

al-badr

16th December 2011

- 1** Narrations of the Hadith
- 2** Interview with the Ameer!
- 3** Fasting 'Ashoora
- 4** Perks of Xmas!
- 5** Humility
- 9** The fresher diaries
- 12** Be.The.Change!
- 17** Bosnia & Herzegovina '11
- 20** Fifa '12
-& much more!!!



Published on behalf of Hammad Lakhani, President of RUMS Islamic Society

“It was Narrated...”

Narrated Abu Hurairah: Allah’s Messenger (saw) said: “Allah the Exalted says, ‘Spend, O son of Adam, you will also be spent upon.’”

[Bukhari & Muslim]

On the authority of Abi Hamza Anas bin Malik, the servant of the messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) from the prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who said: “None of you [truly] believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself”

[Bukhari & Muslim]

“Wealth and children are the adornment of the life of this world. But the good righteous deeds that last, are better with your Lord for rewards and better in respect of hope” **[18:46]**

Narrated Abu Hurairah: Allah’s Messenger (saw) said: “Allah the Exalted says, ‘Spend, O son of Adam, you will also be spent upon.’”

[Bukhari & Muslim]

Anas narrated, Allah’s Messenger (saw) said: “The son of Adam grows old, but two (desires) in him remain young: desire for wealth and desire for life.” **[Sahih Muslim]**

Narrated Hakim bin Hizam: I asked the Prophet (for some money) and he gave me, and then again I asked him and he gave me, and then again I asked him and he gave me and he then said: “This wealth is (like) green and sweet (fruit), and whoever takes it without greed, Allah will bless it for him, but whoever takes it with greed, Allah will not bless it for him, and he will be like the one who eats but is never satisfied. And the upper (giving) hand is better than the lower (taking) hand.”

[Bukhari]

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet (saw) said: “Let the slave of Dinar and Dirham, of Quantify and Khamisa (i.e. money and luxurious clothes etc) perish as he is pleased if these things are given to him, and if not, he is displeased!”. Let such a person perish and relapse, and if he is pierced with a thorn, let him not find anyone to take it out for him. Paradise is for him who holds the reins of his horse to strive in Allah’s cause, with his hair unkempt and feet covered with dust: if he is appointed in the vanguard, he is perfectly satisfied with his post of guarding, and if he is appointed in the rearward, he accepts his post with satisfaction; (he is so simple and unambiguous that) if he asks for permission he is not permitted, and if he intercedes, his intercession is not accepted.” **[Bukhari]**

Narrated ‘Amr ibn ‘Awf, The Prophet (saw) said: “By Allaah, it is not poverty that I fear for you, rather what I fear for you is that worldly riches may be given to you as they were given to those who came before you, and you will compete for them with one another as they competed with one another, and you will be destroyed as they were destroyed.” **[Bukhari & Muslim].**

Interview with the Ameer | Sahal Quazi

Editor's comments: Despite only knowing Sahal for a mere three years, it feels as if I have known him my whole life. He was an exceptional mentor in my first year and gave me a lot of helpful advice. I've seen Sahal develop over the years from a shy friendly companion into the aspiring revolutionary of today. Despite not always agreeing with his vision, he certainly has been a breath of fresh air for the ISoc. The ISoc has seen dramatic changes over the last few years and the transformation into transparency and openness is in a large part down to him. What astounds me most about this intriguing man is that he has what I would describe as an inherently good, sincere, just and pure heart. Not only is he a visionary but he is incredibly talented, perhaps his biggest gift being the ability to deal with people. A true champion of the cause and a real peoples' person. I cannot see Sahal in any future capacity which does not involve working with human beings.

Bariyan, being Ameer entails much responsibility and the occasional perks. One of those perks is that since I am at the 'top', I don't have to answer your questions and you still have to publish whatever I write ;)

Q. So Sahal, tell us a bit about yourself?

This question sounds as if it was taken from one of those Muslim matchmaking websites (not that I have ever visited them of course), but I am just intelligently guessing this is one question they would ask.

Q. Tell us a bit more about your role as Ameer?

With great power comes great responsibility and a lot of shoulder pain.

Q. Describe a typical day in the life of the Ameer?

Evading the authorities.

Q. How do you find the time to balance being a medical student in your clinical years with fulfilling your responsibilities as the most senior individual in the Isoc, as well all your outside-university commitments?

Red bull and mocha coffees from Pret (Russell Square branch), seriously though iman I guess, when are you working for Allah then you have to have faith that somehow there will be barakah in your time. I think people worry when getting involved in isoc or any worthy cause, that their uni work will be sacrificed. Personally I think that some part of uni life should be spent outside your books, getting involved in what uni life is about!

Q. How does it feel to be an Isoc veteran?

Your question makes me sound so old, I am only 22, still got a good 3 years left inshallah unless I get impeached or my GMC licence is revoked for telling a patient that playing Fifa 12 does not = physical exercise.

Q. What would you say has been your greatest achievement to date?

Choosing to support Manchester United when I was 5, I could have chosen Liverpool or Arsenal in which case I would probably be suffering from depression.

Fasting 'Ashoora

Imaam Bukhaari recorded that Ibn 'Abbaas, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "I never saw the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam so keen to make sure he fasted any day and preferring it over another except this day, the day of 'Ashoora', and this month (meaning Ramadaan)."

The 10th of Muharram, 'Ashoora, is a day the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam was very keen to fast and encouraged the Muslims to fast. In fact, Imaam Muslim recorded that the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam said: "I hope Allah will expiate thereby (the minor sins) for the year that came before it." But what is so special about this day that it deserves this fast? Ramadhaan was the month in which the Qur'aan was revealed and 'Arafah was the day on which Allah declared Islam to be completed and perfected for us, but what about 'Ashoora? Imaam Bukhaari recorded that when the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam came to Madinah, he saw the Jews fasting on the day of 'Ashoora' and asked, "What is this?" They said, "This is a good day, this is the day when Allah saved the Children of Israeel from their enemy and Musa fasted on this day." He said, "We are closer to Musa than you."

