

al-badr

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Published on behalf of Hammad Lakhani, President of RUMS

“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 ‘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].**

Heavenly Companion on Earth

As I sit here contemplating how another year at UCL is flying by, I can't help but reminisce all the brothers I have been with and gotten to know...(well that and the fact I was asked to write about companionship :-P). As always the first khutba of every year is based on companionship and making sure that as Muslim students we all mingle with the right sort of people. Although this may seem much like a ploy that the Ameer and President use to get people to be friends with them, there is (of course!) a very important reason for this. The Prophet Mohammed (SAW) said:

"A person is upon the religion of his close friend, so beware whom you befriend." [Abu Daawood and At-Tirmithi]

Keeping good company is essential for every Muslim as it enables us to attain beneficial knowledge, noble manners and righteous actions. The parable of a good companion as opposed to a bad one is perfectly described by the following hadith:

"The case of the good companion and the bad companion is like that of the seller of musk and the blower of the bellows (iron-smith). As for the seller of musk, he will either give you some of the musk, or you will purchase some from him, or at least you will come away having experienced its good smell. Whereas the blower of the bellows will either burn your clothing, or at least you will come away having experienced its repugnant smell." [Al-Bukhaari and Muslim]

In light of such wisdom from our beloved Prophet (SAW), the question left for us to ask ourselves is quite obvious. So who is this good companion? Allah says in the Quran:

"Friends on that Day will be foes, one to another except the pious." [Quran; 43:67]

And thus we come to the crux of this article (fine...it's a speech), if you want an eternal companion, a companion who will keep you on the straight path, a companion who will not desert you on the day even your own father, mother, spouse and children will desert you, then make an effort to be the companion of a righteous Muslim.

Anon

Me, Myself and I.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) said: "Some people will come on the Day of Judgment and their imaan will be outstanding, its light will shine from their chest and from their right hands.

So it will be said to them, 'Glad tidings for you today, Assalaamu Alaykum and goodness for you, enter into it (Jannah) forever!'

So the Angels and the prophets will be jealous of the Love of Allah for them."

So the Sahabah asked, "Who are they Ya RasulAllah?"

He (saw) replied, "They are not from us, and they are not from you. You are my companions, but they are my beloved. They will come after you and will find the Book (the Qur'an) made redundant by the people, and a Sunnah which has been killed by them. So they will grab hold of the Book and the Sunnah and revive them.

So they read them and teach them (Qur'an and Sunnah) to the people and they will experience in that path a punishment more severe and more ugly than what you, O Sahabah, have experienced.

Indeed the imaan of one of them is equivalent to the imaan of forty of you.

The shaheed of one of them is equivalent to forty of your shuhadaa'. Because you found a helper towards the truth (The Prophet) and they will find no helper towards the truth.

So they will be surrounded by tyrant rulers in every place, and they will be in the surroundings of Bait-al-Maqdis (al-Quds, masjid al-Aqsa). The Nussrah (Help and Victory) of Allah will come to them, and they will have the honour of it in their hands."

Then he (saw) said, "O Allah, give them the Nussrah and make them my close friends in Jannah."

-Reported by Ahmed.

Britain is the best place to be a Muslim - according to a recent newspaper article. Now at first this may seem a somewhat conceited statement and as Muslims we do like to entertain our own

self-pity. We like to think we have it tough: 'too much fitna' 'not enough facilities' 'so much discrimination' 'why don't all the restaurants in London just become halal and make everyone's life easier' - the list of complaints is infinite (and understandably so, of course there are issues and there are problems). However the truth of the matter is that in the grand scheme of things, we have it easy. We have it VERY easy.

We have it so easy in fact, that we've become insensitive, lazy and selfish in our attitude and our approach. Our life has become so comfortable and cosy that we are constantly immersed in questions of world-changing proportions - Chicken Cottage or Subway for lunch? Take the tube home or the bus? Go for that promotion or wait it out?

Other issues take a back seat in the face of such pressing matters. The suffering of our brothers and sisters around the world constitutes a conversation or two now and then, a khutbah when it gets really bad or even an event when we're feeling particularly emotional. The truth of the matter is that we no longer know the meaning of true companionship, of true brotherhood, of truly striving in the path of Allah (swt); of selflessness and of Islam - Islam as a religion not for the individual but for society, for mankind as a whole - reflected in its very nature and in the duties and responsibilities it commands which extend to this very length.

The young boys and men who are slaughtered every day; tortured, sodomised, boiled alive and humiliated; the women who are raped, abused and killed around the world every day for the crime of bearing the symbol of Islam whether in Gaza or Syria or Abu Ghraib or Guantanamo or Pakistan - will all insha'Allah be given the honourable status of the shuhadaa' - their akhiraah will be bliss as a result of the immense suffering they had to endure.

