. Dinner was served outside in a tent.



Left: Setting up the refreshments tables. From right, Hina Choudhry, Rita Taufique and Tanveer



Fox 6 on the scene for the Open House!

Open House

>Cont'd from Pg 5

ing to see their confusion not knowing at which entrance they had left them. Some were seen walking barefoot into the hallways.

Once the program began, Br. Lucas Gambino welcomed everyone to the Open House. He gave a historical background of the Birmingham Islamic Society and how we found our new home in Hoover. He then introduced the guest speaker, Hoover Mayor Tony Petelos, to speak a few words to the audience. Mayor Tony Petelos welcomed the Muslim community to Hoover and spoke of the diversity of Hoover. Next on the agenda was an open question and answer session, with questions ranging from the typical "What's the difference between Sunni and Shia?" to questions about the Hoover Crescent, such as "Is that the shahada written around the mihrab?" Br. Raed Awwad, Br.

Ashfaq Taufique, and Br. Lucas Gambino effectively answered the questions as they were asked. A short break was given for refreshments and a chance for guests to mingle amongst themselves and the Muslim community. Guests were invited back into the musallah area for two short presentations: The Basics of Islam by Br. Adam Taufique and The Status of Women in Islam by Sr. Monica Khalaf. More time was allotted for questions and answers related to the presentations and other topics of interest.

Overall, the event was successful and ran very smoothly, alhamdulillah. It was exciting to see the Hoover Crescent Islamic Center vibrant and bustling with activity. Several guests felt welcomed and enjoyed the experience of visiting a Masjid for the first time in their lives. They appreciated our efforts and were curious to find out more about Islam and who Muslims really are. We pray that at least one person left the Open House with a better understanding of who we are and what are beliefs are. May Allah (subhana wa ta'ala) reward everyone who played a role in this important event. ■



Engaged in thoughtful conversation!



Program set-up in the prayer area.



Sister Monica speaks about Women in Islam



Pearls of Wisdom

Individual Responsibility

The individual is, without doubt, a part of society and an essential aspect of the Islamic way of life.

Allah says: "You began to say: Whence is this? Say: It is from yourselves." [Sūrah Āl 'Imrān: 165]

Allah also tells us: "Truly, Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change what is within themselves." [Sūrah al-Anfāt: 53]

Indeed, the very idea of the resurrection and the judgment in the Hereafter is founded on the concept of individual responsibility. The same can be said for our creation. Allah says: "Leave me to deal with the one whom I created in a lonely state." [Sūrah al-Mudaththir: 11]

A person will be all alone, though he might fancy that he will be resurrected along with his wealth, his children, his particular group, or his fellow countrymen. However, the truth is that even his nearest and dearest will forsake him on that day.

Allah says: "On the day when a man will flee from his brother, from his mother and his father, from his spouse and his children. Every person on that day will have concern enough to make him heedless (of others)." [Sūrah 'Abasa: 34-36]

When we observe *i tikāf* in the mosque, one aspect of the wisdom behind our doing so might be so we can restore to ourselves our awareness of our individual responsibility. This is because *i tikāf* frees us from the outside pressures of our group affiliations and of society as a whole, pressures that normally weigh heavily on our thoughts. When we observe a retreat in the mosques, we as individual Muslims can restore the health and natural state of our minds.

The general public can cry out, prod and push, and carry out all kinds of activities. This is why Allah guides us as follows: "Say: (O Muhammad): I do admonish you on one point – that ye do stand up before Allah, - (it may be) in pairs, or (it may be) singly, - and reflect (within yourselves): your Companion is not possessed: he is no less than a warner to you, in face of a terrible Penalty." [Sūrah Saba: 46]

The clear thinking and reflection that Islam calls for is something that does not follow after the whims of the people, but it demands respect for the opinions of others and to give those opinions due consideration. One of us may disagree with what someone else might say, but he has to be prepared to defend that other person's right to express what he believes.

Each individual has to wrestle with most of the concerns that people generally have. Each Muslim faces most of the problems that confront Muslims today. When a person faces problems without the awareness of individual responsibility that Islam seeks to cultivate in him, that person finds it easy to foist the blame on outside influences. He starts talking about globalization, Zionism, hidden hands, and shadowy powers playing some clandestine game. He might blame the government, the scholars, fate, or history for whatever crisis he faces.

He will never think of blaming himself. He takes his own innocence for granted. His views and opinions are always right. He knows it all. If only everyone else would follow his lead, everything would be alright.

We might find this same person incapable of solving his own domestic problems, unable to put one and one together to make two, inexperienced, unschooled, and indecisive. He might be incapable of overcoming his bad habits and character flaws.

We see this often in a young man who has just recently become religious. He thinks that he has the keys to everything in his hands. He acts as if he, like Christ, can heal the leper and the blind with a mere touch of his finger and resurrect the dead with Allah's leave. When he talks about the Qur'an and the Sunnah, he acts as if only he understands it. How easy it is for him to accuse others of ignorance and misguidance.

This is a great personal failing and it contributes the general crisis facing the Muslims today and contributes nothing to the solution.

Individual responsibility varies from person to person depending on the

importance of that person's position in society, his knowledge and his expertise. Individual responsibility exists within a historical context and is not something that just appears overnight. Responsibility means having to bear burdens, fulfill obligations, uphold rights, and do what is proper.