So the reason we fast on this day is because of the victory Allah granted Musa against a great tyrant, Fir'awn. When those who worshipped Allah were weakened, had left their homes and were on the brink of extinction, Allah, the Most Powerful, opened a way for them through the most miraculous of means. And then He, the Most High, used the same means to disgrace and destroy the tyrant who claimed that he was a god, as well as those who followed him. There are many lessons in this for us. We must remember that Allah will surely not abandon His righteous servants, we must remember that Allah is the best of planners and we must

remember that Allah is the true king and no one has any might when faced with the might of Allah. So we take hope in this and show our obedience to Allah by fasting, for surely, if Allah did not abandon Musa and the children of Israeel, Allah will not abandon the followers of Muhammad sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam as long as they remain obedient.

Another notable issue is that many Muslims only focus on 'Ashoora and neglect the rest of Muharram. Firstly, to believe that by fasting one day in the year, you definitely have gained forgiveness for your past sins, is the height of foolishness. If this were the case, why would the best of generations, the companions, never have acted upon this? The correct attitude, and the attitude the companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, was to hope for the reward, but to continue as if they still had mountains of sins to try and wipe away. Ibn Mas'ud, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "A believer treats a sin as if it is a mountain over his head that may fall on him any moment."

It is also important to realise the virtues of the whole month. Imaam Muslim recorded from Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam said: "The best of fasting after Ramadaan is fasting Allah's month of Muharram." Therefore, fasting and doing other good actions throughout this month is something highly rewarding due to this being one of the four sacred months and it being "Allah's month." Fasting itself is something that has an unlimited reward, as, according to a hadith recorded by Bukhari and Muslim, Allah says: "Fasting is for me and I shall reward it". May Allah grant us the ability to fast the day of 'Ashoora, the month of Muharram and on other days throughout the year. May Allah make us steadfast upon His way so that we do not waver as His Prophets and their followers did not waver before us. And may Allah grant us victory over His enemies just as He did with the nations that passed before us.

Perks of Xmas for a Muslim

10 perks of being a Muslim at Christmas:

1. Offers in Tesco, Sainsbury`s and Asda: Starting from around November you can buy boxes of Celebration chocolates (and others) for half price (only £5!). You can also get a whole variety of other finger food platters (obviously vegetarian but I think we eat enough meat as part of other meals).
2. Halal Turkey (in some meat shops, it depends where you live). It's the only time we're gonna get to try it out so we might as well...
3. Boxing Day Sales! (need I say more?)
4. Nothing to distract you from fantastic movies on TV i.e. watching Home Alone sequels for like the 100th time, since none of us have anything to do on Christmas Day.
5. The long-awaited Christmas holidays (after 2 whole months of hard work)
6. Special edition stuff for the time of the year - especially food i.e. the delicious black forest hot chocolate that Costa is doing.
7. Christmas lights in Oxford Street and around London which look pretty - and since we don`t celebrate Christmas we can think of them as a way of cheering us up in the dark cold winter months.
8. Snow and snow fights! A chance to go out and have some crazy fun in the garden.
9. Treating it like any other day...

But most importantly:

10. Realising what a blessing it is to be Muslim and being grateful to Allah (swt) for guiding us – Alhamdulillah!

Humility

Humility: A quality mastered by few, though claimed by many.

It is in that period of life when a person begins to develop their first perspective of the world, and how they fit into its giant, complex systems, that they encounter a sort of identity crisis. I do not mean the typical identity crises where the individual is lost as to who they really are and what their true essence represents. I suggest another shade of uncertainty: a crisis regarding how they confront the contradictions and discrepancies regarding their self-worth. As individuals we look at how we viewed our self-worth in the past in comparison to how society values our worth now as well as how much importance we should ideally place on ourselves as per Divine guidance. This confusing conundrum befuddles us all and therefore we tend to neglect finding answers, opting instead to let others dictate how we perceive our self-worth. Very often, we swing from one extreme to another, in constant reaction to internal and external turmoil. Few realize that at the core of this identity crisis lies humility, a concept which the Divine has instructed prophet and provided guidance for – a guidance that can help calm our tumultuous lives and bring an understanding of who and how important we really are.

If we accept the meaning of humility in its most technical sense, which is to behave and believe that we are not superior to others, we will be presented with a few immediate complications. We can question whether this sense of humility is a reflection of sincere emotions and values: one may have genuine motives such as admiration or shame, but there may exist ulterior motives such as self-gratification, political or social maneuvering, as well as hypocrisy. Also one can be humble in front of some yet arrogant in front of others; will this broken humbleness really count as humility? The most important question is if humility is relative to circumstances and social standards, or is it a fixed measure of character? If a multi-billionaire has pride in his wealth

but humbles himself before more powerful individuals such as Bill Gates, will society accept him as a humble person? Questions like these complicate the essence of humility and thus many altogether discard the importance of being humble. Instead passive standpoints are encouraged such as “don’t let your arrogance bubble out, unless someone personally attacks you.” With this compromise we see another problem: can humility really be conditional? (i.e. “if you show me humility, then I will show you humility”) This leads to the next question: in a secular society which believes each person to be their own god, how far does one have to go to be truly humble, without losing dignity? Are dignity and humility diametrically opposed, or can they exist simultaneously at the highest levels?

Guidance from Islam on the other hand, completely revolutionizes the concept of humility. Firstly, Allah commands man to be humble, thus establishing its importance as opposed to simply being an optional quality. Secondly, Allah inextricably ties a human’s worth to Divine Creation as in the Qur’an it reads man was created “in the best of stature” (95:4). If people are living a life in accordance to Divine principles, Allah raises their status: “Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you.”(Qur’an, 49:13). And we are reminded that if we stray away from Guidance, we become “the lowest of the low” (Qur’an, 95:5). This radically transforms the accepted standards upon which we are judged and judge one another.

