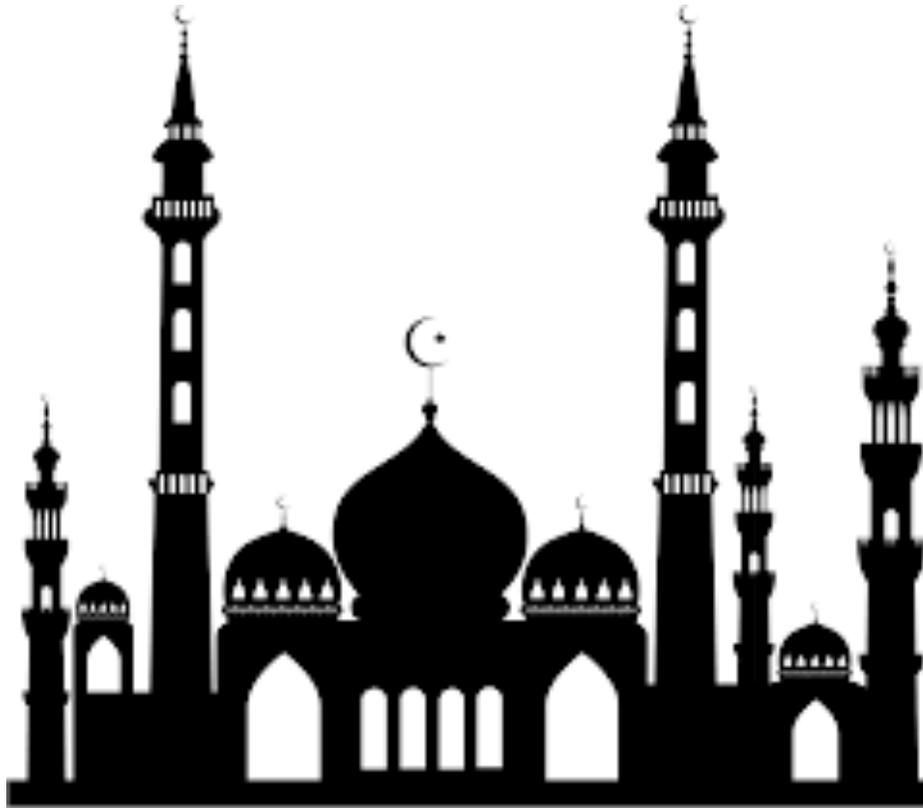


بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

BEST ESSAYS IN IQRA ESSAY COMPETITIONS



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AL-FATIHA

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿١﴾ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢﴾ الرَّحْمَنِ
الرَّحِيمِ ﴿٣﴾ مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿٤﴾ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ﴿٥﴾
أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿٦﴾ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ﴿٧﴾

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

All praise is to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

The Beneficent, the Merciful.

Owner of the Day of Judgement.

You only do we worship, and You only do we beg for help.

Guide us on the Straight Path.

The path of those whom You have favoured; not (the path) of those on whom is (Your) anger, nor of those who go astray. (1:1-7)

AS-SALAATU IBRAHIMIYYAH

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلٰى اٰلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلٰى

اِبْرَاهِيْمَ وَعَلٰى اٰلِ اِبْرَاهِيْمَ اِنَّكَ حَمِيْدٌ مَّجِيْدٌ ط

اَللّٰهُمَّ بَارِكْ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلٰى اٰلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلٰى

اِبْرَاهِيْمَ وَعَلٰى اٰلِ اِبْرَاهِيْمَ اِنَّكَ حَمِيْدٌ مَّجِيْدٌ ط

O Allah! Bless Sayyidina Muhammad
and the Family of Sayyidina Muhammad,
as You blessed Sayyidina Ibrahim
and the Family of Sayyidina Ibrahim.
Surely, You are the Praiseworthy, Glorious.

O Allah! Bestow favours upon Sayyidina Muhammad
and on the Family of Sayyidina Muhammad,
as You bestowed favours on Sayyidina Ibrahim
and on the Family of Sayyidina Ibrahim.
Surely, You are the Praiseworthy, Glorious.

BENEDICTIONS USED IN THE ESSAYS

Subhanahu wa Ta'ala (The Glorified and the Exalted)

Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam (May Allah bless him and grant him peace)

'Alayhissalam (Peace be upon him)

'Alayhassalam (Peace be upon her)

'Alayhimussalam (Peace be upon them)

Rady Allahu 'Anhu (May Allah be well-pleased with him)

Rady Allahu 'Anha (May Allah be well-pleased with her)

Rady Allahu 'Anhum (May Allah be well-pleased with them, referring to the men)

Rady Allahu 'Anhunna (May Allah be well-pleased with them, referring to the women)

QaddasAllahu Sirrahul 'Aziz (May Allah sanctify his secret)

Rahmatullahi 'alayh (May Allah have mercy on him)

BEST ESSAYS IN IQRA ESSAY COMPETITIONS

INTRODUCTION

Al-Hamdu Lillah! All Praise is for Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) and may His blessings and peace be forever upon our Beloved Holy Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam).

Al-Hamdu Lillah, our Iqra web-site www.iqra.net had Quiz and Essay Competitions three times every year, over a period of six years, from Dhu'l Hijjah 1419 to Sha'ban 1425 (March 1999 to October 2004) for a total of eighteen competitions. This competition was open for everyone world-wide. There were two categories: Juniors (up to age 12), and Seniors (13 to 17 years). Quizzes and Essay topics were posted on the Iqra website. After the entries were received and marked, the names of the winners, as well as the best essay in the Junior category and the best essay in the Senior category were uploaded on the Iqra website. This book is a compilation of the eighteen best essays in the Junior category, and the eighteen best essays in the Senior category. Congratulations to the winners of these competitions, and congratulations to their parents as well for their commitment to their children's education.

When we go through the table of contents at the beginning of this book, we notice that Syed Yasin Ali set a record: he had the best essay in nine of the eighteen competitions in the Senior category. **MaashaaAllah!** We also find, interestingly, that of the winners, six are boys and six are girls. This shows that parents are giving equal importance to the education of boys and girls. **Al-Hamdu Lillah.**

Among the winners are two **Hafiz ul-Qur'an**, Hafiz Usman Munawwar and Hafiz Hamid Syed. They were winners in the Junior category and when they grew up, they became winners in the Senior category. The title "Hafiz" has been added to their names from the time they became **Hafiz ul-Qur'an.**

Those who wrote these essays have proof-read them once again for typing errors. Hafiz Hamid Syed and Syed Abid Ali have designed the cover page. Syed Ahmed Ali has typed the "table of contents", and prepared the "list of benedictions used in the essays", while Shahbaz Ahmad has typed the corrections. **Jazakumullahu khayr** (may Allah reward you). **Amin.**

May Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) reward Brother Kassim Kasmani for maintaining the Iqra website. May Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) reward all those who contribute towards the printing cost of these books which are always distributed free. **Al-Hamdu Lillah.**

Insha Allah, those who have written these essays will be gifted with multiple copies of this book. They should gift at least one copy to a non-Muslim with a supplication to Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) to open his or her heart to Islam. **Amin**.

An outstanding feature of all these essays is the good deeds that have been mentioned, all of which are based on the Qur'an and the Hadith. May Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) guide us to perform these good deeds. **Amin**.

May Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) bestow peace on Muslims all over the world, and may He reconcile the hearts of all the Muslims. **Amin**. May He bestow us with useful knowledge that is accepted by Him. **Amin**. May He fulfill all our noble wishes. **Amin**. May He fill our hearts with **Nur** (spiritual light) for the sake of His Beloved Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam). **Amin**. May He bestow **Jannat ul-Firdaws** to our parents and relatives who have passed ahead. **Amin**.

Siddiq Osman Noormuhammad

www.iqra.net

Toronto.

Shawwal 1436 / July 2015

BEST ESSAYS IN IQRA ESSAY COMPETITIONS

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**BEST ESSAYS IN
IQRA ESSAY COMPETITIONS**

PART 1

**BEST ESSAYS OF JUNIORS
(UPTO 12 YEARS OF AGE)**

ALLAH
THE GLORIFIED AND THE EXALTED
By: Aibah Khan

Laa ilaha Illallahu Muhammad-ur-Rasulullah

None is worthy of worship except Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah

This is the first **Kalima - Kalimah Tayyibah**. **Tayyibah** means "pure". This **Kalima** declares the Oneness of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala).

We worship only Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). We pray five times a day to worship Him. And in Prayer we face in the direction of the Ka'ba in Makkah.

Now we come to the translation of Surah Ikhlas from the Holy Qur'an.

Say: He is Allah, the One and Only. Allah the Eternal, Absolute. He begetteth not. Nor is He begotten. And there is none like unto Him. (112:1-4)

Surah **Ikhlas** from the Holy Qur'an reveals that He (Allah) is One and Only. We cannot compare Him with others because **there is none like unto Him**. This is just one Surah from the Holy Qur'an which was revealed by Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) to Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam). Allah revealed four books which are the **Zabur, Tawrat, Injeel** and the **Qur'an**.

Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) also sent Prophets ('Alayhimussalam) for the guidance of mankind. The well-known Prophets are Sayyidina Adam, Sayyidina Nuh, Sayyidina Ibrahim, Sayyidina Ismail, Sayyidina Yusuf, Sayyidina Dawud, Sayyidina Sulaiman, Sayyidina Musa, Sayyidina Isa and Sayyidina Muhammad ('Alayhimussalam). All the Prophets ('Alayhimussalam) taught the people to obey Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) and not to commit any sin.

Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) created everything. The first man Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) created was Sayyidina Adam ('Alayhissalam). The first woman Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) created was Sayyidatina Hawwa' ('Alayhassalam).

Angels are also a creation of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). The angels are always busy in the worship of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). They obey every order that they receive from Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). The well known angels are Hadrat Jibreel, Hadrat Mikaeel, Hadrat Izra'eel and Hadrat Israfeel ('Alayhimussalam).

Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing. He is All-Knowing, All-Wise. He is the Affectionate, Loving, Kind, Oft-Returning to mercy, Multiplier of

rewards, Author of peace, and Granter of security. He made the sun, the moon and the stars. He made everything for our benefit. Not even the smallest flower or the tiniest bird is ever out of God's sight. He is the Creator. He is the Almighty. He is closer to us than our main vein. His promises are always fulfilled. Allah is forever.

We learn in the following verse of the Holy Qur'an to call upon Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) by His Most Beautiful Names.

Say: Call upon Allah, or call upon Ar-Rahman: by whatever name you call upon Him, (it is well): for to Him belong the Most Beautiful Names. (17:110)

We all praise Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) and ask His blessings for His kind Messenger Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam), for the true knowledge of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) and His attributes have come to us through him. He taught us that Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) is the only One God, Who has ninety-nine Most Beautiful Names, as we learn from this Hadith.

Hadrat Abu Hurairah (Rady Allahu Anhu) reported Allah's Messenger (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) as saying: "There are ninety-nine names of Allah; he who enumerates them will get into Paradise". (Bukhari)

We learn from the following verse that Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) is the Most Merciful.

Say: O My servants who have transgressed against themselves! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: for Allah forgives all sins; for He is the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful. (39:53)

Power is another glorious Attribute of Allah Almighty. His Decrees are unchangeable and His Commands unalterable. He uttered the word **kun** ("Be") and they came to life and everything came into existence.

There is all perfection in God. In Him is absolute fullness. The source of all life is God. All Wisdom is in God. He is the Wise. All purity is in God. All righteousness is in God.

His name is Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) and we can call on Him by other sacred names also with great benefits and blessings. Nevertheless, He must be remembered, or called upon only with one of the names by which the last Prophet and Guide, Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) is known to have remembered or called on Him. The reason for this is simple. Allah Almighty is beyond human comprehension and, therefore, to call on Him by names out of one's own imagination may be unbecoming to His Greatness.

Remembrance of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala)

Islam has greatly stressed on its followers the need of remembering Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala), as it is the soul of the true life of man both in this world and in the Hereafter.

The Qur'an and Ahadith are full of instructions which insist on the faithful to see that their heart is always in the remembrance of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala).

Remembrance of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) is the cure for the diseased condition of our hearts. The more we remember Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) the better will be the condition of our hearts. Remembrance of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) is an act which brings Divine blessings and also great reward, as we learn from the following verses of the Holy Qur'an:

Therefore remember Me, I will remember you; and be grateful unto Me and be you not ungrateful (towards Me). (2:152)

Those who believe and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah: For without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction. (13:28)

And remembrance of Allah is the greatest (thing in life) without doubt. (29:45)

The above verses clearly teach the Faithful to remember Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). Among the benefits that we obtain from this deed is contentment, blessings, piety and strengthening of Faith and keeping away from evils and vices.

The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) again and again instructed and advised his Companions (Rady Allahu Anhum) to keep their hearts always illuminated with the remembrance of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala).

The Messenger of Allah said that everything has a polish and the polish of the heart is the remembrance of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala).

In short, the remembrance of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) is the happiest and also the wisest of deeds. Its blessings can never be counted and the satisfaction it brings cannot be measured. We should always keep ourselves busy in the remembrance of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala), even while we work. The act of remembering Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) will save us from bad thoughts and vices and improve both our spiritual and worldly life.

Dhu'l Hijjah 1419, March 1999

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayjuniors1.html>

THE HOLY QUR'AN

By: Syed Abid Ali

The Holy Qur'an is the Word of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). It is the Book of guidance for all mankind till the Day of Judgement. The Holy Qur'an was revealed by Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) to Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa Sallam) through angel Jibreel ('Alaihissalam). It was first revealed in the month of Ramadan. Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) had also revealed three more Books called **Tawrat** to Nabi Musa ('Alaihissalam), **Zabur** to Nabi Dawud ('Alaihissalam) and **Injil** to Nabi Isa ('Alaihissalam).

The Qur'an has 114 **surahs** (chapters) altogether. The **surahs** which were revealed in Makkah over a period of 13 years are called **Makki surahs** while the **surahs** which were revealed in Madinah over a period of 10 years are known as **Madani surahs**. The Qur'an has 6236 **ayahs** or verses. It also has 30 **juz** (parts) in it. There are 14 places in the Qur'an where we do a **sajdah**. The Qur'an teaches about Allah's Message. The Qur'an teaches Muslims about respect. It also explains about Islam. The language of the Qur'an is sweet.

The first **surah** of the Qur'an is Surah al-Fatiha. Its translation is:

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

All praise is to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

The Beneficent, the Merciful.

Owner of the Day of Judgement.

You only do we worship, and You only do we beg for help.

Guide us on the Straight Path.

The path of those whom You have favoured;

not (the path) of those on whom is (Your) anger,

nor of those who go astray. (1:1-7)

The last **surah** of the Qur'an is Surah an-Naas. The most beautiful Names of Allah, the **Asma al-Husna** are mentioned in the Qur'an. The Qur'an has many different names such as **al-Kitab** (the Book), **al-Furqan** (the Criterion of Judgement), **Majeed** (Glorious) and **Karim** (Honourable). The Qur'an is in the Arabic language. It has been translated in all the other major languages.

If you act according to the Qur'an you will live a happy life. When you hold the Qur'an you should be careful because it might drop and some of your good deeds will be erased. We all should recite the whole Qur'an especially for those who have passed away, so Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) could forgive them. The Qur'an tells us about Heaven and Hell. The Qur'an is the way of life for everybody. The Qur'an will keep you safe. Allah

(Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) revealed the Qur'an, so Muslims could know more about Islam. The Qur'an teaches the spiritual truth of Islam. The Commands in the Qur'an are Allah's Commands. The Qur'an teaches elders to love children. It also teaches children to respect elders. The Qur'an teaches us about what is **halal** (permitted) and **haram** (prohibited). The Qur'an answers all the questions about life. The Qur'an has everything we need to know.

The Qur'an has been guiding the destiny of mankind. The Qur'an is more precious than life. The Qur'an is the path of life. The Qur'an also takes us along the right path. The Qur'an is a great noble Book. Some Muslims learn the whole Qur'an by heart. Men and boys who have memorized the whole Qur'an are called Hafiz ul-Qur'an. Women and girls who have memorized the whole Qur'an are called Hafiza al-Qur'an. It is preserved through memory as well as writing. It was written down from the very beginning that Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) has given His Protection to it. It will always be preserved. It is the last and final Book sent by Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). It tells us how to serve and worship Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). It tells us how to live a life of virtue. It tells us how to behave in our homes, like how to treat our parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, neighbours and strangers.

We should try to recite a minimum of one **juz** of the Qur'an everyday. Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa Sallam) said that "a person who doesn't recite the Qur'an is like a ruined house." Even if a person is not able to understand the Qur'an but he can recite it, he will get **thawaab** (heavenly reward).

The verses which were revealed to Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alahi wa Sallam), were recorded. There were also some **Sahaba** (Companions) who had memorized the whole Qur'an, but many of them were martyred in battle. During his Khilafah, Sayyidina Abu Bakr Siddiq (Rady Allahu 'Anhu) said that all these verses should be gathered and he had the Holy Qur'an compiled. Later, during the Khilafah of Sayyidina Uthman (Rady Allahu 'Anhu), people in Iraq, Syria and Egypt were reciting the Qur'an with some differences in pronunciation. Therefore, Sayyidina Uthman (Rady Allahu 'Anhu) had standard copies of the Qur'an produced and sent them to those countries along with a **Qaari** (reciter). And even today, all Muslims whether they live in Egypt or India or Afghanistan, they all recite the same standard Qur'an. This service of Sayyidina Uthman (Rady Allahu 'Anhu) has helped preserve the Qur'an in the way it was revealed.

Before we recite the Qur'an or a **Surah** we should say **Bismillah -ir- Rahman ir-Rahim** (In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful). We should try to understand what is in the Qur'an and act according to it. We should put the Qur'an in a clean spot and put it on top of everything. Every Muslim should know how to recite the Qur'an. We could make Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) happy by completing the recitation of the Qur'an. We could make Him happier by memorizing the whole Qur'an. More people have memorized the Qur'an than any other book.

Rabi' Awwal 1420, July 1999

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayjuniors2.html>

THE COMPANIONS OF OUR BELOVED PROPHET MUHAMMAD
(Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)
By: Hamid Syed

The Companions of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) are known as the **Sahaba**. Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said the **Sahaba** are like stars, anybody who follows them will get guidance. The main Companions of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) are Sayyidina Abu Bakr Siddiq, Sayyidina Umar, Sayyidina Uthman and Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhum). They became his Khalifas.

Sayyidina Abu Bakr Siddiq (Rady Allahu Anhu) was the Prophet's closest Companion. He was the very first **Khalifa**. He received the title "**Siddiq**", meaning truthful. He was the first man to accept Islam. He had a daughter called Aisha (Rady Allahu Anha), who married the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). He fought in many battles together with Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) against those who persecuted them.

Sayyidina Abu Bakr Siddiq (Rady Allahu Anhu) had done many good deeds. One night when the stars were up in the sky, Sayyidatina Aisha (Rady Allahu Anha) asked Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) who had more **thawaab** (heavenly rewards) than all the stars? Then Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said that Sayyidina Abu Bakr Siddiq (Rady Allahu Anhu) had earned more **thawaab** than all those stars only on the day of their **hijra** (migration). When he passed away, he was laid to rest beside the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) in Madina.

Sayyidina Umar (Rady Allahu Anhu) was the second **Khalifa** after Sayyidina Abu Bakr Siddiq (Rady Allahu Anhu) passed away. He was **Khalifa** for 10 years. During his time as a **Khalifa**, Islam spread far and wide. Some people say that if he were **Khalifa** for another 10 years, Islam would have spread all around the world. Sayyidina Umar's daughter Sayyidatina Hafsa (Rady Allahu Anha) was Prophet Muhammad's wife. Shaitaan was so scared of Sayyidina Umar (Rady Allahu Anhu) that there is a Hadith where the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "If (Sayyidina) Umar (Rady Allahu Anhu) is walking on a street and Shaitaan approaches him, Shaitaan will run away and take another street". Sayyidina Umar (Rady Allahu Anhu) was very brave. He received the title "**Farooq**" which means "the one who distinguishes truth from falsehood". He took part in all the battles with the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) including the battle of Badr.