But what of us?

Most (if not all) of the thousands of East-Africans who died as a result of the drought last year will not be questioned about zakah, they will not be questioned about sadaqah, they will not be questioned about taking interest, they will not be questioned about Hajj, they will not be asked about taking out haram insurance or engaging in haram transactions, they will not be asked what they did for the people of Gaza; how much money and effort they put in for them – they did not even have enough water to bathe in...they barely had enough food to keep themselves alive!

You and I, on the other hand. Will. – we will have to answer.

What is our contribution to this situation as people who have health, who have wealth, who have intellect, who have youth and energy and time and who have the resources to make a change? What are we doing in comparison to what we could be doing and what we have been given the ability and scope to do? It's not because we are heartless, merciless and indifferent to the tragedies we see and hear about day in and day out, it is due to something much more dangerous than even this - the sheer laziness and selfishness that has become an inherent part of us not just as individuals but as a community is slowly but surely killing us and is to a large extent the reason for the deaths of our brothers and sisters around the world. How do we justify abandoning them when we know and witness the gross injustices being inflicted daily on the people of our nation, how can we dishonour in such a shameless way those who Allah (swt) has honoured with the Deen of Islam? We find hollow excuses to try and justify our incapacity and moreover reluctance to act and neglect our duties and it is this epidemic of individualism, laziness and outright selfishness that has swept our Ummah which inhibits our moral and Islamic sense of compassion, responsibility and brotherhood. And we the Western Muslims fall disgracefully short in our duties time and time again.

But we need not go to Africa or even Gaza to

illustrate this. We must only go home to our families. Those people who are our closest companions in this life, companions chosen by Allah (swt) in a bond that is for almost all intents and purposes – unbreakable. How much respect and gratitude do we show them; how much love and kindness and how much humility do we display; how much time do we take out for them?

We come to University every day, sit and converse endlessly and debate fervently with our friends and colleagues about matters of the Deen – politics, the weather, world affairs, sports, leisure, breakfast, lunch and dinner - We take silent pride in the knowledge that we accumulate through avenues such as the ISoc or the local Masaajid (and other similar Islamic organisations) and try our best to incorporate what we know into ourselves. But very often we fail to extend this chain of knowledge and wisdom to the ones who we claim to be our nearest and dearest (neither fully nor with the proper etiquette). How much do our siblings really know about Islam? How much do they understand? And how much of that did they learn from us? Do we sit down and explain to them, do we help them better themselves as we hope to better ourselves? Do we lead by example? Do we take the time out and display the maturity and patience needed to be leaders and role models, to make them the leaders and role models of tomorrow?

What do we give them? What use are we to them as children, as neighbours, as friends, as partners, as members of the community and companions in Deen? Why have we become so lax in fighting for our akhirah? Why are we not working with every cell in our body to rectify the diseases of lack of action and zeal and effort that the luxuries of life seem to have brought with them into our hearts?

Companionship is a blessing but it comes with certain rights, responsibilities and conditions. How do we expect to work for those in Gaza when we hardly give a thought to our neighbours and to the members of our community who are

continued...

entitled to our companionship and all that that entails; How do we hope to help those in need outside, when we neglect those who share the same roof as us; How do we hope to save and defend the Ummah of Muhammed (saw) globally if we cannot bring ourselves to act locally?

Discover Islam Week is around the corner and while we are all eager to fulfil our duties of da'wah let us take a moment to try and make this a 'Re-Discover Islam Week' for ourselves. Re-discovering the Islam that says:

'You will see the believers in their mutual kindness, love and sympathy just like one body. When a limb complains, the whole body responds to it with wakefulness and fever' (Muslim and Bukhari)

The Islam that compels us to fight for and work against the horrors that have become daily occurrences for a large proportion of this Ummah; the Islam that instructs us to uphold and honour the values of companionship; to strive with all we have in the cause of Allah (swt) and for his servants; the Islam that makes us responsible for the old lady who lives down the street alone or the Islam that teaches us to help our younger sibling who struggles to wake up for Fajr Salah and rectify with wisdom the shortcomings of our spouse - The Islam that teaches us honour, responsibility, action and selflessness and the Islam that teaches us the true meaning of companionship, friendship and brotherhood.

Go beyond Me, Myself and I.

Abida

Only in ISLAM!