Muslims believe that ultimate judgment comes only from Allah Himself. This gives Muslims boundless relief and freedom – for as long as they are following Allah’s injunctions with wisdom and sincerity, they know not to fear the opinions of others. Thus if society regards a believer as the ‘lowest of the low,’ they remain unperturbed because they believe Allah’s Judgment to be the Highest. This prevents us from becoming

arrogant because we have absolutely no proof of our own success. Even if a person appears to be on the path of success outwardly, their internal condition may differ. And though one may know his or her internal state of humility, it cannot guarantee remaining steadfast in the future. Even if a person does remain steadfast in humility, they know the Final Judgment is still entirely up to Allah Himself, Who is Free to do what He wills. Thus, this uncertainty of how we will be judged deprives us from arrogance; it keeps us in a constant state of yearning for Allah's mercy and forgiveness.

Lastly, recognizing Allah's ultimate authority helps Muslims refrain from passing judgments on others as they realize that their own judgment is completely useless. We can never assume superiority to another even in the face of blatant external signs of hypocrisy or arrogance. All we can do is provide advice for both internal and external reform, for nobody knows what lies in our futures. However, Muslims are instructed to show contempt for pure evil and to stand tall against tyranny. If a person is meek before evil and stands down, then their humbleness (or fear) will only feed the arrogance and allow that evil to grow stronger.

Just as there is virtue in being humble, there is evil in being arrogant, for it challenges the foundation of the Islamic worldview that is based on equity and equality. Hence the saying of the Prophet Sallallahu 'Alahi wassallam: "No one who has an atom's weight of pride in his heart will enter the Garden." (Muslim) Anyone who is cognizant of his own vulnerable position in the universal scheme of things will find it difficult to become arrogant. However, this does not guarantee complete immunity. Human beings as part of their very nature are susceptible to societal pressures. If society praises us, our humility is threatened as we may attribute ourselves with a newfound greatness – which may delude us into believing in our own superiority and the higher probability of a successful future, because we are 'better.' Once a person believes in a greater likelihood of future success, they begin to worry less

about it, something which can have devastating consequences. The more jealously we pursue our goals with, the greater chance we have of achieving them. Arrogance numbs our concern and desensitizes us to all the shortcomings we may have, thus leading the way to disaster.

To shield ourselves from such pride, we are instructed to abstain from ostentation and all needless displays of our accomplishments. We have to be extremely careful about exposing our good attributes although we should mention our achievements if it promotes more good among others. Feeling internally happy at one's accomplishments on the other hand, is also permitted within certain bounds: so long as it does not lead to excessive self-amazement, arrogance, or forgetfulness of who allowed the success. In fact, we should recognize Allah's blessings upon us, as this allows us to show gratitude to Allah, and pray that we successfully utilize them for even greater good.

Another commonly misunderstood concept is the relationship between dignity and humility, as some may confuse dignity with arrogance and humility with a lack of dignity. Only by looking at the examples of our great elders can we understand the subtle differences between them. Thus we find Umar (May Allah have Mercy on him) admonishing a person walking with exaggerated meekness. Yet he had no problem wearing patched-up clothes and letting his slave ride the camel as they entered Jerusalem, even as the city's Christian leaders awaited him. In essence, our elders succeeded in maintaining both dignity and humility at the highest levels. The two qualities were certainly not mutually exclusive, because dignity lies in giving honor to the soul created by Allah, while humility lies in downplaying one's own actions and accomplishments. The litmus test for this unique state of awareness is the fact that they were never above admitting their mistakes and never belittled others.

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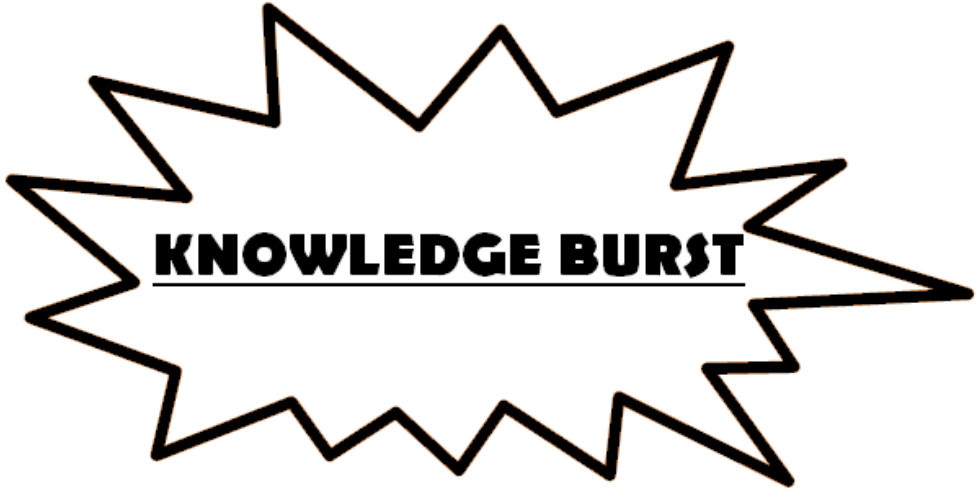
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There is also no concept of self-confidence in Islam, for all power descends exclusively from Allah. If a man believes he creates success alone, he is deluded, his actions worthless; but if he believes in Allah's power, he is empowered, his actions weighty. Humility therefore becomes a matter of faith in Allah; the more faith one has in Allah's protection, the more powerful he feels – and the more humbled he is by this awesome power. The Prophet Sallallahu 'Alahi wassallam himself was the greatest creation in the history of creation, yet the most humble of them all. This 'higher' thinking can explain how the Prophet's Sallallahu 'Alahi wassallam's Companions felt absolutely no fear in challenging the powerful Roman and Persian empires, even as they humbled themselves by expressing reluctance at being assigned leadership roles within the Islamic state. Thus, despairing emotions are naturally foreign to a soul wholly immersed in love for the Divine.

"Truly no one despairs of Allah's Soothing Mercy, except those who have no faith" (Qur'an, 12:87). And once one realizes he draws all his strength from Allah, Who can retract it at any time, his self-pride will automatically vanish: "Say, 'O Allah , Owner of Sovereignty, You give sovereignty to whom You will and You take sovereignty away from whom You will. You honor whom You will and You humble whom You will. In Your hand is [all] good. Indeed, You are over all things competent.'" (Qur'an,3:26).