At first, he was not a Muslim. When the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was spreading Islam to the people, Sayyidina Umar (Rady Allahu Anhu) was not happy and

decided to kill the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). One day Sayyidina Umar (Rady Allahu Anhu) took his sword and went to kill the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). On his way a man told him that his sister and her husband had become Muslims. When Sayyidina Umar (Rady Allahu Anhu) heard this, he got really angry and started going to his sister's house. When he went to his sister's house he heard the Surah Taha being recited. He hit his sister who started bleeding and he felt sorry for her and told her to continue reciting. When he heard the recitation of the Qur'an he was convinced it was a revelation from Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). Then he went to Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and became a Muslim. He was the fortieth person to become a Muslim. When he passed away, he was laid to rest beside the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) in Madina.

Sayyidina Uthman (Rady Allahu Anhu) was the third **Khalifa** after Sayyidina Umar (Rady Allahu Anhu). He was **Khalifa** for 12 years. He was the ambassador of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). He received the title "**Ghani**" meaning rich. He was given that title because he gave a lot of his wealth for Islam. He brought camels loaded with goods for the war effort. He took part in many battles together with the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). He was also given the title **Dhun Nurain** meaning "possessor of two lights" because he married two daughters of the beloved Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), one after another, that is, Sayyidatina Ruqayyah (Rady Allahu Anha) and after she passed away, Sayyidatina Umm Kulthum (Rady Allahu Anha). He is one of the **Asharatul Mubashshara** meaning one of the ten who were promised Paradise by the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). He belonged to the tribe of Quraish. He did **Hijrah** two times, first to Abyssinia, then to Madina.

The Qur'an was compiled on the instructions of Sayyidina Uthman (Rady Allahu Anhu) by the Companions of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), just as it was recited in the time of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). After the Qur'an was compiled together, Sayyidina Uthman (Rady Allahu Anhu) made many copies of the Qur'an and distributed it to major cities. Therefore he is known as "**Jami'ul Qur'an**".

One day when Sayyidina Uthman (Rady Allahu Anhu) was reciting the Qur'an in his house, traitors came from behind and killed him. His blood is on the page of the Qur'an he was reciting. He is a **shaheed** (martyr). He passed away at the age of 81. He was laid to rest in Jannat ul Baqi in Madina.

Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) became the fourth **Khalifa**. He received the title **Asadullah** meaning "the Lion of Allah". Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) was the cousin of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) was born in the Ka'ba. His father was Hadrat Abu Talib. He is one of the **Ashsharatul Mubashshara**. When he first opened his eyes, he saw Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). He was raised up by Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). He slept in the bed of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) when the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) went on **Hijra** (migration). He is called **Bab ul-Ilm**, "the Gate of Knowledge". He was a **Hafiz ul Qur'an**. He is the first child to accept Islam.

Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) married Sayyidatina Fatima (Rady Allahu Anha), the daughter of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). They had two famous sons, Sayyidina Imam Hasan (Rady Allahu Anhu) and Sayyidina Imam Husain (Rady Allahu Anhu). He fought in many battles together with Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) including the battle of Badr. He took part in man to man combats. He killed the best warrior of the enemies in a man to man combat.

Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) loved Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) because he was a very charitable person. Once when Imam Hasan (Rady Allahu Anhu) and Imam Husain (Rady Allahu Anhu) were ill, Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) and Sayyidatina Fatima (Rady Allahu Anha) made a vow that after their two sons recover, they will fast for three days. Allah Ta'ala then blessed their children with good health. So now Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) and Sayyidatina Fatima (Rady Allahu Anha) had to fast. When their fast was completed and Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) came back from the **masjid** after performing **Salat al-Maghrib**, the family sat down for dinner. As soon as Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) picked up the bread in his hand, he heard a voice of a beggar saying "Give me some thing to eat and may Allah Ta'ala feed you with delicious food of **Jannah!** (Paradise)" When they heard the beggar, they decided that they should give him the bread.

On the second fast, when Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) came back from the **masjid** after performing **Salat al-Maghrib**, the family sat down for dinner, when they heard a voice of an orphan from outside who asked for food and said that he was very poor and alone in the world. So again they gave him the bread and broke their fast with water.

On their last fast, when Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) came back from the **masjid** after performing **Maghrib Salah** the family sat down for dinner, they heard a voice of a prisoner, who asked for help and said that he was in great distress. So they gave him the bread and again they went to bed without any food.

On the fourth day no one was fasting, but they had nothing to eat. So Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) then took Imam Hasan (Rady Allahu Anhu) and Imam Husain (Rady Allahu Anhu) to Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "It pains me to see you suffering from want and misery. Let us go to Fatima (Rady Allahu Anha)". When Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) went to Sayyidatina Fatima (Rady Allahu Anha) he saw that she was praying **Nafil Salah**. Her eyes had sunk in and she had become weak. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) took her to his bosom and invoked Allah's mercy for her and her family.

Hadrat Jibreel ('Alayhissalam) came and said that Allah Ta'ala was very pleased with them. And that's how much charitable Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) and Sayyidatina Fatima (Rady Allahu Anha) were.

They are praised in many verses of the Qur'an. The translation of one of these verses is:

And they give food out of love for Him to the poor and the orphan and the prisoner. (76:8)

Sayyidina Bilal (Rady Allahu Anhu) was a **Sahabi** who loved Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). He was the first **muazzin** in Islam. He had the most beautiful voice. He always prayed two **rakah** after he made **wudu** (ablution). This is called "**Sunnah al-Wudu**" When he was a slave, he was beaten up, dragged in the burning sand and had heavy stones put on his chest to force him to say that he is not a Muslim but he always said, "Ahad, Ahad," meaning, 'One, One' (Allah is One). Sayyidina Abu Bakr Siddiq (Rady Allahu Anhu) paid the slave master to free Sayyidina Bilal (Rady Allahu Anhu) from slavery.

He loved Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) so much that after the Prophet passed away, he was so sad that he didn't feel like giving the **Adhan** in Madina. Then after a long time he agreed to give the **Adhan**. But when he got to the recitation of "**Ash-hadu anna Muhammadar-Rasullullah**" (I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah), he started to mourn and fell down unconscious. Sayyidina Bilal (Rady Allahu Anhu) set an example for all Muslims never to give up Islam. His last resting place is in Damascus, Syria.

Another famous Companion of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was Hadrat Abu Hurairah (Rady Allahu Anhu) who narrated the most **Ahadith** (Sayings) of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

Our beloved Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) had thousands of Companions (Rady Allahu Anhum). When he performed his farewell Pilgrimage, he had 124 000 of his Companions with him. Those who migrated with him from Makkah to Madina are called the **Muhajireen** and those in Madina who helped him are called the **Ansar**. May Allah Ta'ala make us follow in the footsteps of our beloved Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and of his blessed Companions, (Rady Allahu Anhum).

Rajab 1420, November 1999

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayjuniors3.html>

HOW I CAN HELP MY PARENTS

By: Syed Abid Ali

These are the suggestions of how to help your loving parents that Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) has given you. First of all you should have respect for your parents. Listen to their commands, like if they tell you to clean up your room, wash the dishes, help them clean the car, sweep the floor, clean the table, vacuum the floor. Do their chores like help them throw the garbage out. Obey them. Be obedient and helpful with all the problems they have. Give them medicine when they are sick.

Give them your love. Do well in studies to make your parents proud of you. You should try to pay back what your parents do for you. Like when they cook for you, wash your clothes, buy new clothes for you, work for you, help you in your education and they give you their love. We are very lucky because some children do not have caring parents like our parents.

To disobey one's parents, to ignore their feelings, or to disregard their comfort and happiness in any other way has been characterized by Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) as a grievous sin. Don't upset them by watching too much television, stealing and getting involved in fights when they told you not to.

When you do a chore for them be happy to do it, not sad. Never disobey them by things that you were asked not to do. Sometimes you are tired and sleepy so you disturb your parents by annoying them, making trouble when they are doing something important like when they are writing a resume for work.

But they don't have the respect they need to have. If you ever have something like that, try to avoid it. This by the way happens to lots of people all around the world.

We shall obey our parents with good behavior like show respect when our parents are talking. It is our duty to look after their needs and comfort them with our respect. We should talk to them with a low voice as respect. When they are old we shall take care of them so that they will never feel neglected. We should ask forgiveness from our parents when we commit a mistake knowingly or unknowingly.

Never argue with your parents or else Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) will be very angry at you. Whenever you do something, do not let your parents feel upset and angry by your behavior towards them.

You could help your parents in so many ways. But the one that gives you the most **thawaab** (heavenly reward), pleases Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) and the best one is to be obedient and have respect for them. That's why I talked about those two the most.

Make **du'a** for them in your prayers to thank Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) for your parents. Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said that whoever pleases their parents, pleases Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) and whoever angers their parents, angers Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). So be good to your parents.

If you are good to your parents, when you grow up, your children will be good to you. If you are bad to your parents, when you grow up, your children will be bad to you. So if you are good to them it's good for you too, not only for your parents.

Dhu'l Hijjah 1420, March 2000

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayjuniors4.html>

THE IMPORTANCE OF SALAH

By: Hamid Syed

Salah (Prayer) is the second pillar of Islam. It is one of the most important pillars of Islam. **Salah** is the key to Islam. **Salah** is **Ibadah** or worship.

In our lives we have many duties that we do like school, jobs and other sort of activities. And when we are doing these things we forget Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) doesn't want us to forget that we are His servants and also why we are here in this universe. That's the purpose of **Salah** and why Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) made **Salah**. **Salah** not only helps us to remember Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala), but it also keeps us on the right path, it helps us from not doing bad, from disobedience of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala), makes us clean and healthy and also it gets us closer to Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). If you stopped offering **Salah** you would no longer be a proper Muslim.

Salah has to be prayed right. **Wudu** (ablution) is the key to **Salah**. If you do not do **wudu** properly and you pray **Salah**, your **Salah** will not count. And when you are praying **Salah**, you must be facing in the direction of the Ka'ba which is our **Qiblah**. Children at the age of ten must start praying **Salah** and when they reach puberty **Salah** is obligatory on them.

There are five **fard** (obligatory) **Salah** in a day. **Fajr** is the first **Salah** of the day, which helps us to start our day with remembering Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). **Fajr** is prayed early in the morning before sunrise. **Zuhr** is the next **Salah**. It is prayed after mid day in the afternoon, so that after you have eaten your lunch you can remember Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). Then comes **Asr** which is prayed when most parents and children come back from school or work. This is another time to remember our Great Lord, Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). After the **Asr Salah** is **Maghrib** which is prayed immediately after sunset. We remember Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) before sunrise and now we remember our Mighty Lord again after sunset. After **Maghrib** comes **Isha** at night. It is the last **Salah** of the day, when we pray to Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) to thank Him for all He has given us that we asked for! We pray for the forgiveness of our sins. We also pray for a peaceful night and also another happy and successful day tomorrow.

The **Jumu'a** Prayer is the most important **Salah** in the week. The **Jumu'a Salah** is at the time of the **Zuhr** prayer, prayed on Friday, with a **khutbah** and in a **jama'ah**, but the **fard Salah** of the **Jumu'a** Prayer is only 2 **rak'ah**. If you miss the **Jumu'a Salah** you can pray it as **Zuhr**, but the **Jumu'a Salah** is highly recommended to pray.

When we pray **Salah**, we stand in straight rows shoulder to shoulder, the rich and the poor, the black and the white, Arab and non-Arab. This shows the unity of Muslims.

We should also pray the **Salat ul-witr** which is next in importance to **Salat ul-fard**. We should also pray **Salat us-sunnah** which are the additional prayers of the Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam). We should also pray **Salat un-nawafil** which are the

additional optional prayers. These prayers bring us closer to Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala).

In each **rak'ah** of **Salah**, we recite Surah al-Fatiha which is the greatest Chapter in the Holy Qur'an. In each **rak'ah** we also recite **Allahu Akbar** (Allah is Supremely Great) five times. In each **Salah** we also recite As-Salat-Ibrahimiyya to send blessing on the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam).

When we finish praying **Salah**, we make **du'a** (supplication to Allah, Subhanahu wa Ta'ala).

Salah is so important that you must perform it in any circumstance. Even if you are on a journey, and also if you are very ill and are confined to bed you still must pray **Salah**. You may ask how are you supposed to pray **Salah** when you are truly ill and are confined to bed? In that case, we can pray **Salah** while lying down in bed, using postures and signs.

Rabi' Awwal 1421, July 2000

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayjuniors5.html>

WHY I AM PROUD TO BE A MUSLIM

By: Hamid Syed

I am truly proud to be a Muslim because I know Islam is the right religion and I am on the right path. Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world. Everything I have belongs to Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). Islam tells us everything from what happens to us when we are born to when we die and also what is going to happen to us after death.

I am proud to be a Muslim because everyone in Islam is treated equally even if you are an Arab or non-Arab, white or black, you are treated equal. In Islam we pray **Salah** five times a day, one before sunrise, one at noon, one in the afternoon, another one after sunset and the last one before going to sleep. These five **Salah** help me remember Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) and when I remember Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala), I don't misbehave, I don't do foolish things and I don't do things that make Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) or my parents unhappy.

Islam is a pure religion because it shows us how to live an excellent life and go to Paradise in the Hereafter. It teaches me manners like how to behave with my elders. It tells us to fast in the month of Ramadan so it shows us how poor people sometimes live without food and water and it tells us to share our wealth with the less fortunate in the form of **Zakah** (poor-due), and **Sadaqa** (charity).

In Islam there is a purpose for everything. The Holy Qur'an is a huge miracle because no one on the surface of earth can write such a beautiful book like the Qur'an. The Qur'an is the only Holy Book, which has not been changed by mankind from the time it was revealed by Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) to our Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam).

I am proud to be a Muslim and I believe that all Muslims should be proud to be Muslims because Islam is a true religion with God.

Sha'ban 1421, October 2000

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayjuniors6.html>

GOOD DEEDS

By: Syed Abid Ali

A good deed is any act that will please Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) and His Messenger, Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Salaam). These are some of the good deeds that we can perform.

A good deed is to learn or teach people how to recite the Qur'an. This deed will make Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) really happy. Also if you teach someone about it, it is a good deed too. Going to **Madrasa** and learning more about Islam is really good. By doing all this you are not only helping others, you are helping yourself by doing a good deed that makes Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) happy and if you make Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) happy there is a great heavenly reward.

Helping your parents is a good deed. You can help your parents by cleaning the house, don't watch too much T.V, study well in school, wash the dishes or anything that will make them happy and not mad.

Being kind to your servants is a good deed. If someone is thirsty, even if it is an animal, you should give water. Giving money or anything that can help the poor is a good deed. If you do any of these deeds you will get a **du'a** from whoever you helped.

If you avoid evil thoughts and evil deeds then you will start doing good deeds. If you think good thoughts, then you'll do good deeds. This will make you a clean Muslim that avoids evil things.

Praying **Salah** five times a day is a good deed. If you do **zikr**, **du'a** or become familiar with these, it is a good deed too. These good deeds will help you be a better Muslim.

Another good deed is to respect your elders. You could do that by speaking to them in a low voice, listen to them and help them out in any way you can. If they tell you to do something, do it. When you help your elders they will reward you by making **du'a** for you. So be good to your elders.

If you're good to your teachers, it is also a good deed. You can be good to them by not talking in class, help them by cooperating in class, studying hard or anything that will make them happy. Be good to your friends and help them out with their problems. Another good deed is to help your neighbours in their problems or difficulties so Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) will save you from your problems and difficulties.

If you do good deeds it will make your heart bigger, cleaner and filled with **Noor** (light). If your heart is filled with **Noor**, you'll be a **Mu'min** and **Insha Allah** you will enter Paradise. **Ameen**.

Dhu'l Hijjah 1421, February 2001
<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayjuniors7.html>

ARKAN AL-ISLAM

By: Usman Munawwar

The five pillars of Islam are the **Shahadah**, **Salah**, **Zakah**, **Sawm** and **Hajj**. We as Muslims have to perform these pillars because Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) has commanded us to perform them. **Shahadah** means Declaration of Faith, **Salah** is the Prayer to worship Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala), **Zakah** means poor-due, **Sawm** means fasting in the month of Ramadan and **Hajj** is the Muslim Pilgrimage to Makkah.

The first pillar of Islam, **Shahadah** means Declaration of Faith. The **Shahadah** is **Laa Ilaaha Illallah Muhammad ur Rasulullah**. These words mean that “**None is worthy of worship but Allah; Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah**”. This declaration is called **Kalimah Tayyibah**. It summarizes the whole of Islamic belief. The other four pillars make up **Ibadah** (worship of Allah, Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) which is done to gain Allah's favor. **Shahadah** concerns belief in **Tawhid** (Oneness of Allah, Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) and **Risalah** (Messengership) of the Prophet Muhammad, (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam).

The second pillar of Islam is **Salah**. When the Prophet Muhammad, (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), went on **Mi'raaj** he was given the five daily **Salah**. First we pray **Fajr**. Its time is from dawn until just before sunrise. Second is **Zuhr**. Its time is after mid-day until the afternoon. Third is **Asr**. Its time is from late afternoon until just before sunset. Fourth is **Maghrib**. Its time is after sunset until darkness sets in. Fifth is **Isha**. It's at night time until just before dawn. We should start praying **Salah** at seven years of age, at ten we should get hit if we don't pray.

The third pillar of Islam is **Zakah** which means poor-due. **Zakah** is payable on wealth such as agricultural produce, gold and silver ornaments, cash in one's possession, trading goods, cows, buffaloes, goats, sheep and camels and, produce of mines. There is a minimum amount on which **Zakah** is not payable. This minimum amount is called **nisab**. Those who have more than this minimum amount have to pay **Zakah**. The **nisab** of agricultural produce is 653 kg per harvest. The **nisab** for gold and silver ornaments is 85 grams of gold or 595 grams of silver. The **nisab** for cash in one's possession is value of 595 grams of silver. The **nisab** for trading goods is value of 595 grams of silver. The **nisab** for goats and sheep is 40 in number.

Zakah is paid every year. The rate of **Zakah** for agricultural produce is 5 percent of produce in case of irrigated land or 10 percent of produce from rain-fed land. The rate of **Zakah** for gold and silver ornaments is 2.5 percent of value. The rate of **Zakah** for cash in one's possession is 2.5 percent of the amount. The rate of **Zakah** for trading goods is 2.5 percent value of goods. The rate of **Zakah** for produce of mines is 20 percent of value of produce. If we pay **Zakah**, we keep our wealth clear of greed and selfishness.

The fourth pillar of Islam is **Sawm** which means fasting in the month of Ramadan. This means abstaining from eating, drinking, smoking and conjugal relations during the time of fasting. Travelers and sick people may not fast in the month of Ramadan and they can make up for the fasts later. The duty of fasting is only for Allah's sake and Allah

(Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) Himself will reward for it. A Muslim is expected to keep away from all bad actions during his/her fast. He shouldn't lie, break a promise or do any deceitful act. The main thing of fasting is to make a Muslim able to control his/her passions, so that he/she becomes a person of good deeds and intentions. In addition to the compulsory fasting in Ramadan, a Muslim may fast during other times of the year.