Though individual responsibility is by definition focused on the individual, it reaps rewards for society as a whole. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Every joint in a person's body has charity due upon it for every day that the Sun rises. It is an act of charity to bring reconciliation between two people. It is charity to help a man onto his horse. Likewise, to raise his luggage up to him is charity. A good word is charity. Every step taken on the way to prayer is charity. It is charity to remove an obstacle from the road."

Even holding ourselves back from abusing others – if we find ourselves incapable of anything else – is a form of charity that we give to ourselves.

The individual obligations discussed in the classical books of Islamic Law are nothing other than individual responsibilities. All of those obligations are prescribed to develop a person's Islamic character so that the person can make a positive contribution to society.

In spite of this, we find a good number of Muslims preoccupied with general concerns and global problems at the expense of dealing with their own deficiencies. They think about the affairs of Muslims world and neglect the matters affecting them in their own countries. They fret about the state of humanity but fail to correct their own numerous faults or make amends for their own wrongdoings, though they may be perpetrating injustices and be beset by ignorance, indolence, and weakness of faith.

If we as individuals are in such a sorry state – where we are misappropriating the wealth of others, engaging in licentiousness, backbiting and slandering people, and operating under vested interests that cloud our judgments – then how can we speak generally about the problems of the Muslims? If we are in such a state, we will ourselves have

become part of the problem.

Therefore, in order to solve the problems of the world, we have to start by rectifying ourselves as individuals. The first steps on the long road to reforming society are the steps we take to reform ourselves.

We are easily distracted by the general problems and crises that erupt around the world and forget about the serious problems that exist within our own selves. We neglect the important task of developing ourselves and our thinking – which will contribute to solving our general problems. All of the individuals that make up the organizations, institutions, and nations of the world they have considerable power to make a difference, though they may be unsung by history and unknown in the media.

The great expansion of Islam in the early days should not only be remembered in the context of the prominent leaders whose names have gone down in history. All of those who sacrificed, struggled, and even laid down their lives, and all of the women who gave their support and lent their fortitude, they must be remembered as well.

Islamic civilization is not to be credited only to the caliphs and rulers, but to all the workers, artisans, thinkers, planners, and investors who built that civilization, though history might only remember the names of the rulers associated with it.

The meaning of individual responsibility is embodied in the teachings of the Qur'an and Islamic thought. It is the essential building block of society. A building is made of many individual bricks. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "The believers with respect to one another are like a building, each one lending support to the whole." [Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim]

Sheikh Salman al-Oadah



Pause and Ponder

Al-Asr (The Time)

Chapter 103: Verses 1-3

Declining Days

"I swear by the declining day, that man is a certain loser, save those who have faith and do righteous deeds and counsel one another to follow the truth and counsel one another to be steadfast."

This short surah of three verses outlines a complete system for human life based on the Islamic viewpoint. It defines, in the clearest and most concise form, the basic concept of faith in the context of its comprehensive reality. In a few words the whole Islamic constitution is covered and in fact, the nation of Islam is described in its essential qualities and its message in one verse only: the third. This is the eloquence of which Allah alone is capable.

The great fact which this surah affirms is simply that throughout the history of man there has been one worthwhile and trustworthy path - that which the surah indicates and describes. All other paths lead only to loss and ruin. As it says in outline, that path is first the adoption of faith, followed up with good deeds and exhortation to follow the truth and to steadfastness:

1. What does the adoption of faith then signify? Faith is the characteristic by which the minute, transient human being attains closeness to the Absolute and Everlasting Originator of the universe and all that exists in it. He thus establishes a link with the whole world, which springs from that One Origin, with the laws governing it and with the powers and potentialities created in it. As a result, he breaks away from the narrow boundaries of his trivial self to the broadness of the universe, from his inadequate power to the immensity of the unknown universal energies, and from the limits of his short life to the "Eternity" that Allah alone comprehends.

2. Godliness is the second quality of dignified humanity. This quality determines for man the source from which he derives his concepts, values, criteria, considerations, doctrines, laws and whatever brings him into relation with Allah, the world at large and with human beings. Thus, equity and justice replace personal desires

and self-interest. This strengthens the believer's realisation of the value of his way of life and keeps him above ignorant concepts, values and interests and above all strictly mundane values.

3. A third quality of faith and dignified humanity is the clarity of the relationship between the Creator and the created, the restricted creature is connected with the Everlasting Truth without any mediator. It supplies man's heart with light, his soul with contentment and gives him confidence and purpose. It eliminates from his mind perplexity fear, anxiety and agitation as well as unlawful haughtiness on earth and unjustifiable tyranny over people.

4. Steadfastness along the path ordained by Allah is the next quality of such humanity. This must be maintained so that good does not occur casually, incidentally or without deliberation but springs from definite motives and heads towards certain aims. People united for Allah's cause collaborate. Thus, with a single definite purpose and a single distinguished banner, the Muslim community is raised. This is true for all generations that are similarly welded together.

Consequently, whenever two companions of the Messenger of Allah were about to depart from each other, they would read this surah, after which they would shake hands. This was indicative of a pledge to accept this doctrine fully, to preserve this faith, piety and a willingness to counsel each other to follow the truth and remain steadfast. It was a mutual compact to remain good elements in an Islamic society established according to that doctrine and to preserve the foundation of this society. ■

Source: Source: "In The Shade of The Quran" - Sayyid Outb

THE BISMILLAH VISION

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