Humility is an extremely difficult quality to acquire and master, and like the battle to acquire sincerity, it remains a dynamic struggle throughout our lives. Much of it stems from its ironic nature: how on one hand humility demands one to desist from self-amazement and lower oneself, but it only truly manifests itself in the most amazing people. Similarly humility destroys all superiority complexes, but only truly superior people can manage to accomplish that. Ultimately, only firm believers in Allah are powerfully proficient at remaining humble.

- Anonymous



The Etiquettes of Drinking...

- ✓ Drink with your right hand: if that means shuffling things from one hand to the other or putting them down in order to free your right hand to drink then do so.
- ✓ Say Bismillah before you start drinking: duhh!
- ✓ Drink at least three sips or more: don't down the whole thing in one go no matter how thirsty you are (you won't feel too good afterwards!).
- ✓ Praise Allah after finishing: a simple and heartfelt Alhamdulillah is not too much to ask.
- ✓ Drink sitting down: try and find somewhere to sit wherever you are, perch on something (or if you're feeling really brave - squat!).
- ✓ When giving/pouring out drink to others, start from the right hand side and drink last: try and make sure there's enough left for the poor guy on your left though!

- ✗ Do not drink out of dishes of Gold or Silver: (it's really not normal...keep it simple with glass or china; play it safe with plastic or go old school with clay)
- ✗ Do not drink straight from the container: pour some out into a glass/cup and drink from there.

tHE fRESHER diARIES...

As the Christmas hols and 2012 fast approach, so does the end of our first term and it is hard to believe that the first term of my first year at UCL is almost complete! - After a long summer of anticipation (and a few nerves) my first day at UCL medical school was one I will never forget. We arrived into lecture theatre 1 of the cruciform building for a taste of what medicine would be like - but to our dismay, we were greeted by smiley lecturers ready to teach us all about the art and science of - plagiarism. On a more serious note, we did learn a little bit about what to do in case of emergency and who to e-mail, but on the whole, the first day of lectures was boring to say the least. However, on this Monday I knew I only had 4 days remaining before I would meet all the amazing ISOC at the ISOC icebreaker! So despite the boring lectures, ISOC kept me going! The first few weeks were introductory talks and lectures, and some parts were scary (embryology :/) whilst others were very exciting (introduction to the anatomy lab!). However to sum up my first term at UCL, I thought I could write my 5 least favourite things and my 5 favourite things - so, drumroll!

My five favourite things on first term as a UCL medical student:

- 1) Fooooooooooooooooo :D - being a UCL student is so much fun and mainly because there is no shortage of amazing food to eat! (and so many Halal options Alhamdulillah :D) Be it Icco's, Halal subway, Bayleaf or even the refectory, I have been very impressed with the food around UCL which (thankfully!) bear no resemblance to my school dinners :)
- 2) The Quad - It's so pretty! Even though it's now winter and very cold, I do love sitting on the steps of the Portico or during October when there was some grass (which sadly seems to have disappeared now :/) It's lovely to just sit and eat and study in the quad whilst always being able to see some lovely friendly familiar faces :)
- 3) Late starts - I've been told these come few

and far between in later years, so I have definitely been grateful to have quite a few! This means I get to miss the terrible rush hour tube journeys and also meet all my favourite sisters in the prayer hut before lectures :)

4) Being better than King's - It's a pretty good feeling and really doesn't need any further explanation.

5) Of course, the ISOC! - Alhamdulillah I have met the most amazing people in the ISOC, and I've thoroughly enjoyed eating with them, talking to them and hanging out (praying) in the prayer hut! ISoc sisters are amazing and there have been brilliant events, amazing advice and just awesome people :)

So my first term at UCL has definitely been one stacked with awesome things - and those are just 5 of my 10000000 favourite things at UCL.

But of course there are things I've not loved and so, my 5 least favourite things have been: -

1) Early morning rush hour commuting - this is my least favourite thing - Although I am enjoying living at home, being piled up with 10000 other random strangers in a hot and stuffy tube early in the morning when really, what I'd rather be doing is sleeping is a challenge, and one I do not appreciate most mornings.

2) Really boring lectures - whilst a lot of lectures have been extremely interesting and made me be fascinated at the human body etc. - there have also been some extremely excruciatingly painfully boring lectures, and whilst these have made opportune times for me to sleep, my parents are not paying my tuition fees for me to sleep.

3) People asking me "Wow, had a bit too much to drink last night then, eh?" when I tell them "I'm tired" and trying to find the words to explain to them what that means.

4) Not having that teacher-pupil connection with professors - some of these professors are amazing teachers and lecturers, but they still maintain a distance that means they aren't approachable, and also definitely don't know who

I am - so every time I see my favourite lecturer walking down the road, it makes me sad that I can't greet them because they don't know who I am :(

5) The dark - whilst this was not a problem until after the end of October, I really do miss the sunshine, and I definitely dislike leaving lectures when it's pitch black - not so much because it is scary, but more because the dark means I will definitely not go home and even attempt to do some work. So, my first term of my first year has definitely been amazing! - UCL is more brilliant than I expected it to be, and the ICE(oc)ing [read Icing] on the cake has been the Isoc! Whilst there have been a few annoying things, on the whole it is absolutely excellent :) I've met amazing people, and learned amazing things (and eaten amazing food!). And whilst this article may have highlighted just how much I love sleep, I have enjoyed a chance to not be lazy. I hope that Inshallah the remainder of my SIX years at UCL goes just as well - but for now, I am looking forward to 3 weeks of studying and well-deserved rest. :)

- Inayah Zaheen

First day at UCL...

First day at UCL, I felt scared
New people, new teachers and buildings widespread
But soon many friends were made
And their warmth made me no longer afraid

Joining all the clubs and societies was so much fun
Then finally the lectures had begun
The first few experiments made me clueless
But I was told not to take stress

The highlight had to be Charity Week
Everyone coming together to help the poor and weak
Selling all those delicious homemade cakes
Learning how much hard work it actually takes

My first term here, to me is treasure
Meeting all the sisters has been an immense pleasure
I know it's going to get challenging
But I've heard that, it's also going to be even more amazing!!!