The fifth pillar of Islam is **Hajj** which is the Pilgrimage to Makkah. It is a visit to **Al-Ka'bah**, the House of Allah in Makkah, once in a lifetime by those who can afford to make the journey. It is performed during the period of the 8th to the 13th of **Dhul Hijjah**, the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar. **Al-Ka'bah** was first built by Prophet Adam ('Alayhissalam), and later rebuilt by Prophet Ibrahim ('Alayhissalam), and his son Prophet Ismail ('Alayhissalam). When the Muslims perform **Hajj**, they also visit the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) in Madina al-Munawwarah.

We should act according to the five pillars of Islam to please Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala), and Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam).

Rabi' Awwal 1422, June 2001

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayjuniors8.html>

THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHILDREN

By: Sabiha Kasmani

To many people it seems that children do not have rights or responsibilities, though we children do have rights and many responsibilities! In this essay I will mention many rights and responsibilities that us children have.

It is the children's right to correct younger ones and teach them as well. It is the children's right to have proper food and clothing. Also us children have the right to eat and drink (halal only), we have the right to read and write, we have the right to try new things, we have the right to play (only at the right time), we have the right to do things only if our parents allow us, we have the right to meet new kinds of people, we have the right to ask and answer questions, we have the right to determine and motivate. It is the children's right to be educated in Islam and worldly matters, the right to be taught skills (correctly), and the right to be given a proper name when born. It is the children's right to be treated equally with siblings and at school, and the right to be brought up with good proper manners. It is a child's right to live.

It is the responsibility of a child to look after parents when they get older and be there for them when needed, to pray five times a day (if at a proper age), fast (if at proper age), respect elders, obey elders, and pray Qur'an. Another responsibility is to show love and gratitude to elders (parents), speak with respect and kindness, and do anything that will make our elders (parents) happy. When someone is sick we should take care of them; stop, look and listen when your parents call you; act your age; do what elders tell you; and help everyone. If parents give us chores, it is our responsibility to do them. It is our responsibility to clean up our own mess, help younger ones, to be polite, be a good role model for younger ones, take care of things (don't leave it on others).

It is the responsibility of children to take care of their pets. If you have a cat then you have to make sure it has food to eat, you should also clean up after it. The cat has to know that it is being wanted, and that it wants to live with you, it has to have freedom, has to be well taken care of, not left alone, to be loved and cared for.

It is the children's responsibility to dress properly. It is also the children's responsibility to make sure they keep good company (good friends that have a good influence on you), to work hard in their studies and at school.

It is the children's responsibility to learn about Islam, the Qur'an, **Zikr** (remembrance of Allah), and **Du'a**. It is the responsibility of children to know their religion, not to be afraid to say it, to pray **Salah**, and to recite the ninety-nine names of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala).

It is the responsibility of a child to be kind and respectful to neighbors, to greet them everyday, to clean up their own part of the front and back yard, to be equal and fair, to keep in good touch and share good news with them.

If our parents and those older than us ask us to get something for them, it is our responsibility to get it. If we ask someone to lend us something, it is our responsibility to use it with care and give it back in good condition. It is our responsibility to behave, have good manners, and teach younger ones to do it too. It is also the responsibility of children to talk to our parents if we have a problem. It is the responsibility of children to know what they are doing.

I think these are important, because we have the right to do something and not to do others. We have some responsibilities now, and others are for when we are older.

Sha‘ban 1422, October 2001

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayjuniors9.html>

MUSLIMS IN MY COUNTRY

By: Syed Abid Ali

There are lots of religions in my country Canada, like Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and lots more. Still there are a lot of Muslims. Islam is the fastest growing religion in North America. There are more than 50 **masajid** in my city of Toronto. There are also lots of Islamic scholars and **madrassas** for children to learn more about Islam.

Muslims in my country come from different backgrounds. We don't get any holidays for our celebrations like **Eid ul-Fitr** and **Eid ul-Adha**. Non-Muslims in my country don't know much about our religion. So, we have to teach them. We have to be good representatives of our religion. We have to help out non-Muslims in our workplaces, schools or anywhere else. We should behave in a proper manner towards them. We should be good to our neighbours even if they are non-Muslims, so that they see how beautiful our religion is. If you give a bad impression about yourself, it will give a bad impression on your religion. Therefore, you should be a good representative of your religion.

Even though the majority of my country is not Muslim, I still have to practice my religion in the proper way. I have to pray five times **Salah** daily and perform other duties like reciting the Qur'an. Just because the people around you do not perform the same religious duties doesn't mean that you should abandon your Islamic duties. Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) has placed us in this world for a test. He wants to see how you follow your religion, the true religion and that you follow it in the proper way. If you do that, Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) will give you the gift of **Jannah** (Paradise).

So remember that even if the people around you are not Muslim, you still have to follow your religion and represent Islam in a good way to non-Muslims, so that they see how good Islam is. These are some facts about Muslims in my country Canada and how we should work towards a better life in our country.

Shawwal 1422, January 2002

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayjuniors10.html>

A MUSLIM'S CHARACTER AND BEHAVIOUR

By: Hafiz Usman Munawwar

In this essay I will tell you about a Muslim's character and behaviour and about the good and humble acts which Muslims perform to help mankind and please Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). I hope that Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) guides us to perform more and more good deeds.

There is a Hadith on good behaviour:

Hadrat Abu Darda (Rady Allahu Anhu), relates that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) said, "Nothing is heavier in the scales of a believer on the Day of Judgement than his good behaviour. Allah detests a person who is obscene and shameless". (**Tirmidhi**)

All the people in this world should follow the character of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) and his **Sunnah** (tradition). Muslims are very humble and polite. They are sharing, giving and kind. They are also very helpful to others, whether the ones they are helping are Muslims or not. Muslims have very strong Faith in Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) and His Rasul (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam). Muslims all around the world pray five times a day.

Muslims are also very kind and forgiving. They help others when needed. They are very kind to their neighbours and they respect their elders. If a Muslim's neighbour needed help in cleaning the lawn or cutting the grass, he would help his neighbour.

Muslims are forgiving to others as was shown by Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam). There was one incident when the Prophet (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) went to Taif to preach but the people stoned him. Then the angels of the mountain came to the Prophet (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) and asked him if they should crush the people of Taif with the mountains surrounding the valley. However the Prophet (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) said "no", and he said that he is **Rahmatul-lil-'Aalameen** (a Mercy for all the worlds). He also said maybe those people would one day believe in Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) and have a change of heart.

There is a Hadith on mercy and forgiveness:

Hadrat Jarir bin Abdullah (Rady Allahu Anhu), relates that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) said, "Anyone who has no mercy for others will receive no mercy from Allah". (**Bukhari and Muslim**)

Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) was very truthful and trustworthy and for that he is called **As-Saadiq** (The Truthful) and **Al-Amin** (The Trustworthy). All Muslims should follow the example of the Prophet (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) and no one should lie to others. If you speak the truth, then Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) will be

very pleased with you and you will be rewarded for saying the truth. Lying is the way of Shaitaan and we should never follow that way because Shaitaan is our worst enemy.

Muslims from all over the world make a Pilgrimage (**Hajj**) to Makkah every year. They also fast in the month of Ramadan every day from dawn to dusk and they pray **Taraawih** Prayers in the month of Ramadan. Muslims also give **zakah** (poor-due) and **sadaqah** (charity). Giving charity to the poor and the needy is an act loved by Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). When you give to the poor and the needy, they ask Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) to send blessings on you and Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) blesses you and you also get heavenly rewards for giving **sadaqah**.

There is a Hadith on **sadaqah**:

Hadrat Abu Hurairah (Rady Allahu Anhu), relates that the Holy Prophet, (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) said, "Charity does not decrease wealth, Allah enhances the honour of one who forgives, and one who humbles himself for the sake of Allah, Allah exalts him in rank". (**Muslim**)

Muslims greet by saying **As-Salamu Alaikum** (peace be upon you). The reply is: **wa alaikum us-Salam** (and peace be upon you too).

Muslims are supposed to have good manners. Muslims show good manners in several different ways, including; when eating, they eat with the right hand; when talking, they talk in a low and calm voice; when greeting, they greet with respect; when yawning, they cover their mouth; and when sneezing, they also cover their mouth.

There are many Hadith on good manners, two of them are:

Hadrat Abu Hurairah (Rady Allahu Anhu), relates that when the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) sneezed, he covered his mouth with his hand or a piece of cloth to reduce the sound. (**Abu Dawud** and **Tirmidhi**)

Hadrat Abu Sa'eed Al-Khudri (Rady Allahu Anhu), relates that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) said, "When one of you yawns, he should cover his mouth with his hand, otherwise Satan would enter (into his open mouth)." (**Muslim**)

All these character traits and behaviour are from the Qur'an and the **Sunnah** of Rasulullah (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) and we should follow the Qur'an and the **Sunnah** all the time.

Rabi' Awwal 1423, May 2002

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayjuniors11.html>

DU‘A AND ITS IMPORTANCE

By: Syed Abid Ali

Du‘a is a supplication to Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala). **Du‘a** is when you ask Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala) for something. Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala) wants to give us so many things. He also wants us to realize that He is there, so we must ask Him by making **du‘a**. **Du‘as** are to help us and guide us. Surah al-Fatiha is the greatest **Du‘a**. It is recited in every **Salah** (Prayer) and on all important occasions.

There are a lot of reasons why **du‘a** is important. Here are some of the reasons.

In a Hadith, Rasulullah (Sallallahu ‘alayhi wa Sallam) said: “There is nothing superior in the eyes of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala) than **du‘a**.” **(Tirmidhi)**

Rasulullah (Sallallahu ‘alayhi wa Sallam) also said: Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala) gets angry on the person who doesn’t make **du‘a**.” **(Tirmidhi)**

Du‘a isn’t only to ask Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala) to give us what we want. It is also to thank Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala) for all the great things He has done for us, ask protection from doing anything wrong, ask for forgiveness and to ask for Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala) to give us a happy life in this world and in the Hereafter. After all, the more you thank Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala), the more He gives you.

In a Hadith it is narrated that Sayyidatina Aisha (Rady Allahu ‘Anha), said: “O Messenger of Allah, if I know what night is the Night of Qadr what should I say?” He replied: “Say: O Allah! You are the embodiment of forgiveness and You love to pardon, so pardon me.” **(Tirmidhi)**

The **du‘a** is:

Allahumma Innaka ‘Afuwwun Tuhibbul afwa fa‘fu annee

In another Hadith, Hadrat Abdullah Ibn Mas‘ud (Rady Allahu ‘Anhu) related that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu ‘alayhi wa Sallam) use to pray, “O Allah, I seek from you guidance, piety, chastity, and richness of heart.” **(Muslim)**

When you are making **du‘a**, you have a direct connection with Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala). So when you are saying your **du‘a** you shouldn’t be distracted, but instead you should be fully concentrated. The Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘alayhi wa Sallam) said in a Hadith narrated by Hadrat Abu Hurairah (Rady Allahu ‘Anhu): Make **du‘a** and be assured of it being answered, and know that Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala) does not answer a **du‘a** from a careless heart which is not concentrating. **(Tirmidhi)**

In a Hadith narrated by Hadrat Anas bin Malik (Rady Allahu ‘Anhu), the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘alayhi wa Sallam) said: **Du‘a** is the essence of worship. **(Tirmidhi)**

Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) tells us in verse (2:152) of the Qur'an to remember Him. Its translation is:

Then do remember Me; I will remember you. (2:152)

When an **Imam** in a **masjid** is saying **du'a**; the more people that are saying "**ameen**" after him, the more likely the **du'a** is accepted.

In a Hadith the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) said: "The one who wants his **du'a** to be accepted in time of difficulty and hardship, should make frequent **du'a** in time of prosperity and peace." (**Tirmidhi**)

In a Hadith narrated by Hadrat Abu Hurairah, the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) also said: Supplications (**du'a**) of three persons are not refused; a fasting person when breaking the fast, a just ruler and an oppressed person. (**Tirmidhi**)

A parent's **du'a** for the children also has a lot of effect.

When you are starting your **du'a**, you should always start by saying: **Bismillah- ir-Rahman- ir- Raheem** (In the name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful). Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) said: A **du'a** that doesn't have **Bismillah- ir-Rahman- ir- Raheem** at the beginning of it is rejected. A **du'a** should begin in the name of Allah, putting all trust and hope in Him alone. Describing Him as The Beneficent and The Merciful creates confidence that the **du'a** will not be rejected. The **du'a** should also contain **Salawaat** (blessings) on Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam).

In a Hadith Rasulullah (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) said: "**Du'a** is a weapon of a Muslim, a pillar of the **Deen** (religion) and **Noor** (light) of the heavens and the earth. (**Haakim**)

After making **du'a** you will notice that you feel good inside, that things are going good in your life and you will think of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) more as a result of making **du'a**. May Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) help us realize the importance of **du'a** and appreciate it in our life time as much as we possibly can. **Insha Allah**.

Rajab 1423, September 2002

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayjuniors12.html>

WHY I LOVE THE MONTH OF RAMADAN

By: Hafiz Usman Munawwar

I love the month of Ramadan because it is the greatest month in the Islamic calendar. This holy month is full of events and worship of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). A lot of great things took place in Ramadan. I love Ramadan because it contains two of the pillars of Islam. It contains **Zakah** and Fasting. I love the month of Ramadan because the Qur'an was revealed in this month. I also love it because **Laylatul Qadr** takes place in this holy month. I love it because you get to perform **Itikaaf** and **Tarawih** Prayers.

The Qur'an guides us on the right path. The Qur'an was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). Muslims should recite the Qur'an at least once in the month of Ramadan. The Qur'an was revealed through Sayyidina Jibril ('Alayhissalam). In a Hadith it says that in Ramadan the gates of Heaven are open and the gates of Hell are closed. This means we should try to recite as much Qur'an as we can.

The great night called **Laylatul Qadr** takes place in the month of Ramadan. **Laylatul Qadr** means "the Night of Power". In the Qur'an it says that this night is greater than a thousand months. A lot of Muslims make **ibadah** for the whole night. Qur'an and **tasbeeh** (glorification of Allah) are recited a lot in this great and powerful night.

Many Muslims also like to give their **Zakah** in Ramadan. **Zakah** can be paid at other times but you get more heavenly reward if you give it in Ramadan. Every Muslim must pay 2.5% of his/her wealth in **Zakah**. **Zakah** is given to the poor and needy people. It is important to give **Zakah** because it is a pillar of Islam.

Fasting is a big part of Ramadan. It is also the fourth pillar of Islam. Every Muslim must fast in Ramadan. Fasting teaches us to have fear of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) and it also teaches us discipline. Fasting keeps us away from bad things. It also shows us how the needy people feel.

Itikaaf (seclusion for worship) and **tarawih** prayers are also two things that take place in Ramadan. **Itikaaf** is performed in the **masjid** for the last ten days of Ramadan. **Tarawih** prayers are performed every night in Ramadan. They start right after **Isha salah**. All the **huffaz** (those who have memorized the whole Qur'an) go to different **masajid** to lead **tarawih salah**. Every night 20 **rak'aat** are performed.

After Ramadan comes **Eid-ul-Fitr**. **Eid-ul-Fitr** is a great celebration for Muslims. The fasting stops and Muslims go to pray in the morning. Then they celebrate with their relatives and friends. A lot of special food is made on **Eid**. These are the reasons why I love the month of Ramadan.

Dhu'l Hijjah 1423, March 2003
<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayjuniors13.html>

MY DREAM OF GOING FOR HAJJ

By: Naseem Ahmed

I dream of going for **Hajj** (Pilgrimage to Makkah) because **Hajj** is the fifth pillar of Islam and it is **fard** (compulsory) for those who have the means. As quoted by Hadrat Abu Huraira (Rady Allahu ‘Anhu) who reported that the Prophet (Sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said the reward for **Hajj** that is accepted by Allah is Paradise. The Prophet (Sallallahu ‘alayhi wa Sallam) said the best Jihad for women is **Hajj Mabruur** (an accepted Pilgrimage).

The **Zam Zam** spring began when Prophet Ismail (‘Alayhissalam) was a baby and he was rubbing his feet against the dry ground crying for water. **Zam Zam** is the water from the well in Makkah near the Ka‘ba. **Zam Zam** is **shifa**, a cure for any purpose for which it is drunk.

I also want to see the Black Stone which was given to Nabi Ibrahim (‘Alayhissalam) from Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala) to be placed in the Ka‘ba.

Mina is a halting place where you throw seven pebbles each at the three **Jamarat** (pillars). Arafah is the place where Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) gave his last sermon. I would like to see the grounds of Arafah, where the Day of Resurrection will take place. I would like to do **Tawaaf** around the Ka‘ba and run between the Safaa and Marwa. I would like to see the footprints of Nabi Ibrahim (‘Alayhissalam) at Maqam Ibrahim near the Ka‘ba and pray 2 **Rakaat Salah** over there.

I would like to visit the Prophet’s **Masjid** in Madina and pray forty **Salah** over there. Last but not the least I would like to visit these places so that I can see how our Prophet (Sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) and the other Prophets (‘Alayhimussalam) and the **Sahaba** (Rady Allahu ‘Anhum) lived and where the **Wahy** of the Qur’an was revealed, since the Ka‘ba is a place of peace and tranquility. It is said by the Prophet (Sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) that a person who performs **Hajj** with a clean heart is free from sin like a baby who is just born.

Rabi‘ Thani 1424, June 2003

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayjuniors14.html>

WHAT MY MOTHER HAS ADVISED ME

By: Syed Abid Ali

Hadrat Mu'awiya bin Jahima said that his father approached Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) and said, "I intend going on Jihad. I seek your advice". The Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) inquired, "Is your mother alive?" He answered, "Yes". The Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) said, "Go and serve her, for Paradise lies beneath the feet of mothers". (Ahmad, an-Nasaai, Bayhaqi)

This Hadith right here tells us the importance of the mother. It tells us why we should respect and be obedient to our mother. If we don't, then we cannot enter Paradise. In this essay, I will be talking about what my mother has advised me and why it's so important to practice it. These are just some of the many things my mother has advised me about Islam and many other things.

One of the most important things my mother has advised me are the basic five pillars of Islam. The first pillar starting off with the **Kalima**, "**Laa ilaaha Illallah Muhammad ur Rasulullah**", which means: "None is worthy of worship except Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah". She told me the importance of it and also told me to believe in it. The second pillar being Prayer, she taught me how to pray **Salah** and advised me to pray it five times a day.

The third pillar is **Zakah**. She recommended that when I grow up, I pay my **Zakah** to the less fortunate. She prepared me for this by putting money in my hand and telling me to put it in the **Zakah** box in the **masjid**. The fourth pillar is fasting. She taught me how to fast throughout the month of Ramadan. The last pillar of Islam that was taught to me was **Hajj**. My mother always advised me that at one point of my life I would have to go for **Hajj**. She also told me that Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) forgave the people that never had the money but told me that if I had the money, then it would be a good time for me to go for **Hajj**.

My mother has also advised me about some little, but also important things that have made me the Muslim that I am now. She has advised me to be honest and always to tell the truth, no matter what the situation is. She told me the story of Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani (QaddasAllahu Sirrahul 'Aziz). When he was just a teenager, he went on a journey and he was approached by thieves who asked him if he had any money. He didn't lie but told them that he had money sewn in the inner part of his clothes. When the thieves found out that he wasn't lying, they were amazed. They asked him why he never lied and he simply replied that his mother taught him always to tell the truth. The thieves repented and became pious Muslims.

My mother always taught me to have good manners, to respect my elders and to care for them. She always told me to treat others the way I wanted to be treated. I was advised to make good Muslim friends that practised Islam on a daily basis. I was instructed to be friendly with my neighbours and the people around me, and also to care for them.