Be.The.Change!

So as the new Islamic year starts, we look back at the year that's passed and how much has been achieved. It was a year filled with courage and honour, as the youth in the Arab world finally woke up and realised that together, they can make a difference. Together they can change the future of their beloved countries. It was no longer about me, me, me....it was about us, us, us and with this new attitude and by the will of Allah (SWT), one by one the dictators of the Arab world were knocked down (metaphorically speaking, but in some cases quite literally).

The beloved Tunisia sparked the flame that allowed the rest of the world to watch as Ben Ali fled the country (which was quite comical I must add). Then the courageous Egyptians stood hand in hand to remove Mubarak the dictator in 18 days (world record). Let us not forget the great people of Libya who fought for months and months to bring down the tyrant Gaddafi. His quote of the decade: "If it wasn't for electricity, we would all be watching TV in the dark." Now I don't know whether to laugh or cry - this man led a country for decades! how? I have no idea! Of course there was Yemen and Bahrain and now the beloved Syria that is still fighting till this very moment for her freedom, and may Allah (SWT) grant the people of Syria justice from the very definition of evil, Bashar Assad.

Indeed the events that occurred in the Arab world over the past year have provided us with great TV, but it should also be taken as a lesson. The youth that fought these dictators, fought for freedom. They risked their lives and the lives of their families for justice. They were well aware that their countries were not going to see democracy instantly - a change like this will take decades and decades. Those that fought may not be alive to see that change, but they did it for the sake of future generations. They didn't think 'Well it's not going to affect my life time so why bother?' instead they thought 'eventually it will change the lives of many', and this is true courage and honour, this is something to be proud of. It's these youth that have and will continue to revolutionise the Arab world for the better and it is because of them that I am proud to be an Arab.

Remember why you are here today studying at UCL, don't take it for granted, use the knowledge you learn and this platform to make a good change in the world for the sake of Allah (SWT). Go out there and make a difference. I'm not saying to go and start a revolution, but use the bravery that you saw in the Arab uprising as an example and motivation to play your part in this world. Don't be someone who only thinks about him/herself and their generation, or complains they want change but thinks 'someone else will do it'. Be that someone who does good for the benefit of society as a whole, whether that benefit will be seen in your lifetime, or once you are gone. Be the change.

So dearest youth in the Arab world,

Thank you for reminding us what courage is; we seemed to have forgotten.

Yours Truly,

NHA

Lessons from the death of Gary Speed

Football is by far one of the main things in the heart of a young boy growing up in England as well as in most parts of the world. I've lost count how many hours of my life I have washed away with deciding who next should fill the left back slot on my football manager team, the depth and concern of thought that went into this, looking back at it is amazing, should I buy a proven prolific player who is coming to the end of his career or risk a youngster with the hope that I can develop him into a world beater? Walk into any primary school today and most of them will undoubtedly have a dream, as did I, of one day emulating players such as Beckham or Ronaldo, but is this really what the heart desires or needs?

Apart from just loving the game of football for what it is there are many underlining causes to this fantasy to name a few. The players are always portrayed as having the life every youngster should strive to land, whether this be due to their monumental pay cheques, the latest Porsch that they drive or the next supermodel that they are dating, and in most cases cheating on as well.

This truth was put into perspective on Sunday 27th of November, when Gary Speed a well-known former footballer and the current Wales manager decided to take his own life away. When I first found out about this the instantaneous shock that engulfed me was multiplied when it was stated that he had in fact committed suicide.

What could push a man who seemed to have every materialistic object falling at his feet at a canter to hang himself? He possessed. money, fame, a glittering career, high position in society,

love of the public, a wife, two children, a secure high-paying low-hours job, yet it is reported that he was still not happy and was in fact depressed. Allah says in the glorious Quran "Verily! Only in the remembrance of Allah will your heart find peace." (Surah 13: Verse 28). This clear and pertinent ayah states that materialistically that you may have seem to have everything in the world however unless you have the love of Allah close to your heart you will never find true and sustained happiness.

Therefore we should never be fooled in thinking that this worldly life that is portrayed is as rosy and sugar coated as they make it out to be. Allah has presented the Ummah with the gift of Islam, a true friend and comfort for the heart. No matter what situations faces us, only turning towards Islam will give us the peace of mind we require. Islam is a strong enough tool that it can energise the soul enough for it to be able to move mountains. A person who holds Islam close to their heart will never fail! Not in this life, not in the hereafter.

"Whoever works righteousness — whether male or female — while he (or she) is a true believer (of Islamic Monotheism) verily, to him We will give a good life (in this world with respect, contentment and lawful provision), and We shall pay them certainly a reward in proportion to the best of what they used to do (i.e. Paradise in the Hereafter)" . (Surah 16: Verse 97).

- Ajmal Naqshbandi

Notes from across the pond | Parte Deux

Masha'Allah!!

I cannot fathom another way to begin as I come to the end of my time here in London and at UCL. Before falling into sentimentality, I should at least attempt an explanation. It is difficult to quantify or qualify my time here. Superficially speaking, it has been 91 days since my arrival, I've added 34 friends to my facebook, and my bank account is...well we'll have to leave that one unsaid!

Yet, the unquantifiables are so much more vivid in my memory. It may not register as abnormal to those that have been exposed to ISoc's, but to think that I was part of a group of college students who raised more money for charity than what some mosques in the U.S. can at a fundraising dinner is amazing. The way this Islamic community on campus comes together has been a bit of an inspiration. For, even with all of its imperfections, I still think it is beautiful that we can do small things like have a Tahajjud Train and come together to vote on university issues that are pertinent to us.

I mentioned in the first edition of "Notes" that we have the propensity to be overly critical of our own institutions, and I remain convinced of that fact. While being an outsider gives me the distance with which to be objective and critical, it remains good only if it is useful. And so, I'll leave my suggestions in the realm of "To whom it may concern," and continue this optimistic streak while it lasts.

When the traditional American feasting day known as Thanksgiving came around this year, I found myself without the presence of family for the first time. However, I also found myself – after a small bout of self-pity – with more things

to be thankful for than ever before. To have the ability to be in this country, as much as you may find fault in it, is a blessing. Even the trivialities of London life like the tube are a privilege. Yes, waiting that extra 4 minutes until the arrival of that Metropolitan line train is a gift. If this was Chicago, you would have to wait a solid 8 until the next train, and if we were in Bombay, you would be using your feet.

So, the next time you walk into that halal Subway off Tottenham Court Rd., weak from your gruelling morning of class and ready to bite into that Italian BMT, do a little Masha'Allah dance (in your head!) because those don't exist everywhere. The next time you use the wudu area, as littered as it may be, consider that it is not a common fixture.

Thankfulness, I have discovered, does not mean resignation to the way things are. It does not mean giving up on striving for what's better. It is merely an acknowledgment of the countless ways – both big and small – that God has looked after you. As He has willed it, I have met some beautiful people, relished in their company, and experienced life in a city that I now love with a terrible passion.

And, Masha'Allah, what a beautiful time it has been!

- Nasiha Razvi

...Righteousness is in good character

On the authority of an-Nawwaas bin Sam'aan (radiAllaahu anhu) that the Prophet (sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam) said :
 Righteousness is in good character/morality, and wrongdoing is that which wavers in your soul, and which you dislike people finding out about.

It was related by Muslim. And on the authority of Waabisah bin Ma'bad (radiAllaahu anhu) who said:

I came to the Messenger of Allaah (sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam) and he said: "You have come to ask about righteousness". I said : "Yes". He said : "Consult your heart. Righteousness is that about which the soul feels at ease and the heart feels tranquil. And wrongdoing is that which wavers in the soul and causes uneasiness in the breast, even though people have repeatedly given their legal opinion [in its favour]."

Bismillah.

As a child we are taught about Islam - a Deen based upon our complete submission to Allah `azzawajal alone, ascribing no partners to Him; as being a religion of rituals; comprising of 5 pillars and that only such constitutes worship of Allah. It is only from a deeper and profound understanding of Allah and His Deen that we begin to associate our very heart to those obligatory actions and much more. We learn that good deeds are a means of purifying the heart in the hope that the believer reaches a state of perpetual worship in both thoughts and deeds.

Good character is one of the end results of putting into practice, Islam. The greater the imaan (faith) of a believer, the more beautiful his/her character is and both are inextricably

linked. The phrase of Laa ilaha illallah – There is none worthy of Worship except Allah, - when held in the strong conviction (that it is due) becomes a fountain of righteousness (al-birr) and good character is the greatest characteristic of al-birr.

"Successful indeed are the believers. Those who offer their Salaat with all solemnity and full submissiveness. And those who turn away from Al-Laghuw (dirty, false, evil, vain talk). And those who pay the Zakaat. And those who guard their chastity. Except from their wives or (the captives and slaves) that their right hands possess, for then, they are free from blame; But whoever seeks beyond that, then those are the transgressors; Those who are faithfully true to their Amanaat (all the duties which Allaah has ordained, honesty, trusts etc.) and to their covenants; And those who strictly guard their (five compulsory congregational) Salawaat (prayers) (at their fixed stated hours). These are indeed the inheritors [of Paradise]." [Soorah al-Mu'minoon 1-10]

Why is it that one of the purposes of Salah is to prevent lewdness and shamelessness? "Surely, the salah prevents lewd acts and bad deeds..." (Quran 29:45) Or that fasting is not likely to be accepted if one fails to restrain their tongue and temper? "Whoever fails to leave off ruinous speech and acting on it (during Ramadan), Allah does not need him to leave off eating and drinking"(Bukhari)

Or that giving of Zakat aims to drive out the stinginess of the heart and the love of wealth? "Of their wealth take alms to purify and sanctify them." [Tauba 9:103].

We can only scrape the surface of fathoming the divine hukm (Wisdom) of Allah, the Most High.

The first ten ayat of surah al-mu'minoon depicts the traits of a successful believer according to Allah, the Most High: it is an obvious combination of religious obligations and righteous conduct. Thus, a Muslim who is deficient in his/her Salah, for example, yet has impeccable character amongst the people should not be considered righteous as his good behaviour may be of little value in the eyes of Allah and the one who is strict in his Salah but is disrespectful to others (e.g. curses a lot) is not one who understands the true essence of Salah. Both types of people show shallowness of thought; intentionally dividing 'piety' up in this way is considered an affront to the comprehensive nature of Islam.

Once we come to terms with the idea that good character and religious commitment are sisters of one another it becomes easy to grapple with the profound statement of Aisha (RadhiAllahuAn) the Mother of the Believers, when asked what the character of our beloved Rasulallah (Sallallahu'alaihiwassallam) was, she said "His character was the Qur'an". It was already established in the life of Rasulallah (Sallallahu'alaihiwassallam) that he was the best of man and Allah, The Most High, Himself, comes to the aid of our beloved Prophet when the mushrikoon begin their verbal hostilities and attack his integrity: "Nun. By the Pen and by what they (the angels) write (in the Records of men). You (O Muhammad), by the Grace of your Lord, are not mad. And verily for you will be an endless reward. And verily, you (O Muhammad) are on an exalted (standard of) character"(68:1-4) Aisha's statement corroborates the perfect character of our final Messenger; even in the comfort of his own home, never did he show duality in his personality, unlike most of us who undergo a change in some form or another when dealing with family members. But more importantly, referring to someone's character as being the Qur'an (the very Word of Allah), a guidance sent for humanity, providing us with knowledge of Allah's Names and Attributes, the stories and

lessons from previous prophets and nations, and of certain legal rulings and injunctions, is a testament to 'character' as being multi-faceted and is not merely restricted to how we behave towards other people. One's character does not only determine how one views and treats others, but how one's attitude is towards their own self, their actions, general and specific, the knowledge they harbour and ultimately what their relationship with Allah, the Most High, is like. A personification of the Qur'an in man is the epitome of an excellent character.