Something else that is important and was advised to me by my mother was to make a habit of reciting the Qur'an everyday. She said that it was very important that I recite the Book of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) and practice to become more fluent at reciting the Qur'an and to act on its teachings.

Once a person asked the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam), "Who deserves the best care from me?" The Prophet replied, "Your mother (he repeated this three times), and then your father".

I conclude my essay with this Hadith because it tells us why we should listen to what our mother has to say because she is the most important person in our life. That's why we should realize that whatever our mother says, we should take it into consideration because it's going to be based on the teachings of the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). I hope to put the advice of my mother in my daily practice, **Insha Allah**.

Sha'ban 1424, October 2003

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayjuniors15.html>

SAYYIDATINA AISHA (Rady Allahu ‘Anha)

By: Naseem Ahmed

Sayyidatina Aisha (Rady Allahu ‘Anha) is one of the most important wives of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam). She was born in 9 B.H. and she passed away in 58 A.H, living up to 67 years old. Her whole name is Aisha Siddiqah bint Abu Bakr as-Siddiq. She is the daughter of Sayyidina Abu Bakr Siddiq (Rady Allahu Anhu). Her father is a close Companion of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) and is our first **Khalifah**. She is known as one of the Mothers of Faithful Believers as she is the Prophet’s wife.

We know that she is one of the most important wives because Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said that one day he had a dream. In that dream, he was presented with a gift from Heaven. When he opened that gift, he saw Sayyidatina Aisha. What that meant was that Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala) informed Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) that he had to marry Sayyidatina Aisha (Rady Allahu ‘Anha).

Many of the wives of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) were widows, divorcees, or captives of war. Sayyidatina Aisha (Rady Allahu ‘Anha) was not any of them. She was the only virgin that Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) married. Among women, Sayyidatina Aisha (Rady Allahu ‘Anha) reported the greatest number of **Ahadith** (Sayings) of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam).

Dhu’l Hijjah 1424, February 2004

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayjuniors16.html>

SAYYIDINA ABU BAKR AS-SIDDIQ (Rady Allahu Anhu)

By: Naseem Ahmed

Sayyidina Abu Bakr As-Siddiq (Rady Allahu Anhu) is a blessed Companion of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam), the first one among men to accept Islam, and the first rightly-guided **Khalifa** or successor. He participated in the Battle of Badr. He is the father of Sayyidatina Aisha (Rady Allahu Anha).

Sayyidina Abu Bakr As-Siddiq (Rady Allahu Anhu) is two years younger than the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam). His real name is Abdul Ka'ba, the servant of the Ka'ba, but when he became a Muslim, his name was changed to Abdullah. He adopted the name Abu Bakr which is the name everyone calls him by.

Ever since he was young, he was a good and an upright person. He had the respect of many people, especially of the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam). He was a rich and generous person. Everyone trusted him for he had a good heart and no one could stop him from doing the right thing.

“Abu Bakr did not hesitate to accept Islam”, the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam) said. He spread Islam in every way he could, and wherever the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam) went, he went. He protected the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam) from anything, even a snake, as he didn't care even if he himself got hurt.

He helped many people and had the title of **Siddiq**. **Siddiq** is a person who is truthful. He earned this title because his Faith was too strong to be shaken by anything. He's ranked next in greatness after all the Prophet's (Alayhimussalam).

Sayyidina Abu Bakr As-Siddiq (Rady Allahu Anhu) took part in all the battles. In Tabuk, he even took all his things to help an expedition. When the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam) asked him: what have you kept for yourself? He replied: “Nothing. Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) and His Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam) are enough for me.”

When the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam) could not lead the Muslims in Prayer in his final illness, he asked Sayyidina Abu Bakr (Rady Allahu Anhu) to lead the Muslims in Prayer.

When Sayyidina Abu Bakr As-Siddiq (Rady Allahu Anhu) became **Khalifa** of Islam after the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam) passed away, he told the people: “O people, I have been elected your leader even though I am not better than anyone from among you. If I do any good, give me your support. If I go wrong, set me right. Listen, truth is honesty, and untruth is dishonesty. The weak among you shall be strong in my eyes as long as I do not get them their due, Allah willing. The powerful among you shall be weak in my eyes as long as I do not take away from them what is due to others, Allah willing. Listen, if people give up striving for the cause of Allah, Allah sends down disgrace on them. If people become evil doers, Allah sends down calamities on them. Listen, you

must obey me as long as I obey Allah and His Messenger. If I disobey Allah and His Messenger, you are free to disobey me.”

When he was **Khalifa** he sent the Muslim army to defeat Musaylama al-Kadhhab who claimed to be a prophet. In this way he preserved the purity of the teaching of Islam that Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam) is the Final Prophet.

Sayyidina Abu Bakr As-Siddiq (Rady Allahu Anhu) passed away at the age of sixty-three. I believe he is one of the most amazing persons in Islam, really in the whole humanity of the world.

Rabi‘ Awwal 1425, May 2004

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayjuniors17.html>

SAYYIDINA UTHMAN ZUNNURAIN (Rady Allahu Anhu)

By: Muzna Jin

Sayyidina Uthman ibn Affan (Rady Allahu Anhu) was born in the 6th year of the elephant (576 C.E). He was of the Quraish tribe. He was married to two daughters of the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam). So he was given the title of **Zunnurain** which means “Possessor of the Two Lights”. First he was married to Sayyidatina Ruqayya (Rady Allahu Anha) and when she passed away, he married Sayyidatina Umm Kulthum (Rady Allahu Anha) who also passed away. Rasulullah (Sallallahu ‘alayhi wa Sallam) said that if he had another daughter, he would have given her in marriage to Sayyidina Uthman (Rady Allahu Anhu).

He belonged to a rich family in Makkah and was one of the first to accept Islam. When persecution of Muslims by non-believers increased, he migrated to Ethiopia. Later, he also migrated to Madina with the rest of the Muslims and participated in the major events. He generously gave his wealth to help fellow Muslims, so he is affectionately called Uthman **Ghani**. He donated many wells to provide free water for the Muslims. This is an example of **sadaqah jariya** (continuous charity). We pray to Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala) to make us as generous as Sayyidina Uthman (Rady Allahu Anhu).

He participated in important matters of state and was one of the Prophet’s writers. He was well-known for his modesty.

When Sayyidina Umar ibn al-Khattab (Rady Allahu Anhu) who was the second **Khalifa** passed away, Sayyidina Uthman (Rady Allahu Anhu) was elected as the third **Khalifa**.

Despite his great wealth, he led a simple life. He was a patient and pious man with total trust in Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala). During his time as **Khalifa**, he expanded the Prophet’s Masjid in Madina.

Sayyidina Uthman (Rady Allahu Anhu) was **Khalifa** for twelve years. During his **Khilafat**, Islam spread from Morocco in the west to Afghanistan in the east.

Sayyidina Uthman (Rady Allahu Anhu), besides being a relative of the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam) and his son-in-law was one of his closest aides and writer. After the passing away of the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam), Sayyidina Uthman (Rady Allahu Anhu) became the assistant of Sayyidina Abu Bakr (Rady Allahu Anhu), and later of Sayyidina Umar (Rady Allahu Anhu).

During the time of the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam), the greatest scholars were those who had memorized the Qur’an and so he was among the greatest scholars of the day. When he was **Khalifa**, he got a standard copy of the Qur’an compiled and had several copies reproduced which he sent to various towns. His love for the Qur’an was great and he recited a great deal of it. At the time he was martyred in Madina, he was reciting the Qur’an.

Many books and **qasidas** have been written about Sayyidina Uthman (Rady Allahu Anhu), praising his achievements and his goodness.

His name is mentioned in the Friday **Khutbah**. The names of all the first four **Khalifas** are mentioned in the Friday **Khutbah**. They are Sayyidina Abu Bakr As-Siddiq, Sayyidina Umar Faruq, Sayyidina Uthman Zunnurain, and Sayyidina Ali Al-Murtada (Rady Allahu Anhum).

Sha‘ban 1425, October 2004

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayjuniors18.html>

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**BEST ESSAYS IN
IQRA ESSAY COMPETITIONS**

PART 2:

**BEST ESSAYS OF SENIORS
(13 TO 17 YEARS OF AGE)**

THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD

(Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam)

By: Syed Yasin Ali

The people of ancient Arabia were misguided and misled. They disobeyed Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala) and worshipped idols. Then Allah Ta‘ala favoured mankind by sending them the best creation of Allah; the Master of humankind and jinn; the greatest personality on earth; the beloved of Allah, Prophet Muhammad Mustafa (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam).

Our beloved Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) was born in Makkah on 12th of Rabi‘ Awwal in the year 571 C.E. He was a descendant of Prophet Ismail (‘Alayhissalam). His father’s name was Hadrat Abdullah and his mother’s name was Sayyidatina Amina. He was nursed by Sayyidatina Halima (Rady Allahu Anha). His father, Hadrat Abdullah, passed away several weeks before his birth. His mother, Sayyidatina Amina passed away when he was 6 years old during the return journey from Madinah, at a place called Abwa. He was raised by his grandfather, Hadrat Abdul Muttalib, until the age of eight. After his grandfather passed away, his uncle, Hadrat Abu Talib, took care of him. Hadrat Abu Talib treated Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) very kindly. Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) would sleep in his uncle’s bed and eat with him.

Under the care of Hadrat Abu Talib, Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) began to earn his living as a businessman. At the age of twelve, he accompanied Hadrat Abu Talib with a caravan as far as Syria. Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) was popularly known as **‘as-Sadiq’** (the truthful) and **‘al-Ameen’** (the trustworthy) for his good deeds. His name, Muhammad means “the praised one”.

After hearing about Prophet Muhammad’s (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) impressive character, Sayyidatina Khadijah (Rady Allahu Anha), a rich business woman, offered Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) money to take some goods for trade to Syria. Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) set out for Syria along with Maisarah, a slave of Sayyidatina Khadijah (Rady Allahu Anha). After the trip, Maisarah told Sayyidatina Khadijah (Rady Allahu Anha) all about the Prophet (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam). Sayyidatina Khadijah (Rady Allahu Anha) was fascinated by Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam). Therefore, she married him (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam). Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) and Sayyidatina Khadijah (Rady Allahu Anha) were blessed with two sons and four daughters. Their first son, Qasim passed away at the age of two while their second son, Abdullah, passed away during his infancy. Prophet Muhammad’s (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) four daughters were Sayyidatina Zainab, Sayyidatina Ruqayyah, Sayyidatina Umm Kulthum and Sayyidatina Fatima (Rady Allahu ‘Anhunna).

Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) usually went to a cave in Mount Hira for meditation. Sometimes, he would remain in the cave for a month. Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) was forty years old when Archangel Jibril (‘Alaihissalam) appeared before him and revealed the first five verses of Surah Al-Alaq of the Qur’an. After the revelation, Sayyidatina Khadija (Rady Allahu Anha) became the first person to accept Islam.

Sayyidina Jibreel (‘Alaihissalam) visited Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) and revealed verses of the Qur’an over a period of twenty-three years. Sometimes, Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) would receive some parts of a chapter or a whole chapter. They were memorized as soon as they were revealed. These verses were collected in a book, known as the Qur’an.

The first few people to accept Islam were his cousin Sayyidina Ali, his servant Hadrat Zayd ibn Harithah, his friend Sayyidina Abu Bakr Siddiq (Rady Allahu Anhum) and his daughters. They accepted Islam by testifying that “There is no deity except Allah. Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) is Allah’s Messenger”.

In the first three years of Prophet Muhammad’s (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) mission, forty people accepted Islam. He then began to preach Islam in public. The leaders of the Quraish did not accept the new religion. Some of them tried to bribe Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) with money and power, including an offer to make him a king. But our beloved Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) refused to abandon Allah’s Message. When this did not work, they tried to convince his uncle, Abu Talib, to allow them to kill Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam). Therefore, his uncle tried to dissuade him from preaching. But Holy Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) said “O uncle, if they were to put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand to stop me from preaching Islam, I would never stop. I will keep on preaching until Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala) makes Islam prevail or I die.”

The tribe of Quraish began to persecute Muslims by beating and torturing them. The first person to die by this means was a Muslim woman called Hadrat Umm ‘Ammar (Rady Allhu Anha). Our beloved Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) was publicly humiliated. They threw dirt on him while he was walking on a street and while he was praying in the Ka‘bah. Despite all these hardships, Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) was told by Allah Ta‘ala to be patient and preach the Message of the Qur’an. When the punishment became unbearable for Muslims, the Prophet (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam), advised them to go to Abyssinia (Ethiopia).

The Quraish made life miserable for Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam). They made a ban on contact with the Prophet’s (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) family. The ban lasted for three years. After the ban was lifted, Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) lost his wife, Sayyidatina Khadijah (Rady Allahu Anha) and his uncle, Hadrat Abu Talib.

After Sayyidatina Khadijah (Rady Allahu Ahna) passed away, Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) married Sayyidatina Sawdah (Rady Allahu Anha). She was fifty years old. Later, Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) married Sayyidatina Aisha (Rady Allahu Anha), the daughter of Sayyidina Abu Bakr Siddiq (Rady Allahu Anhu), a close Companion of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam).

Since his uncle, Hadrat Abu Talib passed away; Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) went to Taif, a city south-east of Makkah, to preach there. But the people of Taif laughed at him. Their children threw stones at our beloved Prophet (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam). Sayyidina Jibreel (‘Alaihissalam) visited Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) and suggested that the angels were ready to destroy the town. But Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) refused and prayed for the future generations of Taif to accept Islam.

After the incident at Taif, Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) experienced the events of **Isra** and **Mi‘raaj**. During the event of **Isra**, Sayyidina Jibreel (‘Alaihissalam) took Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) to Masjid Al-Aqsa, a **masjid** in Jerusalem, at night. Here, Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) led the other Prophets (‘Alaihimussalam) in Prayer. After this, the event of **Mi‘raaj** took place. Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) was taken to the heavens. It was on this journey that he received the gift of the five daily Prayers. He was then taken back to Makkah. When Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) mentioned these events to the people of Makkah, they laughed at him. However, Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) described the Masjid al-Aqsa to them and told them that a caravan will be arriving soon. The non-believers were later astonished when this turned out to be true. **Mi‘raaj** is one of the many miracles of the Prophet (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam).

The leaders of Quraish were getting angry at Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam). They decided to kill him. The leaders chose a young man from each clan of Quraish. These men were responsible for attacking Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam). Sayyidina Jibreel (‘Alaihissalam) informed Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) about the plan and instructed him to leave immediately. Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) advised Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu ‘Anhu) to sleep in his bed. He then met with Sayyidina Abu Bakr Siddiq (Rady Allahu ‘Anhu) and both of them went into hiding in a cave in Mount Thawr.

The next morning, the men raided the house of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam). After finding out that he had left, they set out for the mountains in search of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam). Abu Karz, a man known for his skills in tracking footprints, followed the tracks of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) to the cave. They examined the cave and noticed that a web had covered its mouth. They thought that it was impossible for Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) to hide in the cave. So, they departed.

Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) spent three nights in the cave. When he was sure that the Quraish had ended their search, he travelled to Madinah. This journey is known as “**Hijra**”. The Islamic calendar begins with this event. Upon the arrival of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam), the people of Madinah greeted him with great respect and treated him with hospitality.

After the migration to Madinah, the enemies of Islam increased their attack on Muslims. The Battles of Badr, Uhud and al-Ahzab took place and were fought near Madinah. Many men gave their lives for Islam. This resulted in many widowed women and lots of orphaned children. Therefore, Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) married several widows like Sayyidatina Zainab bint Khuzaimah, Sayyidatina Umm Habibah and Sayyidatina Umm Salamah (Rady Allahu Anhunna). All his wives, especially Sayyidatina Aisha (Rady Allahu Anha), reported many **Ahadith** (Sayings of Prophet Muhammad).

A year after the Battle of the Allies, Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) and fifteen hundred Muslims left for Makkah to perform Hajj. On their journey, they were stopped from entering Hudaibiyyah. In this city, some negotiations took place that allowed them to come next year. This treaty attracted many people from Arabia. Many people came from different parts of Arabia and accepted Islam.

Two years later, the Quraish violated the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah. So, Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) marched to Makkah with an army of 10,000 Muslims. Before entering the city, he told the citizens of Makkah that anyone who remained in the house of Abu Sufyan or in the Ka‘bah, would be safe. The army entered Makkah without fighting and Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) went directly to the Ka‘bah. He thanked Allah, the Almighty for allowing the entry to Makkah. He then pointed at each idol and recited this verse from the Qur’an,

And proclaim, Truth has come and falsehood has vanished; indeed, falsehood is always bound to vanish. (Surah Bani Israil, 17:81)

One by one the idols fell down. Thus, the Ka‘bah was cleaned. Next, he forgave the leaders of Quraish and the people of Makkah. The people of Makkah then accepted Islam, including the enemies of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam). Within a year, almost the whole of Arabia had accepted Islam.

Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) performed his first and last Pilgrimage during the tenth year after Hijra. 120,000 men and women performed Pilgrimage with him. He received the last revelation during this Pilgrimage. Two months later, Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) fell sick and after several days left his earthly existence on Monday, 12th Rabi Awwal in Madinah. He was 63 years old.

Our beloved Nabi (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) lived a very simple and modest life, even though he could have lived like a king. He (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) and his family used to go without cooked meals for several days at a time, eating dates and dried

bread. During the day, Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) was the busiest man, he performed his duties as the head of state and a family man. He (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) used to spend one to two-thirds of every night in prayer and meditation. Prophet Muhammad’s (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) possessions consisted of mats, jugs and other simple things.

At the end of his mission, Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) was blessed with several followers. Thousands prayed with him and listened to his sermons. Hundreds of **Sahaba** (Companions) would find time to be with him during the five daily Prayers. They used to seek his advice for their everyday problems. Among them were Sayyidina Abu Bakr Siddiq, Sayyidina Umar, Sayyidina Uthman, and Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhum).

Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) had a beautiful appearance. His sweat was more fragrant than musk and his perspiration shone like pearls. He (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) talked so clearly that someone could count the number of words he spoke. Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) never struck anybody with his hand, but he did fight for Islam. He (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) used to forgive his enemies and release prisoners of war.

He had the seal of Prophethood between his shoulders.

Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) is the last Prophet of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala). All sincere Muslims try to follow the **Sunnah** (tradition) of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam). Many Muslim scholars have composed **qasidas** in praise of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam). Rasulullah’s (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) favours upon his **Ummah** (community) are unlimited. Our Nabi (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) said, “You do not have (complete) **Imaan** (Faith) until I am more beloved to you than your father, children and the rest of mankind.”

Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) is the connection between Muslims and Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala). We can never get close to Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala) unless our hearts are filled with the love of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam).

Muslims strive to send abundant **salams** and **salawat** (salutations and blessings) on the beloved Prophet (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) as commanded to us by Allah Ta‘ala. Sending salutations and blessings on the Prophet (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) enables Muslims to draw closer to the Prophet and increase their love for him. The most famous **salat** is the Salat al-Ibrahimiyyah, which was taught to us by Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam) as mentioned in a Hadith in Bukhari. Its translation is:

“O Allah! Shower blessings upon Sayyidina Muhammad
and on the Family of Sayyidina Muhammad
as you showered blessings upon Sayyidina Ibrahim

and on the Family of Sayyidina Ibrahim.
Surely, You are the Praiseworthy, Glorious

O Allah! Bestow favours upon Sayyidina Muhammad
and on the Family of Sayyidina Muhammad
as You bestowed favours on Sayyidina Ibrahim
and on the Family of Sayyidina Ibrahim.
Surely, You are the Praiseworthy, Glorious.”

Dhu’l Hijjah 1419, March 1999.

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayseniors1.html>

THE BLESSED HADITH SHAREEF

By: Amina Noormohamed

Muslims follow the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith Shareef. The Qur'an is Holy Scripture, Word of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). Hadith is what Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) said. **Sunnah** is what Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) said, did, or approved of. When we recite Hadith we learn about his **Sunnah**. We want to learn about his Hadith because we want to follow what he did and what he approved of, in detail. Hadith is mentioned in the Qur'an and it is referred to as **Hikmah** (Wisdom) in the following verse:

And Allah has sent down to you the Book (the Qur'an) and the Wisdom and taught you what you knew not (before), and great is the Grace of Allah upon you. (4:113)

Hadith is next in importance to the Qur'an, because Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) tells us in the Qur'an to obey Him and the beloved Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) as in the following verses:

Say (O Beloved Prophet): If you do love Allah, then follow me; Allah will love you and forgive you your sins, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (3:31)

O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger and those in authority from amongst you, then if you have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to Allah and the Messenger if you are (in truth) believers in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and very good in the end. (4:59)

Whoso obeys the Messenger, indeed obeys Allah and whoso turns away, We have not sent you as a warder over them. (4:80)

O people! The Messenger has come to you with the Truth from your Lord. Therefore believe, (it is) better for you. And if you disbelieve, still, surely! to Allah belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth, and Allah is Ever-Knower, Wise. (4:170)

O you who believe! Obey Allah and His Messenger, and turn not away from him when you hear (him speak). (8:20)

O you who believe! Be not unfaithful to Allah and the Messenger, nor knowingly betray your trusts. (8:27)

You have indeed in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful example (of conduct) for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day and remembers Allah much. (33:21)

And it befits not a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter (for them), that they should (after that) claim any

choice in their matter, and whoso disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he surely has gone astray in manifest error. (33:36)

O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and render not your deeds useless. (47:33)

The (true) believers are only those who believe in Allah and His Messenger and afterward doubt not, but strive with their wealth and their lives in the Way of Allah. It is they who are the truthful. (49:15)

And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it). And fear Allah, surely! Allah is severe in retributing (evil). (59:7)

For this reason the Qur'an is the first source of Muslim law and Hadith is the second source of Muslim law.

Whatever Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) said, did or approved of was narrated by his Family members and Companions as Hadith. The man who narrated the most number of Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) was Hadrat Abu Huraira (Rady Allahu Anhu), and the lady who narrated the most Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) was Sayyidatina Aisha (Rady Allahu Anha).

There are six major books of Hadith. These books are: **Sahih Bukhari** by Imam Bukhari (194 A.H.-256 A.H.) containing 7275 Hadith, **Sahih Muslim** by Imam Muslim (206 A.H.-261 A.H.) containing 4000 Hadith, **Jami** by Imam Tirmizi (209 A.H.-279 A.H.) containing 1600 Hadith, **Sunan** by Imam Abu Dawud (202 A.H.-275 A.H.) containing 4800 Hadith, **Sunan** by Imam Ibnu Maja (passed away 283 A.H.), and finally **Sunan** by Imam An-Nasaai (215 A.H.-303 A.H.).

Each Hadith is classified in a specific manner, for example: **Sahih** (sound), **Hasan** (good, approved), **Da'if** (weak), **Mutawatir** (with a continuous chain of narrators), **Mash-hur** (well-known, handed down by at least three different reliable authorities), **Muttafaqun Alaih** (agreed upon by both Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim), **Ghareeb** (rare, unfamiliar), and **Ma'ruf** (well-known). A Hadith is classified as sound if it has a solid chain of narrators, and is classified as weak if it has a weak chain of narrators.

Some of the things that we learn from Hadith are that the **Kalimah Shahadah** is the key to Paradise, how to pray our **Salah**, what is **Zakah** and how much to give in **Zakah**, the importance of fasting in the month of Ramadan, and how to perform **Hajj**. We also learn about **Arkan al-Iman** or the pillars of Faith, and how to be good Muslims by practicing **Ihsan** (goodness). We learn about the things that are prohibited in Islam such as stealing, cheating, lying, backbiting, fraud, alcohol and pork. The other thing that we learn from Hadith is what to do or recite on specific occasions for example: when giving in charity, say **fee Sabilillah** (in the Way of Allah); when getting married, say **Amantu Billah** (I believe in Allah); when parting from someone, say **fee Amanillah** (may you be in the protection of Allah); when participating in prayer, say **Ameen**; and when a death message

is received say **Inna Lillahi wa Inna Ilayhi Raaji'un** (we are for Allah and indeed to Him we shall return).

If we want to know the totality of Prophet Muhammad's (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) teachings on any subject (for example charity), we need to study all the Hadith on that subject.

Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) said, "Say your five prescribed Prayers, keep Ramadan fasts, give Zakat of your property, and believe in one God." The above topics will now be discussed with a few Hadiths from Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) to demonstrate the importance of each subject in a Muslim's life. Unfortunately, all the Hadith are not provided, due to the nature of this short essay.

For one thing, **Salah** is one of the most important aspects of being a Muslim, where one prays to Allah for forgiveness. The significance of **Salah** is seen in the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam). He used to pray **Salah** for so long in the night in standing posture that his feet got swollen up. Sayyidatina 'Aisha (Rady Allahu Anha) asked him, "O Messenger of Allah! Why do you exert so much when Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) has already forgiven you?" Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) replied, "Should I not be a grateful servant of Allah?"

Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) also said **Salah** was the best deed in the sight of Allah, followed by being good to your parents and to do Jihad in the way of Allah. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Sayyidatina Aisha (Rady Allahu Anha) said that Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) offered **witr** Prayers on different nights at various hours extending (from the Isha Prayers) up to the last hours of the night. (Bukhari)

This shows us the importance of **Salah**, from the above examples of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam).

Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) believed that the month of Ramadan was the most blessed month of the year, and this can be seen in the following Hadith.

Hadrat Salman (Rady Allahu Anhu) reports that Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) said, "This is indeed the month of patience, and the reward for patience is Paradise. It is the month of sympathy with one's fellow men. It is the month wherein a true believer's sustenance is increased." (Khuzaimah)

Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) believed that you should not fast until you have seen the moon and do not leave the fasts until you see it, and if there are clouds, complete thirty days. (Malik)

He also said that whoever forgets while he is fasting and eats or drinks, let him complete his fast because Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) has fed him and has given him drink. (Bukhari)

Fasting is one of the pillars of Islam, and in order to practice Islam one needs to fast. The above Hadiths show us what fasting does for a person, and how important it is.

Zakah is also described in many of Prophet Muhammad's (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) Hadith. Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) said, "Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) loves the pious rich man who (in spite of his piety and wealth) is obscure and unknown to fame." (Muslim)

Hadrat Abu Huraira (Rady Allahu Anhu) reported that Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) said, "The generous man is near Allah, near Paradise, near men, and far from hell; but the miserly man is far from Allah, far from Paradise, far from men, and near hell. Indeed, an ignorant man who is generous is dearer to Allah than is a worshipper who is miserly." (Tirmidhi)

Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) always gave away everything in charity, for example his mule on which he used to ride and a plot of land. (Tirmidhi) These narrations of the Prophet's sayings and life, demonstrate the gravity of **Zakah** and **Sadaqah** (charity) in a Muslim's life.

Finally, Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) believed that Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) is dearer to him than everything on which the sun rises. (Muslim)

Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) used to say, "Glory be to Allah; Praise be to Allah; there is no one worthy of worship but Allah; and Allah in Most Great", is dearer to me than everything on which the sun rises." (Muslim)

The **tasbih** mentioned here is: **SubhanAllah wa'l Hamdu Lillah wa laa ilaha Illallah Wallahu Akbar.**

Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) said if anyone says this 100 times a day, his sins will be removed from him. (Muslim)

Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) taught us that there is no might and no power except with Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala).

Hadith is a very important aspect of being a Muslim because it develops love for Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) and for Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam). Following the Sayings of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) makes you follow the right path.

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Rabi' Awwal 1420, July 1999

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayseniors2.html>

THE FAMILY OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD
(Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)
By: Syed Yasin Ali

The Family of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is known as the **Ahl al-Bayt**. The members of the **Ahl al-Bayt** are Sayyidatina Fatima, Sayyidna Ali, Imam Hasan and Imam Husain (peace be upon them).

The wives of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) are also included among the Family of the Prophet, as Allah Ta'ala mentions them in the Holy Qur'an,

Allah only wishes to remove impurity from you, O members of the Household, and purify you with a thorough purification. (Surah al-Ahzaab, 33:33)

The scholars agree that this ayah (verse) refers to the Ummahat al-Mu'mineen (the Mothers of the Believers), who are the honourable wives of the beloved Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam).

There is a Hadith where the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) embraces Sayyidina Ali, Sayyidatina Fatima, Imam Hasan and Imam Husain and says, "This is my Family". While he was hugging his Family, Hadrat Jibreel ('Alayhissalam) was looking and wished to be a part of the Prophet's Family. Thereupon, the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) embraced Hadrat Jibreel and told him that he was also a part of his Family.

The following are some of the other Hadith about the **Ahl al-Bayt**:

Hadrat Zaid bin Arqam (Rady Allahu Anhu) reported Allah's Messenger (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) as saying, "I am leaving among you something of such a nature that if you lay hold of it you will not go astray after I am gone, one part of it being more important than the other: Allah's Book, a rope stretched from heaven to earth, and my close relatives who belong to my Household. These two will not separate from one another till they come down to the Pond, so consider how you would act regarding them after my departure." **(Tirmidhi)**

Hadrat Abu Dharr (Rady Allahu Anhu) while holding the door of the Ka'ba, said that he had heard the Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) say, "My Family among you are like Noah's ark. He who sails on it will be safe, but he who holds back from it will perish." **(Ahmad)**

Hadrat Zaid bin Arqam (Rady Allahu Anhu) said that Allah's Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said of Sayyidina Ali, Sayyidah Fatima, Sayyidina al-Hasan and Sayyidina al-Husain (Rady Allahu Anhum). "I am at war against him who makes war on them and at peace with him who makes peace with them." **(Tirmidhi)**

Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu)

Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) was the fourth Khalifah after Sayyidina Uthman (Rady Allahu Anhu). He was the cousin and son-in-law of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). He accepted Islam at the age of 11. His birth took place inside the Ka'ba and the first thing he saw when he opened his eyes, was the beautiful face of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has said that he is “the city of knowledge” and Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) is “the gate of knowledge”.

Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) and Sayyidatina Fatima's (Rady Allahu Anha) famous sons were Iman Hasan (Rady Allahu Anhu) and Imam Husain (Rady Allahu Anhu).

Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) was very brave and he was ready to sacrifice his life for the sake of Allah Ta'ala. Therefore he received the title of '**Asadullah**' meaning “the Lion of Allah.” Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) helped the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) by sleeping in his bed when the non-believers wanted to kill the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) was a **Hafiz al-Qur'an**. He was very pious. Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) took part in many battles. He was praying in a **Masjid** when a member of the Kharijite sect killed him. The man put poison on the sword before stabbing Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu). It was decided to remove the sword from his body while he was praying **salah** because they knew he would not feel the pain in **salah** as his whole concentration would be in it. He was laid to rest in Najaf, Iraq.

Sayyidatina Fatima (Rady Allahu Anha)

The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has said: “Fatima is the leader of the women in Paradise.” (**Sahih Bukhari**)

Sayyidatina Fatima (Rady Allahu Anha) was the youngest daughter of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). She was a pious and a charitable lady. She was the wife of Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu). She is known as Fatima az-Zahra. She was so pious that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) used to stand up and greet her.

Sayyidatina Fatima (Rady Allahu Anha) was the first person to pass away after the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). One day, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) whispered something into Sayyidatina Fatima's ear, upon which she started crying. Later he whispered something else, upon which she turned happy. When the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) passed away, Sayyidatina Aisha (Rady Allahu Anha) asked her about the secret that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) had whispered into her ear. Sayyidatina Fatima said that the Holy Prophet had told her that he will soon pass away upon which she started crying. Later, he told her that she was going to join him soon, upon which she turned happy. Sayyidatina Fatima (Rady Allahu Anha) passed away in Madinah. She was laid to rest in Jannat ul-Baqi'.

Imam Hasan (Rady Allahu Anhu) and Imam Husain (Rady Allahu Anhu)

The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has said that Hasan and Husain are my two basils in this world. **(Sahih Bukhari)**

He used to carry Imam Hasan (Rady Allahu Anhu) on his shoulder and he prayed to Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala), "I love him, so please love him." Sayyidina Abu Bakr Siddiq (Rady Allahu Anhu) used to say that Imam Hasan (Rady Allahu Anhu) very closely resembled the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) knew that his grandsons were going to become martyrs. One day, Hadrat Jibreel ('Alayhissalam) brought two dresses from Jannah for the Prophet's grandsons. Imam Hasan (Rady Allahu Anhu) chose the green dress and Imam Husain (Rady Allahu Anhu) chose the red one. The green colour stood for poison while the red colour was for blood.

Imam Husain (Rady Allahu Anhu) has been given the title of "**Sayyid ash-Shuhada**" meaning "the Leader of Martyrs" for the courage he displayed against Yazid's army in the battle of Karbala.

The **Ahl al-Bayt** were very generous and charitable. There was an incident where Imam Hasan (Rady Allahu Anhu) and Imam Husain (Rady Allahu Anhu) fell seriously ill. Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) and Sayyidatina Fatima (Rady Allahu Anha) vowed that they would fast for three days after the recovery of their sons. Soon, Imam Hasan and Imam Husain recovered and the family started observing fasts. When the first day's fast was completed and they were about to break their fast, a beggar reached their house and asked them for some food. They gave away all the food they had to the beggar. When the time came for the second day's fast to be broken, an orphan begged them for food and they gave away all the food. When the time came for the third day's fast to be broken, a prisoner came to them and asked them for food and they gave away everything.

The fourth day they were not fasting but they had nothing to eat. Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) took Imam Hasan and Imam Husain, to see the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). After looking at his grandsons, the Holy Prophet then visited Sayyidatina Fatima (Rady Allahu Anha). Her eyes were sunk in, and she had become weak. The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) embraced her and invoked Allah's mercy on her.

Hadrat Jibreel ('Alayhissalam) came and said that Allah Ta'ala was pleased with them.

This verse of the Holy Qur'an was revealed in their honour:

And they give food out of love for Him, to the poor and the orphan and the prisoner. (Surah Ad-Dahr: Verse 8).

It is the duty of Muslims to love and respect the Family of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) because the Holy Prophet has said in a Hadith, "When I am loved, then my family members whom I love, should also be loved." **(Tirmidhi)**

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Rajab 1420, November 1999

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayseniors3.html>

HOW CAN I HELP MUSLIMS?

By: Syed Yasin Ali

It is important that we help our fellow Muslims because Allah the Almighty has commanded us, and our beloved Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has taught us. In order to help Muslims, we should be able to interact with the Muslim community in a lot of ways. By helping Muslims we please Allah Ta'ala and receive rewards from The Almighty. As a Muslim youth, it is my duty to help Muslims as much as I can. There are many different ways in which I can help the Muslim community.

I can volunteer at my local **masjid** and help them by keeping the **masjid** clean and preparing it before Prayer. I can also assist the staff of the **masjid** by helping them in their **da'wa** work and addressing Muslims to adhere to Islam.

I can also help my Muslim friends in my school and try to organize events where all the Muslim students can get together and participate. I can also help my Muslim friends by trying to establish a place in the school where we could pray our **Jumu'a** Prayers regularly.

I can also help the Muslim brothers who live in the neighbourhood by helping them in any way I can, whenever they are in any kind of trouble. I can also invite them to my home so that we can get together and discuss issues about ways in which we can improve the Muslim community.

I may also help my fellow **Madrassa** students by helping them recite the Qur'an, assisting them in other activities and providing leadership for them. I can also organize events conducted by the **Madrassa**, like distributing flyers for the program, announcing and setting up the tables for food, serving and cleaning everything up after the program.

I can also visit senior homes where I can sit and talk with elderly Muslims about Qur'an and Hadith for a while, help them with their daily routines like feeding them, making sure they take their medication and cleaning their beds.

I can also visit welfare homes and help the orphan children with their education and teach them ways to lead a good Islamic life.

I can also try to make an effort to contribute at least some money to the Muslim organizations that try to help poor Muslims and Muslims who are living in countries like Chechnya, Bosnia, Somalia and Kashmir. By contributing we can make sure that they receive food, shelter and clothing. It is important for us to help these people since we are living in an excellent condition by the Grace of Allah the Almighty and we should help our fellow Muslim brothers living in poor conditions so that Allah Ta'ala might reward us. There is a Hadith, where Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has said that a Muslim who feeds his fellow Muslim brother will taste the delicious food of **Jannah** (Paradise), a Muslim who clothes his brother will receive beautiful clothes in

Jannah and a Muslim who gives water to his fellow Muslim brother will receive drinks in **Jannah**.

Finally, I can help Muslims by just behaving properly and acting in a good manner so that I may set an example for other Muslims. It is very important that Muslims help each other in this country since we are a minority. By helping and taking care of each other, we can set an example to non-Muslims and other communities and emerge as a strong Muslim **Ummah** (community).

Dhu'l Hijjah 1420, March 2000

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayseniors4.html>

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HAJJ

By: Sidhra Yakub

Every year between the 8th and the 13th of Zul Hajj, Muslims from all over the world, gather in the holy city of Makkah for **Hajj**. **Hajj** is the fifth pillar of Islam. It is a visit to the Ka'ba, the house of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). The Ka'ba is a sacred building that was built by Sayyidina Nabi Adam ('Alayhissalam). During the battles that took place over time, the Ka'ba was damaged. Sayyidina Ibrahim ('Alayhissalam) and his son Sayyidina Ismail ('Alayhissalam) then rebuilt the Ka'ba and restored its dignity. The Ka'ba is the oldest House that was built for the purpose of worshipping Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala).

It is **Fard** (compulsory) for every Muslim to make at least one journey in their lifetime to Makkah for **Hajj** if they can afford it. Going on **Hajj** consists of many memorable events. First, you must do **ghusl** (bath) and make **niyyah** (intention) for **Hajj**. Men wear **Ihram** clothing which are two pieces of unstitched white clothing, women wear their normal dresses. You then recite the **Talbiya** which is **Labbayk Allahumma Labbayk** (I am here O Allah, here I am) and perform the rites of **Umrah**. On the 8th of Zul Hijjah you do the **Tawaaf** of the Ka'ba in Makkah. Then you go to Mina and pray **Zuhr**, **Asr**, **Maghrib**, and **Isha**. On the 9th, you pray **Fajr** in Mina. After **Fajr**, you go to Arafat to pray **Zuhr** and **Asr**. You make **du'a** there. More people are forgiven by Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) on the Day of Arafat than on any other day.

Then you leave for Muzdalifa after sunset. At Muzdalifa, you pray **Maghrib** and **Isha** and collect 49 or more pebbles. On the 10th, you pray **Fajr** at Muzdalifa and leave for Mina and sacrifice a lamb there as it is the day of **Eid ul-Adha**. Now you stop reciting the **Talbiya** and begin to recite the **takbiraat** of **Eid**. You then pray **Zuhr** and throw 7 pebbles at the big pillar (**jamarah** in Mina) which represents shaitaan. After you have sacrificed an animal, have a haircut or shave your hair, women need to clip only a little of their hair. Now you can come out of **Ihram** clothing and put on your normal clothes. Then you leave for Makkah and perform **Tawaaf** there. You then return to Mina. On the 11th after **Zuhr** Prayer, you have to throw 7 pebbles each at the 3 **jamarat** (pillars) in Mina. On the 12th, you throw 7 more pebbles each at the **jamarat**. After that, you return to Makkah and make **Tawaaf-ul-Wadaa** (farewell **Tawaaf**). This completes your **Hajj**.