This endeavour or struggle of achieving ihsan (excellence) in our personality is certainly not an easy task especially when we are constantly being exposed to its opposite from every direction in addition to the inherent weakness of human beings of giving in to our dominant desires. From Imam Al-Ghazaali's work Ihya' 'Uloom al-Deen, of how to acquire good characteristics, he outlines some essential ingredients: intention to purify oneself through knowledge, awareness of one's shortcomings, a good attitude, a balance and persistence, and restraint from committing evil deeds.

Essentially, good character is the culmination of efforts to purify and rid one of bad traits displeasing to Allah and inculcating good and righteous actions that are loved by Allah so that these become a habit. Or in other words from the development of khushu' in our Salah, to the concern we have towards our neighbours - it is an effort to make Islam who we are.

May Allah 'azzawajaal grant us beautiful character, forgive us of our many, many sins, help us to overcome the evil desires and trials that plague our Ummah and to be constant in our gratitude for bestowing us with this perfect Deen, that will be our only Salvation in the Akhirah.

- U.Y.N.J

Bosnia and Herzegovina 2011 | The Journey

Day 7 – 27.06.2011

Vitinica...

Probably the day where I learnt the most about myself and my character. A slow day started eating a beautifully cooked breakfast of mushrooms. A trip into the city saw us stopped by Serbian police again, prompting our host to get us registered by the local police station. It was the first time since landing we were treated to a barrage of stares from the locals. I guess we had tanned more than previously thought. We met Mohamed's work colleague and friend, a 40-year-old man named Islam, also an Imam for the village of Vitinica. A measured and simple man on first appearance, we chatted over a cold drink at a juice bar in Zvornik. He appeared to have charisma in abundance merely by his knowledge of Islam, having been on Hajj, and the way he addressed us. He spoke to us about religion in Saudi Arabia and Bosnia and how he cherishes living in rural Bosnia and practicing his faith.

A trip back to the village left us rather frustrated as we had not done any physical labour. Dilwar was increasingly restless and we resorted to having a power nap to kill time! Our patience would be tested to the limit. On such a good day, Mirzet, the neighbour/cousin invited us to football in the evening, an opportunity we could surely not pass up having been sleeping! After consultation with my roommate we decided we would tell Mohamed we would like to go to play football if not subjected to any physical work (our stomachs were now protruding).

Mohamed rejected Dilwar's request, twice, and explained we were to go to a village called Sapna, to do nothing (the translation on Google translate was probably bad). After reluctantly accepting, we set off with Mohamed and Mahmood (the most well-mannered boy I have ever met). Mahmood is a special story on his own. Son of a Mujahid from the war, at 11 years old he has more maturity than most adults I have met. He speaks with respect, does what he is told, and is very polite. Added to this, he possesses an AMAZING voice, mash'Allah. We

stopped off in a Serbian hamlet where Mohamed did an IT job at a house for 30 minutes. Dilwar and I played football on the road, growing increasingly impatient. It was then we decided to be patient and remind ourselves that we were in fact getting a snapshot of rural life that others would not. We were meeting and greeting (albeit in the wrong manner) Serbs and Serbian people.

We left for what would be the most amazing experience so far. Upon arrival to Islam's beautifully maintained house and garden in the hilltop village of Vitinica, a certain peace in the air silenced us. This village was heavenly. Scattered houses, perfect roads, a scenic view with Serbia in the distance, and a nice family sitting with us was a perfect setting for discussing Islam with Islam! He asked us about religion in Birmingham and England, and how it was practicing with so many variations. He then interviewed Mahmood and told him to practice nasheeds which he had rehearsed, another cultural insight. Incidentally, Islam is also the head of a local choir group, (including our host Mohamed) which has members from many of the surrounding villages around Zvornik.

I then began reciting the adhan out of the blue (as one does) and this seemed to catch his eye. He had the idea of asking me to recite Maghrib adhan for the village at the local masjid, for which he is the Imam. After consulting with Mohamed, and gaining approval, he asked me and I immediately said yes.

The walk up to the masjid was humbling. Passing by and saying salaam to old women and men walking outside their house without an ounce of arrogance or pride in the hearts and smiles was a breath of fresh air to the reserved and brash mob of Central London (and even Serb Zvornik). Islam showed us a cemetery and explained how they were shaheeds from when Serbian tanks had destroyed the village from across the valley 18 years ago.



Mosque in Vitinica

Reciting the adhan was a feeling words cannot describe. Hearing the echo of Arabic utter through the village and bounce off the tree laden valleys and mountains was something I will never forget. Undoubtedly a personal highlight of the trip so far, I was glad I did not push to play football. A soothing feeling of Ibadah ran through my throat and body and the flow of Arabic seemed easy.

Praying side by side with old men and young children was another proud moment. Bosnia's Muslims seem to be practicing and vibrant at all ages. Islam then took pictures with us in his Imam dress on his camera, we had realised Islam had in fact been the one who had invited and expecting us earlier in the day. The experience of the masjid and the adhan, of Islam and his family, of the beautiful village of Vitinica was probably the highlight of my journey to Bosnia and one of the highlights of my youth (if I can still call it that). It was something I will never forget and something I hope to experience again, inshAllah. Dilwar and I looked and each other on the journey back, we both knew we had succeeded in being patient, showing sabr despite being restless earlier, and had both admitted to have been fortunate to see a breath-taking village.

Day 8 – 28.06.2011

Snagovo Haystack Part One...

Today was the day we had been anticipating. Hard, physical work.

Grandad Hussain was a physical man, even in his mid-seventies. He would wake up every morning, do demanding work with his axe and create new building projects seemingly to entertain himself, watched attentively by his loving wife, and every now and then entertain the young children with a joke. (His quips were usually a step too far in Bosnian for us).

After another delicious breakfast, we offered to help Hussain with skinning his barks. This was in the heat of day, and finally Dilwar and I were getting a workout, to the entertainment of our visitors, Lucy and Leila. They had walked over from their village of Snagavo, Leila enjoyed her stay here with a game of volleyball (in which she showed how Iranians really want to win!) and Lucy with various administrative duties. We then walked back uphill to their village, accompanied by their lovely host Maliha, who spoke great English!