Then you leave for Madina and stay there for at least eight days to complete the 40 **Salah** and visit **Rawdat-ur-Rasul** to recite **salawaat** and **salaams** on the Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam).

Performing **Hajj** brings us closer to Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). It brings **thawaab** (heavenly rewards) and is a memorable experience that teaches us many valuable lessons in Islam.

The teachings of **Hajj** are very significant to a Muslim's daily life. During **Hajj**, we pray **Salah** five times a day and offer many other prayers and stay clean and pure at all times. Praying **Salah** is mandatory during the period of **Hajj** as well as throughout one's life. Praying **Salah** in the Grand **Masjid** in Makkah rewards a Muslim 100,000 times the **thawaab** of praying one **Salah** at home.

Sacrificing a lamb or goat during **Hajj** teaches us to share and to give to the poor. It teaches us generosity, kindness, and the ability to share with others less fortunate. In Mina, when we throw pebbles at the three pillars representing shaitaan, we learn that we should be truthful and clean and live a life free of sins. We learn to disobey the shaitaan's evil ways and stand against him.

Apart from kindness and generosity, **Hajj** teaches us that Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) has blessed us greatly. The water from **Zam Zam** is a special gift from Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) to Muslims till the Day of Judgement. Anyone who drinks the water from **Zam Zam** will be granted **shifa'a** (healing) from all the illnesses and diseases. Making **du'a** at Arafaat is also a blessing. All **du'as** are answered and all wishes are made true.

This Pilgrimage helps us learn the history of Islam, and to see how it has been held up over the past centuries. We should remember the work of our Beloved Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam). We should learn the patience and the sacrifices made by our Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) at this very time and place many centuries ago. The gathering of Muslims all around the world helps us to remember that we are all Muslims and worshippers of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) and that we are all brothers and sisters in Islam. We learn about Muslims from different nations. We see that Muslims are not joined together on the basis of color or race. They are joined together on the basis of Islam, the way of Faith and right action. The Pilgrimage brings Muslims of all countries, colors, and races to one place, the Ka'ba. This strengthens the spirit of unity, equality and brotherhood. These are the values on which Islam builds the human society and it will continue this way till the Day of Judgement. **Ameen.**

Rabi' Awwal 1421, July 2000

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayseniors5.html>

WHY I AM PROUD TO BE MUSLIM

By: Syed Yasin Ali

The true religion with Allah is Islam. (Qur'an, Surah Aal-'Imran, 3:19).

And whoever seeks another religion than Islam, it shall never be accepted of him. (Qur'an, Surah Aal-'Imran, 3:85)

Islam is a true religion. It is the religion of Allah the Almighty and his beloved Messenger, Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Islam is one of the major religions of the world, with Muslims making 20% of the total population of the world. It is also one of the fastest growing religions in the world. These are some of the several reasons for which I am proud to be a Muslim.

Islam is a complete way of life. The Holy Qur'an and the Hadith teach us how to live a civilized life. Islam teaches us purity and encourages cleanliness. It teaches us respect towards our parents and elders. It teaches us to help the less fortunate, by giving alms and charity to them. There is equality in Islam. All Muslims are equal in the eyes of Allah (Subhabahu wa Ta'ala), whether they are Arabs, African or Indian. There is unity among Muslims. Each Muslim helps his fellow Muslim brother. These beautiful attributes of Islam make me proud to be a Muslim.

The most important reason for which I am proud of Islam is the Holy Prophet, Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is the greatest Prophet of Allah. There is not a single Prophet or a man that can match the qualities of our beloved Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). He was a preacher, a statesman and a ruler. His **Sunnah** is the best example a Muslim can follow. He is still considered the greatest leader by many non-Muslims in the West.

Islam has also had a huge influence on the entire world. This is another important reason that makes me proud of Islam. Muslim scientists and scholars formed the basis of the European Renaissance. Muslim mathematicians and scientists were important contributors to medicine, technology and philosophy. Islamic medicine and science influenced Europe greatly during the fifteenth century.

Muslims should be proud of their religion. They should not be embarrassed to be Muslims. Allah the Almighty says in the Holy Qur'an,

You are the best of people raised up for (the benefit of) mankind; you enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong and you believe in Allah. (Surah Aal-'Imran, 3:110)

Muslims are the best nation created by Allah (Subhabahu wa Ta'ala). We were created in the best stature and will remain so, as long as we obey Allah (Subhabahu wa Ta'ala). He says in the Qur'an,

Surely, We created man of the best stature. Then We reduced him to the lowest of the low. Except those who believe and do righteous deeds, for they shall have a reward without end. (Surah, Al-Teen, 95:4-6)

The Companions of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) were proud of being Muslims. For this reason, they were able to defeat the non-believers and were able to conquer so many parts of the world. They did not hide themselves in a corner, afraid to declare their Faith. They were proud of their religion. An excellent example of this display of Muslim pride was Hadrat Abu Dharr Ghifari (Rady Allahu Anhu). He accepted Islam at a time when Muslims were being tortured and persecuted. After accepting Islam, the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) told him not to tell anyone in Makkah about his acceptance of Islam because the non-believers might kill him. But Hadrat Abu Dharr (Rady Allahu Anhu) vowed to proclaim his Faith. He told the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) that he would go to the Sacred **Masjid** and proclaim his Faith. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) remained silent. Later, he went to the Holy Ka'ba, where the Quraish were sitting and talking. He called out in a loud voice, "O people of Quraish, I testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." Immediately, they jumped on him and began to beat him cruelly. But Hadrat Abbas (Rady Allahu Anhu), the Prophet's uncle saw him and told the Quraish to stop beating him up, since he belonged to the Ghifar tribe of Syria and his death could end the trade between Syria and Makkah.

This **Sahabi** had so much pride in his religion that he announced it in front of his enemies, even at the risk of his life. We should be proud of our religion. We are not supposed to hide our Faith unless our lives are in danger like the time when Muslims were being persecuted in Makkah. But once they had the strength to defend themselves, they spread their religion. They took the message of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) to different people and different kings. They were proud of their religion because they knew that Islam was and is the truth. They knew that their duty was to spread Islam.

I am proud to be a Muslim and I feel that Muslims should be proud of their religion. They should display their Faith and should be proud to be a part of this beautiful religion called Islam.

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The Holy Qur'an

Sha'ban 1421, October 2000

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayseniors6.html>

MAJOR SINS AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

By: Syed Yasin Ali

The major sins are those acts which have been forbidden by Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) in the Holy Qur'an and by His Messenger, Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) in his Hadith.

The translation of a relevant verse from the Holy Qur'an is:

If you avoid the major sins which you have been forbidden, We will cancel out for you your (other) evil deeds and admit you (to Paradise) with a noble entry. (An-Nisaa', 4:31)

Therefore, Allah the Almighty has guaranteed Paradise to those who avoid the major sins. It is very important for a **Mu'min** (believer) to avoid these types of sins, since they carry a lot of punishment.

According to a Hadith of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam), there are seven major sins (**kaba'ir**). Anyone who commits these sins will be punished in the Hereafter unless there is true repentance. In a Hadith, the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) says, "Avoid the seven noxious things", and after saying this, the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) mentions them, "ascribing partners to Allah, magic, killing a person without a just reason, consuming the property of an orphan, consuming usury, fleeing from battle when the army is advancing, and slandering chaste women." (**Muslim**)

Among the mentioned sins, committing **shirk** (ascribing partners to Allah) is the most punishable act. According to the Qur'an, a person who commits **shirk** will not be forgiven and will remain in hell forever, as we learn from this verse:

Surely, Allah does not forgive (the sin of) ascribing partners to Him, and He forgives whatever is other than that to whomsoever He wills. (Surah An-Nisaa', 4:48 and 4:116)

Shirk is the greatest sin because it violates belief in the Oneness of Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala). We need to believe that Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) is One, the only One who deserves our worship.

There are also many kinds of other sins that are highly punishable like gambling, consuming intoxicants, lying, stealing and committing suicide. But there are also many sins that we commit everyday without knowing that these sins are punishable as well, since they displease Allah the Almighty. The following are some of these kinds of sins which we don't pay much attention to.

1. Disobeying our parents.
2. Giving false testimony.
3. Engaging in bribery.

4. Cursing others.

The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) said, “Abusing a Muslim is evil and fighting him is disbelief.” (**Sahih Al-Bukhari**).

5. Harming neighbours.

According to a Hadith, the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) said, “A person who is not safe from his neighbour’s mischief will not enter Paradise.” (**Sahih Al-Bukhari**).

6. Men wearing silk and gold.

The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) said, “Men who wear silk and gold will have no portion (of Heaven) in the Hereafter.” (**Sahih Muslim**).

7. Not praying in congregation and praying by yourself without an excuse. The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) said, “Whoever hears the call to Prayer and doesn’t come to Prayer, there is no Prayer for him except for the one who had a valid excuse.” (**Al-Bukhari**).

8. Spying on Muslims.

9. Believing in soothsayers, psychics and astrologers.

The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) said, “Whoever goes to a fortune teller and asks him about something will not have his Prayer accepted for forty nights.” (**Sahih Muslim**).

We can avoid all kinds of sins by praying five times a day, reciting the Holy Qur’an, observing the five pillars of Islam and by keeping ourselves busy with the remembrance of Allah (**zikr**). By observing these duties, we leave very little room for sins to occur. We should also go to the **masjid** regularly and we should keep good company. Thus, these sins don’t have any influence on us.

But true repentance is the key to avoiding sins. Whenever we commit a sin, we should beg for forgiveness from Allah the Almighty and we should vow not to repeat them again. Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta’ala) forgives the sins of those who repent, as we learn from this verse of the Holy Qur’an:

Except those who repent and believe and do good deeds. Such will enter Paradise, and they will not be wronged in any way. (Surah Maryam, 19:60).

We commit sins everyday. But we should try to avoid the major sins that are very displeasing to Allah. We should repent for the sins that we commit and we should beg Allah’s forgiveness. We should also do good deeds in order to wipe out our sins. We should also have a good understanding about Islam through the Qur’an and Hadith. Thus, we will know the sins and the unlawful deeds that displease Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta’ala) and will be able to avoid them.

Dhu’l Hijjah 1421, February 2001

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayseniors7.html>

THE PILLARS OF IMAAN

By: Syed Yasin Ali

Iman (Faith) is a very important part of a Muslim's life. Muslims believe in the six articles of Faith. These beliefs are derived from the Holy Qur'an and the **Sunnah** of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam). The Pillars of Iman are belief in Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala), belief in His angels, belief in His Books, belief in His Messengers, belief in the Hereafter, belief in the Divine Decree of Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) and raising up for judgement on the Day of Resurrection after death. It is extremely important to believe in these six pillars as we learn from this verse of the Holy Qur'an:

O you who believe! Keep Faith in Allah and His Messenger and the Book (the Qur'an) which He revealed to His Messenger, and the Book which He revealed before, and whoever disbelieves in Allah, and His angels, and His Books, and His Messengers and the Last Day, then verily he has wandered far astray. (Surah an-Nisaa', 4:136)

Belief in Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala)

Belief in Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) is the foundation of Iman. **There is no one worthy of worship except Allah** (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala). He is our Creator, and He is not created. He is the Eternal and the Ever-Lasting without a beginning or an end. He sustains and protects all that exists. To Him belong the heavens and the earth and everything in between them. He is the All-Knower and nothing escapes His Wisdom. He does not tire or become weary. He is the Owner and complete Sovereign of all. He has complete control over everything and nothing happens except by His Permission. He is the Best Planner. Others may plan, but His is the way that will be. He is Pardoning and Forgiving. He forgives His servants out of his infinite Mercy. He is the Mighty. He is Unique; the Possessor of Majesty and Nobility.

Muslims believe in all the ninety-nine names and attributes of Allah Ta'ala which are described by the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam). Belief in Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) as the Lord is known as **Tawheed**. On the other hand, associating someone else with Allah is called **shirk** and is one of the gravest sins in Islam. Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) clearly explains **Tawheed** as we learn from the translation of Surah al-Ikhlās of the Holy Qur'an,

Say (O Beloved Prophet): He is Allah, the One. Allah, the Eternally Besought. He begets not, nor was He begotten; and there is none comparable unto Him. (Surah al-Ikhlās, 112:1-4)

Belief in His Angels

Angels are a creation of Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) who have been created from pure light. They neither eat nor sleep. They are free from the weaknesses of the flesh. They

don't suffer from hunger, weakness, illness or disease. Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) created them for the sole purpose of worshipping Him and obeying Him. They perform different and numerous tasks which have been assigned by Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala). For example, Hadrat Jibreel ('Alayhissalam) is the Angel of Revelation, **Malak al-Mawt**, the Angel of death and so on.

They are constantly engrossed in the remembrance of Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala):

They celebrate His praises night and day, and they do not slacken. (Surah Al-Anbiya', 21:20)

The angels are a special creation of Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala).

All praise is for Allah, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, the Appointer of the angels – messengers flying on wings: two, three, and four. He increases in the creation what He pleases. Surely, Allah Has power over all things. (The Qur'an, Surah Al-Fatir, 35:1)

Belief in the angels is very important since they play a huge role in our affairs. They keep a record of our good and bad deeds. They attend gatherings of **zikr** held in the remembrance of Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala).

Belief in His Divine Revelations

Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) guided and helped different nations by sending a revelation that contained the laws that were to be observed by a particular nation. He sent these revelations through a Prophet ('Alayhissalam) and also blessed him with the knowledge and the wisdom to teach the revelations to his people. These Books helped the people understand that Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) was the only One worthy of worship, and that true success in this life and the Hereafter could only be achieved by worshipping Him alone, without any partner. They informed of life in the Hereafter, giving glad tidings to those who obeyed the Messengers, and warning of severe punishment for those who rejected their guidance.

Among the Books that were revealed by Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) were the **Suhuf** (Scrolls) given to Prophet Ibrahim ('Alayhissalam), the Zaboor (Psalms) revealed to Prophet Dawud ('Alayhissalam), the Tawrah (Torah) revealed to Prophet Musa ('Alayhissalam), the Injeel (Gospel) given to Prophet Isa ('Alayhissalam) and the Holy Qur'an which was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam).

Muslims believe in all of the Divine Revelations revealed by Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala). However, we follow the Qur'an only as it is the Final Revelation and implement it in our daily lives, as commanded by Allah the Almighty to His Messenger, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam).

Belief in His Messengers (‘Alaihimussalam)

Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala) chose Prophets and Messengers (‘Alaihimussalam) in order to guide and bring people to Islam. He has sent all of the Messengers (‘Alaihimussalam) with the same Message, as we learn from the Qur’an:

And surely, We have sent to each community a Messenger (saying): Worship Allah and abandon the false gods. (Surah An-Nahl, 16:36)

There were many Prophets (‘Alaihimussalam) sent by Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala) but only twenty-five of them have been mentioned in the Holy Qur’an. The first Prophet sent by Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala) was Prophet Adam (‘Alayhissalam) and the last Prophet to be sent by Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala) was Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam). He is known as the Seal of Prophethood since there will not be any Prophet after him.

The Messengers (‘Alaihimussalam) were worshippers of Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala) whom Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala) honoured with the position of Prophethood. They were indeed the greatest men who ever lived as Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala) says about Prophet Nuh (Noah, peace be upon him) in the Qur’an,

Indeed he was a thankful bondsman. (Surah Bani Israeel, 17:3).

Most of the Messengers (‘Alaihimussalam) were sent by Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala) to a particular nation or people but the Last Messenger, Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) was sent for the whole of mankind. Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala) tells Prophet Muhammad to tell the people,

Say (O beloved Prophet): O mankind! Surely I am the Messenger of Allah unto all of you... (Surah Al-A‘raf, 7:158).

The Hereafter

We should also believe in the end of times and its signs. There are many future events that will happen at the end of times which are foretold in the Holy Qur’an and the Hadith Shareef of the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam). One of the major events is the appearance of Dajjal (The Antichrist). Some of the other signs is the appearance of the Mahdi, Nabi Isa (‘Alayhissalam) and the appearance of Ya’juj and Ma’juj.

Muslims should believe in the Final Hour when Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala) will terminate the creation and cause everything to die. We should believe in the Day of Resurrection in which Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala) will raise mankind back to life and in the Day of Judgement when all of mankind will return to Him and have our deeds rewarded by Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala).

On the Day of Judgement, there will be Scales set up to weigh the good and the bad deeds and Justice will be done as we learn from this verse of the Qur'an:

And We shall set up the Scales of Justice on the Day of Resurrection, then none shall be wronged in any matter and if (a deed) the weight of a mustard seed exists, We shall bring it and We are Sufficient to take Account. (Surah Al-Anbiya', 21:47).

The good deeds will be placed on one side of the scale and the bad deeds will be placed on the other side of the scale. The weighing of the deeds will be followed by a revelation of the person's record. The person who receives his record in the right hand will have an easy reckoning while the person who receives his record in the left hand will be thrown into hell.

Muslims also believe in the existence of Paradise and Hell. Paradise is prepared for the servants of Allah only. Paradise has been described in the Qur'an. The translation of one relevant verse is:

Gardens of perpetual bliss – they shall enter them, as well as the righteous among their fathers, and their spouses and their decendants. And angels shall enter (to welcome them) from every gate. (Surah Al-Ra'ad, 13:23).

Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) has mentioned many beautiful descriptions about Paradise but the most important aspect is that life in Paradise will never end. And the greatest happiness of those in Paradise will be achieved when they behold Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala).

Hell is prepared for the sinners and for those who have rejected Faith in Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala). It is filled with many kinds of punishments. Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) warns his creatures beforehand about hell in the Holy Qur'an. This is a translation of one relevant verse:

Therefore I warn you of the flaming hell-fire. (Surah Al-Layl, 92:14).

The main goal of every Muslim is to enter **Jannah** (Paradise). We know the description of **Jannah** from the Holy Qur'an and the Blessed Hadith Shareef, but we have not seen it. We can only imagine Paradise through our analogy. But the reality of **Jannah** is far beyond description. According to a Hadith Qudsi, Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) says that He has prepared for his servants, "what no eye has seen and no ear has heard and has never occurred to a human heart." (**Sahih Al-Bukhari**).

Jannah is not just limited to enjoyments but it also contains the greatest pleasure of all, the pleasure of being closer to Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala).

But Paradise comes with a price. The price of **Jannah** is true Faith in Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) and in His beloved Messenger, Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam). Muslims should believe in "**La ilaaha Illallah, Muhammad ur-Rasulullah**"

(none is to be worshiped but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah) with all their hearts, and be prepared to sacrifice all that they have for Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala).

Belief in the Divine Decree

Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) has decreed and ordained in due measures everything that has happened until this present day and everything that will happen from this day until the Last Hour comes. There is nothing that can interfere with the Decree that has been issued by Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala). Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) has recorded every event that will ever occur. He has recorded everything in the Preserved Tablet (**Al-Lawh Al-Mahfuz**), which contains the records of all creations as we learn from this verse of the Holy Qur'an,

Know you not that Allah Knows all that is in the heavens and on the earth? Indeed it is (all) in the Book. (The Qur'an, Surah Al-Hajj, 22:70).

A Muslim believes that Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) has predestined all things and events (**Qadar**). He also believes in His Decree (**Qadaa'**) and His Will. Nothing in the universe can occur without the Knowledge of Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala). A Muslim further believes that Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) is Just in what He has predestined and in His Decree, and Wise in all of His actions. Whatever He desires, it occurs and whatever He does not desire, it doesn't occur. There is no power or any movement except by Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala).

Rabi' Awwal 1422, June 2001

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayseniors8.html>

THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS

By: Syed Ahmed Ali

In Islam, Muslim children are considered as precious gifts from Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). They are loved immensely by their parents and they become the fondness of the family. But children should also be aware of the many rights and responsibilities of their parents. There are many verses in the Holy Qur'an which acknowledge the debt that an individual owes to his or her parents. One responsibility of a parent is to make sure the child gets educated. Parents have to make sure the child is happy, honest, and religious and has knowledge about Islam irrespective of the fact that they might be boys or girls.

When teaching children, parents should remember that a child often learns from examples. The examples of parents play a very important role in bringing up a child. Parents who want their child to be religious, honest and disciplined should themselves be religious, honest and disciplined. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam) has said, "Be careful of your duty to Allah and be fair and just to the children". Parents should also be fair to their children so that they can be fair with others around them. A father should not bestow more favors on some children than others without a valid reason since this kind of treatment will produce jealousy and hatred among siblings. The Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam) has said, "Do justice among your sons", and he repeated it twice. Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) has promised us that He will not change a person's condition until the person changes himself or herself. Parents should be respectful and not say lies if they want their child to be respectful and truthful because a child does what he sees.

When a child is born, it is the responsibility of the parents to give him or her a good name. It is also **Sunnah** to slaughter an animal when a baby is born and to feed friends and the poor as a sign of thankfulness to Allah Ta'ala for the blessing which is bestowed on them. The parents are also responsible for circumcising a male child at any time which is convenient. Parents should provide a pleasant environment for their children so that they feel that they are secure and loved.

One huge responsibility of a parent is to teach the child good manners. The Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam) has stated that "No father can give his child anything better than good manners". (**Tirmidhi**)

Muslim parents are responsible to teach their children how to greet people, how to eat, how to sit, how to drink and so on. The Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam) has also said, "Those who do not show respect to others, respect will not be shown to him". They should be taught that they should treat people the same way that they would like to be treated and that they should have good manners and good habits because Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) dislikes people with bad manners and bad habits. The Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam) has said, "Among the virtues and habits they should develop are the habits of being honest, and truthful, gentle and polite, helpful and considerate without being loutish in their behavior to others and the habit of being clean, neat and tidy when looking after their personal hygiene and appearance".

They should be taught how to be clean so that they could look after themselves when they're older.

Parents should send their children to a **Madrasa** to give the child guidance to be a good Muslim. They should make sure the child knows how to recite the Qur'an well and has good knowledge of Islam. A child should develop a thirst for knowledge through listening, observing, reading and interacting with others. Children should be taught how to recite the Holy Qur'an and Hadith at an early age so that they develop the love for it when they're older. They should be taught good morals, good characters, good Islamic knowledge and proper Islamic behavior.

Parents should give a Muslim child a proper understanding of man's relationship with God. A child should be taught that man is dependent on Allah the Almighty and that Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) is the Most High and He does not have any mother, father or son. He should be taught of the existence of angels and Shaitaan. A child should be able to understand the purpose of life, the reality of death, the returning of every human being to Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) and the future life in Paradise or Hell. By the age of five or six, a child should learn to love Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) and thank Him. Slowly, he should learn the guidance that Allah Ta'ala gives to human beings through His Messengers ('Alaihimussalam). They should be taught of the guidance which was conveyed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) and the love and respect which every Muslim should have for him. Therefore, a strong Islamic base is established in the child at a very young age that will further enable him to watch over his actions and to further acquire more knowledge about Islam. As a result, a Muslim child understands that the guidelines set by his parents for him are not only the wishes of his parents but are also the wishes of Allah the Almighty.

Allah has not only given parents responsibilities but He has given them rights as well. He has given them the right of disciplining or punishing their children when they do something wrong. Parents have the right to punish their boys who are ten years and older if they don't pray Salah at the appropriate times. When a child misbehaves, a parent should first teach and make sure the child understands that what they did was wrong and if the child doesn't understand and misbehaves again parents have the right to punish the child.

Allah Ta'ala says in the Holy Qur'an,

Say (O beloved Prophet): Come, I will recite to you what your Lord has forbidden for you: that you ascribe no partner to Him and that you do good to parents... (6:151).

Allah Ta'ala also says,

And We have enjoined upon man concerning his parents: his mother bore him in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Therefore, show

gratitude to Me and to both your parents: unto Me is the eventual journeying. (31:14)

There are also many **Ahadith** which stress the importance of parents and the respect that should be given to them.

Hadrat Mu‘awiya bin Jahima said that his father approached Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) and said, “I intend going on Jihad. I seek your advice”. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) inquired, “Is your mother alive?” He answered, “Yes”. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) said, “Go and serve her, for Paradise lies beneath the feet of mothers”. (Ahmad, an-Nasaai, Bayhaqi)

It is also related by Hadrat Abdullah ibn Umar (Rady Allahu Anhu) that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) said, “The pleasure of Allah lies in the pleasure of the parents and the displeasure of Allah lies in displeasing the parents”.

Parents should train their children to ensure love for Islam, love for Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala), love for the holy Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam), love for their parents, love for their teachers and love for their community.

Sha‘ban 1422, October 2001

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayseniors9.html>

MUSLIMS IN MY COUNTRY

By: Syed Yasin Ali

Canada is a diverse nation with Canadians coming from a variety of cultures and faiths. Although the majority of Canadians are Christian, the Muslim community in Canada is growing and is currently the largest religious minority in the country. The Canadian Muslim community is estimated at around 600,000, in a total population of about 30 million. Muslims in Canada come from different parts of the world and speak a variety of languages. They come from South Asia, the Middle East, Europe, Africa and the Caribbean, and speak English, Arabic, Urdu, Farsi, Swahili, Turkish and many other languages. Eighty-six percent of Muslims live in the major Canadian metropolitan areas and the Greater Toronto region is home to more than 250,000 Muslims.

Islam is not a new religion to Canada. Muslims have a history in this country that dates back to the mid 19th century. In 1854, the first Muslim child was born in Canada to a Scottish family in Ontario. The family later had seven other children. There were also records of a European-Muslim family that migrated from the United States and settled in Ontario in 1871. During the pioneering days, many Muslims came to work on the construction of the railway linking the Prairies to Ontario and Quebec. Others arrived during the beginning of the 20th century to work in the settlements of Alberta and Saskatchewan.

On December 12, 1938, the first **masjid** in Canada, and indeed in the whole of North America was opened. The Al-Rashid **masjid** in the city of Edmonton, in the Province of Alberta was inaugurated in the presence of Mawlana Abdul Aleem Siddiqui al-Qadiri (Rahmatullahi 'alayh) and Abdullah Yusuf Ali (Rahmatullahi 'alayh), the well-known English translator of the Holy Qur'an. The Al-Rashid **masjid** still continues to be a landmark for the Muslim community in Canada.

Muslims arrived in Canada after World War II. Many of them progressed and improved the economy. They were skilled workers and professionals who were brought to serve the needs of the people. In 1952, the inauguration of Islamic Studies took place at McGill University and attracted many Muslim scholars and students from abroad. During the mid-1960's, many Muslim teachers, professionals and entrepreneurs came to Canada and increased the economic growth.

Today, Muslims in Canada are a well-established community. They are active members of the Canadian society. Twenty-seven percent of Muslims in the labour force have one or more university degrees compared to 17% of the general population. **Masajid** and **halal** meat shops are common in major Canadian cities. Muslims have also established **madrasas** to educate their children. The events of Ramadan, **Eid ul-Fitr** and **Eid ul-Adha** are covered in the Canadian media and by newspapers regularly. Schools, businesses and workplaces are beginning to accommodate Islamic practices and are recognizing Muslim holidays. Muslims have also opened websites which present the beauty of the teachings of Islam and have also used them for propagating to non-Muslims. Many prominent figures in Canadian politics also continue to attend Muslim events and seek support from the Muslim community.

In Toronto, there are more than 50 **masajid** and Islamic centres that are full during Jumu‘ah prayers. Most of these **masajid** have at least two **Hafiz al-Qur’an** who lead the **tarawih** Prayers during Ramadan. Some of these **masajid** have been built new from the foundation while most of them have been converted from existing buildings. Special arrangements are made during **Eid ul-Fitr** and **Eid ul-Adha** prayers in order to accommodate a larger congregation. Muslims also preserve their Islamic traditions and recite **Khatm ul-Qur’an** and celebrate **Milaad un-Nabi** and **Mi‘raaj un Nabi** in homes and **masajid**. They also visit farms and perform **zabiha** (sacrifice) on **Eid ul-Adha** and distribute the meat among their families, relatives and the poor.

The Muslim community has also developed a positive relationship with members of other faiths in Canada. Muslims are starting to promote understanding about their Faith and are increasing awareness in their communities and workplaces. The Muslim community respects all places of worship of all religions.

The Muslim community of Canada is also blessed with many scholars and shaykhs. For example, in Toronto alone, we have personalities like Imam Hafiz ‘Abdul Haleem (from Afghanistan), Imam Haji Shameer Khan and Imam Muhammad Yusuf (from Guyana), Syed Mumtaz Ali saheb (from India), Shaykh Yousef Bakhour and Imam Yusuf Chebli (from Labanon), Imam ‘Abdulshakur Dulloo (from Mauritius), Mawlana Qazi Bashiruddin Farooqui (from Pakistan), Shaykh Umar al-Qadiri (from Somalia), Shaykh Ahmad Talal (from Syria), and Imam Muzaffar Kosar (from Turkey).

Some prominent Muslim individuals are also becoming more visible in the Canadian society, serving as editors of newspapers, as economists and researchers in industry, and as professors and Deans of Faculties in universities.

But despite the progress made by the Muslim community, we still have many challenges facing us. Muslims have to fight the negative stereotypes that are surrounding the community. Terms like “Islamic extremists” and “Muslim terrorists” are constantly being repeated in the media. There have been incidents where Muslims with beards were being called terrorists and Muslim women with **hijabs** were being harassed. Muslims should educate the Canadian public more about our religion and we should help them understand Islam and the noble teachings of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam).

Overall, Muslims have established themselves as a strong community in this country and we have gone through a lot of hard work to arrive at this stage. The years ahead will be very critical for Muslims. The community will have a large population and will have a great impact on the Canadian society. Once again, we will have to emerge as a strong community and we will only accomplish this goal by never abandoning the teachings of Islam and the **Sunnah** of our Holy Prophet Muhammad, (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam).

Shawwal 1422, January 2002

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayseniors10.html>

A MUSLIM'S CHARACTER AND BEHAVIOUR

By: Syed Yasin Ali

Sincerity, compassion and forgiveness are qualities that are very important to an individual. They form the basis of a person's character and help him or her interact with society. These values are also some of the most essential qualities that are to be present in a Muslim. Islam teaches Muslims to beautify their character and Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) commands Muslims to reflect their religion by demonstrating a noble character and having a good personality. But in order for Muslims to possess such qualities, we must follow our beloved Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam). Since Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) says in the Holy Qur'an,

Surely there is for you the best example in the Messenger of Allah (that is, in Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu-Alayhi-Wasallam), for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah often (much). (Surah Al-Ahzaab, Verse 21).

The life of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) was full of compassion, forgiveness and sincerity. He excelled in virtue and piety. The people of Makkah called him "**As-Sadiq**" (the Truthful) and "**Al-Ameen**" (the Trustworthy). It was through these fine qualities and noble values, that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) was able to win the hearts of the people of Makkah and Madinah and bring them to the fold of Islam.

Apart from maintaining a strong Faith, a Muslim also has to maintain a good character. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) said, "Modesty and Faith are twins. One who gives up one has to lose the other too." A Muslim should refrain from being ill-mannered and immodest. When a Muslim has strong Faith, his/her character will also be strong. If his or her character is very weak, then the Faith will also be very weak. A Muslim can create a good character within one's self by praying **Salah** five times a day, fasting and paying **zakah**. These forms of worship instill good manners and an exemplary behaviour within a Muslim. The daily **Salah** cleans a person physically and spiritually. It also prohibits evil and obscenity. Fasting teaches a person self-control and makes him righteous while **zakah** creates kindness and sympathy within a person. It helps Muslims to become more charitable and more caring about the less fortunate in the society.

Muslims should also demonstrate an excellent character to their neighbours and the community that they live in. They should always present themselves as helpful and caring individuals to their neighbours. In a Hadith, a person inquired from the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) about the fate of a woman who was very famous for her prayers and fasting but who always talked very rudely with her neighbours. The Prophet replied that she would go to hell. The same person also asked the Prophet (Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wa Sallam) about another woman who prays and fasts and doesn't harm her neighbours. The Prophet (Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wa Sallam) replied that she would enter Paradise. This Hadith shows that it is not sufficient enough for a Muslim to just pray and

fast in order to enter Paradise, but a Muslim also has to be compassionate and caring towards other members of society.

Muslims should continue to display their exemplary behaviour and should show mercy and forgiveness even to their enemies. Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) forgave non-believers who caused great harm and injury to him. Rather than praying for their death and their destruction, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) instead prayed for their forgiveness from Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). Even during the incident at Ta'if, where the Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wa Sallam) was pelted with stones by the people, he was asked by Angel Jibreel ('Alayhissalam) to give permission to destroy the town, but the Prophet refused but instead prayed that their progeny may become Muslim. Muslims should also treat non-Muslims with respect and dignity. They should show compassion and mercy towards them. Once, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) was walking at a very slow pace with his Companions. The **Sahaba** were very puzzled and asked him if they could walk faster. But the Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wa Sallam) replied that there was an old man walking ahead of him. His Companions (Rady Allahu Anhum) told him that the man was a non-believer but the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) replied that the man was worthy of respect because of his old age.

Islam spread to many parts of the world because of the noble character and the excellent qualities that were demonstrated by Muslims. Their compassion, tolerance and generosity spread throughout the world. It helped introduce Islam to other places and also showed our tolerance and respect to people of other faiths. Excellent behaviour and good qualities are an important part of our religion. It helps us live together peacefully as a society and it also reflects our beautiful religion to the outside world.

Rabi' Awwal 1423, May 2002

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayseniors11.html>

DU‘A AND ITS IMPORTANCE

By: Syed Yasin Ali

Muslims worship Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala) in many ways. We follow the five pillars of worship, we pray five times a day and we also pray extra prayers (**Salât an-nawâfil**) to make our Faith in Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala) stronger. But Muslims can also make **du‘a** (supplication) to Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala) in order to increase their Faith. By making **du‘a**, we are recognizing the power and the glory of Allah Ta‘ala and we are asking for mercy and help from our Creator.

According to Hadrat Anas bin Malik, (Rady Allahu ‘Anhu), the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) has said, “**Du‘a** is the essence of worship.” (**Tirmidhi**).

By supplicating to Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala), we are communicating directly with Him. We should always make **du‘a** whenever it is possible for us since Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala) is the only One who can help us through His Knowledge and Power. Whenever we need assistance or help, we should always turn towards Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala). A Muslim should not think that it is unnecessary for him to make **du‘a** since Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala) is aware of his thoughts and will grant his wishes if He Wills. He should always supplicate to Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala) for assistance and should beg for His forgiveness.

However, it is very important that we don’t become disappointed or unhappy when one of our **du‘as** is not accepted by Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala). Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala) is well aware of all things and He has the Knowledge of the Unseen. We should be content with whatever decision Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala) the Almighty has chosen for us even though it might be disappointing. In a Hadith, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) has said, “No one makes a **du‘a** without Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala) giving him what he asks for, or keeping away from him a similar amount of evil, provided he does not ask for something sinful or for breaking family ties.” (**Tirmidhi**)

Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala) is All-Merciful and He accepts the **du‘a** of Muslims when we ask for His help. However, He accepts the **du‘as** of some people more readily than others. For example, in a Hadith, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) has said that the supplications of three persons are not refused – a fasting person when breaking the fast, a just ruler, and an oppressed person. (**Tirmidhi**)

Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala) also accepts the **du‘as** of the person who is in urgent need and a person who is travelling. Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala) also immediately accepts the **du‘as** of a righteous person such as a **sufi shaykh**. Therefore, we should try to ask a righteous person to make **du‘a** for us since it will be accepted by Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala) more easily. The **du‘a** of a Muslim for another brother or sister whom he/she has not met is also readily accepted by Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala). For example, there are times in a **masjid**, when the congregation is urged to pray for the health of a sick person. We should join in and pray so that we can benefit from Allah’s blessings.

However, it is very important that we supplicate to Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) with **adab** (respect). A person who makes **du'a** should be physically clean and tidy. He should also be very sincere in his supplication to Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) and should have faith in Him. The Qur'an says,

Supplicate to your Lord with humility and in private, for He does not love the transgressors. (Surah Al-'Araf, 7:55)

While making **du'a**, a Muslim should also face towards the direction of the Ka'ba and should recite his **du'a** in a median tone. Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) says in the Holy Qur'an,

Neither say your Prayer aloud, nor in a low tone, but seek a middle course between. (Surah Bani Israil, 17:110)

A Muslim should have the utmost confidence that his **du'a** will be accepted.

We should begin our **du'as** by thanking Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) for His infinite bounties that He has sent down upon us and we should send salutations on the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam). The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) has said, "Whoever sends blessings on me once, Allah blesses him ten times."

In our **du'as**, we should first supplicate to Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) for forgiveness and security. In a Hadith, a man came to the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) and said, "O Messenger of Allah, which is the best supplication?" The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) said, "Supplicate to your Lord for forgiveness and security in this world and in the Hereafter." He came again the next day, and then again on the following day and asked him the same thing. The Prophet, (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) gave him the same answer, and then said, "If you are given forgiveness and security in this world and in the Hereafter you have attained success." **(Ibn Majah)**

We should also take the utmost advantage of blessed occasions such as the month of Ramadan, the pilgrimage of **Hajj**, and Fridays to supplicate to Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) since **du'a** during these occasions is readily accepted by Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala). We should also take advantage of the five daily prayers and of the later part of the night to supplicate to Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala). In a Hadith, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) was asked, "What supplication finds the greatest acceptance?" The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) answered, "A prayer offered in the middle of the latter part of the night, and after the prescribed Prayers." **(Tirmidhi)**

As part of **du'a**, Muslims recite the Ayat al-Kursi (Verse of the Throne), from Surah al-Baqarah. This verse illustrates the Majesty of Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala). Numerous virtues of this verse have been mentioned in the Ahadith. In one Hadith, the Prophet (Sallallahu `Alayhi Wa Sallam) states that the jinn and the shayateen (devils) will not enter the house in which Ayat al-Kursi is recited. **(Tirmidhi)**

The following is the translation of Ayat al-Kursi:

Allah! None is worthy of worship except He, the Ever-Living, the Self-Existing Sustainer. No slumber can seize Him, nor sleep. Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth belongs to Him. Who can intercede with Him except with His Permission? He Knows what is before them and what is behind them. Nor can they get any of His Knowledge except what He Wills. His Throne extends over the heavens and the earth and He feels no fatigue in guarding them both, and He is the Most High, the Most Exalted. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:255)

Finally, we should not only supplicate to Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) to grant us success in the Hereafter and to provide good health for us but we also should also supplicate to Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) for the wellbeing of our parents, grandparents, relatives and for the entire Muslim **Ummah**. We should be concerned about our fellow Muslim brothers and sisters and we should help them or pray for them during times of need and distress. **Insha Allah**, by making **du'a** for them, Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) will also shower His Mercy and Blessings on us.

Rajab 1423, September 2002

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayseniors12.html>

WHY I LOVE THE MONTH OF RAMADAN

By: Sidhra Yakub

On an annual basis, Muslims around the world prepare for the age-old tradition of fasting in Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. Since the days of our Beloved Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), fasting has been a compulsory element in developing the spiritual persona of a Muslim. As directed by Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala), Muslims avoid eating and drinking between dawn and sunset – a unique ritual performed in unison during one of the most physically and spiritually influential months in Islamic history.