At Maliha's house we were treated to traditional farm work. Their mother was gutting chickens as we entered and the father was firing up the hay transporter. After Leila gave us a demonstration in how to make bread, we ended up helping the family with raking their massive fields of hay, before stacking them. Thankfully the sun was not out, yet it still took over 3 hours of hard grafting to get the dead grass into a large pile. What amazed me here was the sheer amount of work women do on the farm. Their strength and determination puts into perspective how little physical activity men and women in urban England actually do, and how much we complain!



Helping host Maleeha's family build a haystack

Mohamed collected us to play football with the local Bosnian village lads. Lads they certainly were. With an average height of well over 6 feet and built like rugby players, we were in for a tough induction into Bosnian football. We lost both games, but having scored twice and set up some goals, I feel we came through this test. Both Dilwar and I were clearly exhausted after a long day working hard and came home to a nice relaxing shower, meal and Hollywood film 'Paul' with our lovely family.

“This ain’t Nandos..!”

Mild, Moderate or Extreme seems to be the new flavours of Muslims introduced not by Nando’s but an establishment much more influential than it, the media.

Mild being a Muslim who doesn’t involve himself in politics, Islamic events, prays his ‘salat’ every once in a while and named by the ‘extreme’ ones as “Muslim by name” but very much to the liking of western taste ‘Mild’. Then it’s the ‘moderate’ ones who are regular with their prayers but don’t have the beard or keep up with the social trends. Finally, the ‘extreme’ or the ‘hardliner’ Muslims (who give away their identity by mere physical appearance and attire) are the works; prayers, fasting, the beard and the Islamic clothing.

It’s as if the Western media are trying to classify and break down the religion of Islam into a food menu. Pick a ‘flavour’ suited to your taste. But what they fail to comprehend is that this religion cannot be catalogued merely to three different types. Its based upon something much more simple but deep i.e. your level of Iman (faith). Islam grows with the person following it, nurturing and breeding it within you allows you to increase your levels of Iman. Iman is like a seed, given the right environment; it grows to be a strong, deep-rooted tree.

For now, there is just the moderate and the extreme variations of Islam being circulated in Western news agencies, but the coming of the ‘Mild’ variation is inevitable, erasing the ‘moderate’ and further polarizing the Muslim community and the brotherhood that is already brought down to its knees by the campaigning of the West.

The internal affairs of these tagging methods

aren’t just what damage the Muslims, but the image of observant Muslims; the ‘extremists’ is also demonized to the outside world.

In short, the message I’m trying to convey is that Islam has been brought down to the rank of a grilled chicken. It is something much more meaningful to a person who practices it and understands the significance behind the message. It doesn’t just help you grow as a person, but as a community, building a society and strengthening your relationship and ties with not just Muslims but non-Muslims too.

Fifa'12 tournament

The UCL Islamic Society held the Fifa 12 tournament in early October 2011. This was the perfect opportunity to introduce the new brothers to the Society.

Alhamdulillah, the brothers were able to reserve one of the rooms at UCL with a gigantic screen so the feeling of playing Fifa 12 was more fulfilling. There were quite a few brothers interested and everyone wanted to pick the likes of Real Madrid and Barcelona. Some of the brothers then decided that everyone would be given a random team. I thought this was the perfect way to test my skills.

Luckily for me, I got Real Madrid and was delighted. I thought I was going to have an easy ride to the finals of the tournament but was proved wrong with the very first game of the tournament. I played against Chelsea (Yusuf Zakariya) and I was the first one to concede in the game, Yusuf was shocked as to how "useless". It was an even contest but Karim Benzema proved to be the difference between the two sides as he scored the winning goal with a header. Yusuf couldn't deal with my set pieces and as a result, I knocked him out.

The next round I played against Tottenham. Saleh was playing with Tottenham but had to leave early because he had some work (it was just an excuse!). Yusuf wanted a rematch. As a result, Yusuf played with Tottenham as he thought my goals were all "fluke" in the first game (against Chelsea). I scored two goals in this game as well and he had nothing to say. He was speechless. It was quite nice to see him so quiet as he just kept on going on about just how awesome he was at Fifa 12.

Finally, here it was, the final of the tournament. This was the toughest team of all. It was the last

team I would have wanted to meet in the final. It was Barcelona. There was no room for error. I knew I had to be perfect. Therefore, just before the game, I was extremely nervous. I tried to make some tactical changes. I changed my formation to 4-5-1. I wanted to put more bodies in midfield in order to prevent Barcelona from playing their tiki-taka football. I knew I had to prevent Xavi, Iniesta and Messi linking up. It was a massive risk but one which was worth taking. Luckily, the formation worked as I looked to hit them on the break. In the end, Benzema scores all four goals and ends up being the man of the match while I ended up being the champion of Fifa 12 at UCL.

I always thought I was good at Fifa 12, but not this good!

Prayer Timings

Prayer Timings | December 2011

Date	Day	Fajr	Sunrise	Zohar	Asr	Maghrib	Isha
16	Fri	6:16	8:00	11:56	2:05	3:52	5:35
17	Sat	6:17	8:01	11:56	2:05	3:52	5:36
18	Sun	6:17	8:02	11:57	2:06	3:52	5:36
19	Mon	6:18	8:02	11:57	2:06	3:52	5:36
20	Tue	6:19	8:03	11:58	2:06	3:53	5:37
21	Wed	6:19	8:03	11:58	2:07	3:53	5:37
22	Thu	6:20	8:04	11:59	2:07	3:54	5:38
23	Fri	6:20	8:04	11:59	2:08	3:54	5:38
24	Sat	6:21	8:05	12:00	2:08	3:55	5:39
25	Sun	6:21	8:05	12:00	2:09	3:55	5:40

If you would like to write an article for publication in Al Badr, please send the article with the subject as 'Al Badr Article' to:

barian_ali@hotmail.com (articles from brothers)

halimah.javaid@gmail.com (articles from sisters)