In one Hadith narrated by Hadrat Abu Huraira (Rady Allahu Anhu), the Prophet (Sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) is reported to have said, “He who fasts during Ramadan with faith and seeking reward from Allah will have his sins forgiven”. Ultimately, the finest reward one can receive is the Mercy of Almighty Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala). The month of Ramadan is almost a privilege for the Muslim population in the sense that there are many opportunities for a Muslim to improve his/her spiritual conditions both physically and mentally.

Food and drink are essential to the sustenance of human life, and we are fortunate enough to have these necessities readily available without difficulty. However, when our materialistic interests are abstained during Ramadan, we realize the value of some of the components of life which we overlook on a daily basis. As a result, we build self-discipline and learn to consider the less fortunate who struggle to survive famine each day. Personally, the importance of nutrients in our lives reminds us of our own mortality, and the role Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala) has in our existence.

As Muslims, we are in firm belief that Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala) is the All-Seeing Creator of beings in the universe. In essence, His Greatness cannot be matched and we must sequentially worship and obey Him alone. To achieve the status of good human beings, Muslims are motivated during the month of Ramadan to perform good deeds and restrain from the bad in order to be rewarded. Fasting and **Ibada** (especially during the Night of **Lailatul-Qadr**) are the most rewarding acts of good since they are performed for the sake of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala).

In the month of Ramadan, we should be pleased with the feeling of being closer to Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala). Fasting allows the nourishment of the spirit and soul of a human being, and cleanses one’s heart and mind. Thus, one’s personal relationship with Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala) becomes strengthened.

In many written accounts, the first battle fought by Muslims (the Battle of Badr) took place on the 17th of Ramadan in 2 A.H. A Quraish force consisting of more than 1000 well-armed men was to meet with a Muslim army of 313 near Madina. Although the Quraish were favourable for the win, a strong spirited Muslim army drew the victory with the Blessing of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala) and His Help. Because they stood firm under the banner of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala) and defended the religion of Islam,

these Muslims were guided. Likewise, Muslims today who stand by the same principles, encouraged in the month of Ramadan, are rewarded. The story of Badr shows that Ramadan is an important time in which decisions are made and goals are achieved.

At the end of Ramadan, Muslims all over the world celebrate **Eid-ul-Fitr**, a celebration to commemorate a successful month which contributed to self-growth and religious maturity. On the day of **Eid** we are filled with joy as we recite these **takbiraat** of **Eid**.

Allahu Akbar Allahu Akbar Allahu Akbar
laa ilaha Illallahu Wallahu Akbar
Allahu Akbar wa Lillahil Hamd

Allah is Supremely Great, Allah is Supremely Great, Allah is Supremely Great
None is to be worshiped but Allah, and Allah is Supremely Great
Allah is Supremely Great, and all Praise is for Him

Each year, as we grow older and fast for the many more months of Ramadan to come, we face a constant reminder of how we must act in order to be the ideal Muslims most admired by Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). Enforcing good deeds during Ramadan helps us turn an annual tradition into a way of life. Although the month of Ramadan is completed in 29 or 30 days (according to the lunar calendar), its teachings live on in an endless continuum and mould our hearts and minds into those of a sincere, humble believer.

Dhu'l Hijjah 1423, March 2003
<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayseniors13.html>

MY DREAM OF GOING FOR HAJJ

By: Anwaar Ahmed

The **Hajj** or Pilgrimage to Makkah, is a central duty in Islam whose origins date back to the beloved Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him). It brings together Muslims of all races and languages for one of life's most spiritual experiences. The **Hajj** can only be carried out in the first two weeks of the Islamic month of Dhul Hijja. The **Hajj** is a duty that mankind owes to Allah Almighty. Allah Ta'ala has said in the Holy Qur'an:

And Hajj (Pilgrimage to Makkah) to the House of Allah is a duty that mankind owes to Allah, for those who can find a way to do it (afford the expense). (Al-Qur'an, Surah 3, Aali-'Imran, Verse 97).

For 14 centuries, countless millions of pious Muslims, men and women from the four corners of the earth, have made the Pilgrimage to Makkah, the birthplace of Islam. In carrying out this obligation, they fulfill one of the five pillars of Islam.

Hajj provides an opportunity for Muslims with diverse racial, ethnic and geographical heritage to get acquainted and feel unified as one **Ummah** (community) on a global level.

The beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "Islam is founded on five pillars". Among these five pillars, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) mentioned the **Hajj**.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "The **Hajj** which is accepted by Allah will receive no other reward than Paradise".

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "He who performs **Hajj** and neither spoke indecently nor did he act wickedly would return free of sins as on the (very first) day his mother gave him birth".

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also said, "O people! Allah made Hajj obligatory for you; so perform **Hajj**". Thereupon a person said, "Messenger of Allah, (is it to be performed) every year?" He (the Holy Prophet) kept quiet, and the man repeated (these words) thrice, whereupon Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said, "If I were to say; yes, it would become obligatory (for you to perform it every year) and you would not be able to do it". Therefore, due to these Hadiths we now know the importance of performing **Hajj** at least once in our lifetime.

According to the Holy Qur'an it was Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) who, together with Prophet Isma'il (peace be upon him), built the Ka'bah, "the House of Allah Ta'ala," the focal point towards which Muslims turn in their worship five times each day. It was Prophet Ibrahim, (peace be upon him) who established the rituals of **Hajj**, which recall events or practices in his life and that of Hajar (peace be upon her) and their beloved son Prophet Isma'il (peace be upon him). After that, polytheists came and corrupted the

rituals of **Hajj**. Then Allah Ta‘ala sent Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who purified the rites of **Hajj**.

The specific rites of performing **Hajj** are: the state of **Ihraam**, **Tawaaf** of the Ka‘bah, running between the hills of As-Safaa and Al-Marwah, stay at ‘Arafa, Muzdalifah and Mina, **Ramy** of **Jamaraat** (stoning of the specified pillars in Mina), and slaughtering of **Hady** (animal). These rites are collectively referred to as **Manasik**. Some of these rites are obligatory whereas some are recommended.

After the **Hajj**, the pilgrim is recommended to visit the **Rawda** of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in Madina. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has said that his **shafa‘a** (intercession) becomes obligatory for anyone who visits him.

As the pilgrims of diverse races and languages return to their homes, they carry with them cherished memories of Prophet Muhammad, Prophet Ibrahim, Prophet Ismail, and Hajar (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon them). They will always remember that universal fraternity where the poor and the rich, the black and the white, the young and the old met on equal footing.

The pilgrims go back with hope and joy, for they have fulfilled Allah Ta‘ala's Command to humankind to undertake the Pilgrimage. Above all, they return with a prayer on their lips. May it please Allah, they pray, to find their **Hajj** acceptable and may what the Prophet (peace be upon him) said be true of their own individual journey: “There is no reward for an accepted Pilgrimage but Paradise”. They also return with a better understanding of conditions of their brothers in Islam. Thus is born a spirit of caring for others and an understanding of their own rich heritage that will last throughout their lives.

Therefore, due to the sacrifices of Prophet Muhammad and his Companions, as well as the sacrifices of Prophet Ibrahim, Prophet Ismail and Hajar (peace be upon them), their trust in Allah Ta‘ala, and their love for Allah Ta‘ala, has enlightened my dream of going for **Hajj**. However, before I fulfill my dream, **Insha Allah** I will make sure that my parents perform **Hajj**. May Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala) make this dream come true. **Ameen.**

Rabi‘ Thani 1424, June 2003

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayseniors14.html>

WHAT MY FATHER HAS ADVISED ME

By: Hafiz Hamid Syed

My father is the most important person in my life. Ever since my childhood he has played a very important role in my life, especially in educating me about Islam. He has advised me about my duties and obligation to Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). He has taught me the basic virtues and basic qualities of being a good Muslim. My father has also advised me about good manners and good character.

My father has taught me about **Islam**, **Iman** and **Ihsan**. He has taught me to always love Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) and His Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). He has taught me to pray five times daily **Salah**. He has taught me how to behave and act with my family members. He has taught me about my obligatory duty to take care of my neighbors. He taught me to honor my guests. He taught me to take care of the orphans and the needy. He has also taught me about the five pillars of Islam. He has taught me to repent to Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) and ask for His forgiveness. He taught me to be thankful to Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) for all the things He has done for us.

My father has educated me on a lot of basic virtues and basic qualities to being a good Muslim. He has taught me that a person's actions are judged through his intentions. He has taught me to always speak the truth and always keep my promises. He advised me to be kind and polite to everyone. He has also taught me never to stop seeking the knowledge of Islam. He has advised me to be punctual in the things I do. He has taught me to be just and fair with everyone. He has also taught me to visit the sick and feed the hungry. He has taught me to trust Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). He taught me to be firm against evil. He has taught me to work hard in everything I do. He has also taught me to be generous and forgiving to others.

My father has advised me a lot about good manners to become a good Muslim. He has taught me to say **Salaam** to everyone when I arrive at a meeting or when I meet someone. He has taught me to always speak well and if I don't have anything good to say, then to keep silent. He taught me the manners to eat, like eating with your right hand, reciting **Bismillah** (in the name of Allah) before eating and so on. He has taught me the manners to wear clothes like wearing clean clothes, not to wear silk and so on. He has conveyed to me all these teachings of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam).

My father has also advised me to avoid bad conduct. He taught me never to lie to anyone. He taught me to never backbite about anyone. My father also advised me not to be jealous of others. He advised me not to get angry. He taught me not to be overly proud of myself. He taught me never to abuse another person. He also advised me not to taunt others. He advised me never to defraud anyone. He taught me not to be arrogant to anyone. He advised me about never drinking wine and gambling. He has advised me not to make a mockery of anyone. He taught me never to steal anything from anyone. He advised me that Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) has forbidden interest and usury. He has conveyed to me all these teachings from the Qur'an and Hadith.

In conclusion, I'm thankful to Almighty Allah for blessing me with such a great father. My father's great advices have hopefully made me a better Muslim. In the future, I hope to continue to act on his advice and I hope he keeps on advising me.

Sha'ban 1424, October 2003

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayseniors15.html>

SAYYIDATINA KHADIJA (Rady Allahu Anha)

By: Syed Ahmed Ali

Sayyidatina Khadija (Rady Allahu Anha) is one of the four greatest ladies of Islam along with Sayyidatina Maryam ('Alayhassalam), (the Blessed Virgin Mary, mother of Prophet Isa 'Alayhissalam); Sayyidatina Asiya ('Alayhassalam) (wife of the Pharaoh), and Sayyidatina Fatima (Rady Allahu Anha), (daughter of the Prophet Muhammad, (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam). She was the first person to accept Islam. She was also the first wife of the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) and played a vital role in his life. They were married when the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) was twenty five years old and she was forty. They were happily married for twenty five years until she passed away. They had four daughters; Zainab, Ruqayya, Umm Kulthum and Fatima (Rady Allahu Anhunna); and two sons Qasim and Abdullah, who passed away in childhood. She is described as the "First mother of the Faithful" because she was the first wife of the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam). Her other titles are **al-Kubra** which means "the Great", **Ameerat Quraysh** which means "Princess of Quraysh" and **al-Tahira** which means "the Pure" as she did many good things for the people at that time.

The Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) loved Sayyidatina Khadija (Rady Allahu Anha) a lot and never let anyone say anything bad about her. He said: "To me, she was one of the best human beings; she was the first to believe in me, she gave me her moral and material support and I had all my children but one by her". This shows how much the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) loved and cared for Sayyidatina Khadija (Rady Allahu Anha).

Sayyidatina Khadija (Rady Allahu Anha) did many good things for the less fortunate and her relatives. Some of her many good deeds even before marrying the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) were feeding and clothing the poor, helping her relatives by giving them money and helping her relatives get married. She used a lot of her wealth and profit from her business to help the poor, widows, orphans, the sick and the disabled people of Makkah. Another great quality of Sayyidatina Khadija (Rady Allahu Anha) was that despite the fact that people in her tribe of Quraysh worshipped idols, she did not worship them and never believed in them but believed in one God.

Sayyidatina Khadija (Rady Allahu Anha) helped the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) in many ways especially when he became a Prophet of Allah. When the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) received the first revelation of the Holy Qur'an through Angel Jibreel ('Alayhissalam), he came home with this great responsibility of Prophethood. Sayyidatina Khadija (Rady Allahu Anha) helped him throughout this time by providing him with love, care and moral support. She took him to her Christian cousin whose name was Waraqa ibn Nawfal. When her cousin heard what happened to the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) he said: "Holy, Holy! By Him Who dominates Waraqa's soul, if your report is true, this must be the great Spirit that spoke to Moses. Muhammad, you must be the Prophet of the nation and if I were young, I would have supported you".

The Holy Qur'an says:

The Prophet is closer to the Believers than their own selves and his wives are their mothers. (33:6)

Sayyidatina Khadija (Rady Allahu Anha) was instrumental in helping the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) spread the word of Islam especially in the early stages. She was such a great lady that even Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) sent **Salaams** to her. One day, Hadrat Jibril ('Alayhissalam) came and told the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) to convey **Salaams** of Allah to Sayyidatina Khadija (Rady Allahu Anha). Hearing this, Sayyidatina Khadija (Rady Allahu Anha) exclaimed: Did Allah mention my name, O Prophet of Allah? "Yes indeed", was the Prophet Muhammad's (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) answer.

Sayyidatina Khadija (Rady Allahu Anha) passed away on the 10th of Ramadan, 3 years before Hijra at the age of 65 and was laid to rest in Makkah in the cemetery of Ma'lah. The Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) called the year in which Sayyidatina Khadija (Rady Allahu Anha) passed away '**Aam-ul-Huzn**' meaning "the year of grief". The Holy Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) did not marry any other woman while he was married to Sayyidatina Khadija (Rady Allahu Anha) and later on said that she was the best among his wives. He said that Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) has provided her with a palace in Paradise.

Dhu'l Hijjah 1424, February 2004

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayseniors16.html>

SAYYIDINA UMAR (Rady Allahu Anhu)

By: Hafiz Usman Munawwar

Sayyidina Umar ibn al-Khattab (Rady Allahu Anhu) was the second **Khalifa** of Islam. He became **Khalifa** after Sayyidina Abu Bakr as-Siddiq (Rady Allahu Anhu) passed away. Sayyidina Umar (Rady Allahu Anhu) was **Khalifa** for 10 years. He was a very strict and powerful man and all his enemies were afraid of him. Even shaitaan was afraid of him. It has been stated in a Hadith by Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam), “If Umar is walking on a street and shaitaan is coming from the opposite direction, shaitaan would take another street out of fear of him”.

Sayyidina Umar (Rady Allahu Anhu) was given the title, **al-Faruq**, which means “ the one who distinguishes truth from falsehood”. This title was given to him by the tribe of Quraish who admired Sayyidina Umar’s (Rady Allahu Anhu) skills to solve problems. He was a very pious and righteous Muslim.

However, before he became a Muslim, he opposed the religion of Islam, and so was an enemy of the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam). An incident took place when he took a sword and went to kill the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam) and on his way a man told him that his sister and her husband became Muslims. On hearing this, Sayyidina Umar (Rady Allahu Anhu) marched into his sister’s house and he heard Surah Taha from the Holy Qur’an being recited. He was so impressed after hearing Surah Taha that he went to the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam). When he arrived, the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam) was informed that Sayyidina Umar (Rady Allahu Anhu) came to kill him but the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam) still let him in. Sayyidina Umar (Rady Allahu Anhu) then took the **Shahadah** and became Muslim in the blessed gathering of the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam) and his Companions (Rady Allahu Anhum). He was the 40th man to accept Islam.

Sayyidina Umar (Rady Allahu Anhu) led a very simple life. He gave half of his property to Islam. He also took part in all the battles with Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam). His daughter, Sayyidatina Hafsa (Rady Allahu Anha), was the Prophet’s (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam) wife. He also introduced **Tarawih** Prayers in congregation during Ramadan.

Islam spread far and wide during his time as a **Khalifa**. Hadrat Khalid bin Walid (Rady Allahu Anhu) was one of his greatest generals who conquered many parts of the world. It is said that if Sayyidina Umar (Rady Allahu Anhu) were **Khalifa** for 10 more years, Islam would have spread all over the world.

Sayyidina Umar (Rady Allahu Anhu) passed away at the age of 63 and he was laid to rest beside the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam) and Sayyidina Abu Bakr As-Siddiq (Rady Allahu Anhu) in Madina al-Munawwarah. Even though Sayyidatina Aisha (Rady Allahu Anha) wanted to be laid to rest beside the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam), she gave permission to Sayyidina Umar (Rady Allahu Anhu). This shows the greatness and importance of Sayyidina Umar (Rady Allahu Anhu).

Rabi‘ Awwal 1425, May 2004

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayseniors17.html>

SAYYIDINA ALI (Rady Allahu Anhu)

By: Hafiz Usman Munawwar

Sayyidina ‘Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) was the fourth Khalifah of Islam. Some of the titles given to Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) were **Al-Murtada** (the one contented with the Decree of Allah), **Asadullah** (the Lion of Allah) and **Abu Turab** (Father of sand) because once he slept on bare sand. He was also known as Abul Hasan which means the father of Imam Hasan (Rady Allahu Anhu). Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) was thirty years younger than the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam). He was the cousin of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam). His father's name was Hadrat Abu Talib and his mother's name was Sayyidatina Fatimah bint Asad (Rady Allahu Anha).

Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) was the first from among the children to accept Islam. He was only eleven years old when he accepted Islam. Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam) loved Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) and Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) also loved Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam). He later went on to marry Sayyidatina Fatimah (Rady Allahu Anha), the blessed daughter of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam). They had two sons and their names are Imam Hasan (Rady Allahu Anhu) and Imam Husain (Rady Allahu Anhu). Together, Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam), Sayyidina Ali, Sayyidatina Fatimah, Imam Hasan, and Imam Husain (Rady Allahu Anhum) are known as **Ahl al-Bayt** which means the People of the Household of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam). We Muslims must love the Family of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam) more than our own families.

Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) was very brave and strong. This is why he is known as **Asadullah** which means the Lion of Allah. His love for Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) was indeed very great. In the wars against the disbelievers, Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) fought very bravely. There was one incident when Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam) went to Madinah al-Munawwarah because he had received news that his enemies were going to come to his house and try to kill him. Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) was so brave that he got into the bed of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam). Before leaving, Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam) had told Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) to meet him in Madinah al-Munawwarah. When the enemies picked up the blanket, they saw Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu). They were very angry to see that it was not Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam) and they left. Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam) had left everyone's belongings with Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) to be distributed to their rightful owners. When he gave everyone's things back, they asked him if he was scared while he slept in the bed of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam). He replied that he was not scared because Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam) had told him to meet him in Madinah al-Munawwarah. So he knew nothing would happen to him. This shows us how brave Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) was, and how much he loved and trusted Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam).

Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) was also a very knowledgeable person. Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam) had once said, “I am the city of knowledge, and Ali is its gate.” This is why Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) was also given the title of **Bab ul-**

'Ilm which means “The Gate of Knowledge”. This was only one title among many that were given to Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu).

Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu) lived a very simple life and he was a great person. His braveness was clearly visible and his love for Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala) and for His Rasul (Sallallahu alayhi wa Sallam) was unquestionable. He was martyred at Kufa in Iraq on Monday, the 21st of Ramadan 40 A.H. at the age of 63. He was laid to rest in Najaf, near Kufa. We have learned a great deal from Sayyidina Ali’s (Rady Allahu Anhu) dedication to Islam. May Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala) grant more people from this **Ummah** to follow the footsteps of Sayyidina Ali (Rady Allahu Anhu). **Amin**.

Sha‘ban 1425, October 2004

<http://www.iqra.net/muslimstudents/essayseniors18.htm>