As I queued to use the ablution facilities at the Royal Free Hospital, a bearded middle aged muslim directly behind me (in the queue) greeted me with the greetings of Ahl-ul-Jannah. He smiled and pointed out that we were both wearing the same shirt in terms of colour and design. We both laughed at this and considered the coincidence. As the laughter faded away he said something that I will never forget till the day I die God-willing. Just because we wore the same shirt it was enough for him to desire the following. He said with a smile on his face "I hope we meet in Heaven like we have met today InshaAllah". Only in Islam will you get such a selfless breathtaking supplication for two brothers; unrelated; divided in age, background and knowledge; united solely by faith. Only in Islam will you get two people completely unaware of the other yet demonstrate love for each other solely for the sake of Allah. Only is Islam.

As Friday prayers came to a conclusion and the congregation left to address their worldly concerns, I too headed for the exit of the hospital. Behind me was another bearded middle aged muslim (different to the first) although he was rushing to leave the hospital. As he passed me, he must have noticed me from the congregation and completely halted his jog to greet me with once again the greetings of Ahl-ul-Jannah. He explained that he was afraid that he went over the time limit for his parked car outside the hospital. We talked for a bit as we walked to the exit and although I urged him to rush to his car, he refused and insisted we continue our dialogue. He had full trust in Allah, The Almighty, The Disposer of all affairs, to take care of his worldly worries. As we departed he once again greeted me with the greetings of Ahl-ul-Jannah. He reminded me the sheer beauty of this religion. Only in Islam will you witness something of the like. Only in Islam.

Reminder

Following desires creates a permanent state of depression, dissatisfaction and uneasiness and is only punctured by sinning, akin to the temporary effect of aspirin in reducing the fever but doing nothing to kill the germ or like winning a battle but losing the war.

Eemaan (faith) and 'Ibada (obedience/doing good deeds) creates a permanent sense of contentment, inner peace and tranquillity and is only punctured by human reactions to trials and tribulation or reminders to get back on the straight path in the form of apparent evil but ultimately, eemaan wins. Alhamdulillah.

When the alarm rings.....

Those who wish to wake up open their eyes.

Those who prefer to sleep some more, press the snooze button and risk waking up too late.

As for those in the next room, the sound only serves as a source of annoyance.

Similarly, when Allah reminds us out of His mercy that we have gone astray, we have the choice of repenting and accepting His guidance, of procrastinating and risk leaving this world in a state of sin or of becoming spiritually dead and completely ignoring the reminder.

Companion



com•pan•ion [kuh m-pan-yuh n]
noun

1. A person who is frequently in the company of, associates with, or accompanies another: my son and his two companions.
2. A person employed to accompany, assist, or live with another in the capacity of a helpful friend.

(www.dictionary.reference.com/browse/companion/)

What does the word companion mean to you?

“Companion”, distinguishable from the word “friend”, signals foremost trustworthiness. Reliability, a source of comfort and relief. A companion is one who is generous, loyal and charitable. The Sahabah of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) were amongst some of the most faithful and trustworthy people, who supported and helped the Last Prophet (saw), through his greatest times of need. In a time fraught with corruption and deceit, people who embody these characteristics are often hard to come by. Selfishness, personal gain and dishonesty have unfortunately become innate and standard traits in our society – visible in politicians, the media, even people we consider friends.

What we often fail to remember is that an endless supply of consolation and guidance, a great pillar of reliability and consistency, with unwavering strength and selflessness, is always present in our lives. It had always been present, waiting

for us to grab it with both hands and immerse ourselves in its glory. This is none other than the greatest blessing mankind was granted: The Qur’an. The Qur’an that has the ability to move mountains; the magnitude to humble an arrogant man and the beauty to provoke tears in the strongest of men. It is this Book alone that we should make our closest, most revered and most sought after companion, for no mere human could give the kind of knowledge and assistance that the Qur’an endlessly offers. Few realise its true value; even mountains, symbols of endurance, firmness and stability are unable to bear the Qur’an:

“Had We sent down this Qur’an on a mountain, you would surely have seen it humbling itself and rending asunder by the fear of Allah. Such are the parables which We put forward to mankind that they may reflect.” [59:21]

Firstly, as you would expect from any companion, the Qur’an is a source of guidance, as it gives advice on every aspect of human life whilst always having your best interests at heart. Not only does it provide a sound basis for legal authority, but a solution for every doubt and every problem. All the commandments and prohibitions are present solely for the purification of oneself and to make society a place of modesty, education and respect. In Surah Luqman, Allah says “These verses give guidance to the Right Way and have been sent down as a mercy from God.”[31:3]. The religion of Islam, unlike any other religion, asserts a universal law that, if followed, ensure eternal happiness and luxuries in the Hereafter; surely we are at an incredible loss if we do not heed the advice given to us. The Qur’an clearly manifests haram and halal; to nurture your modesty, to prostrate in prayer, to stay away from zina and ribba ... spiritually and logically; these

” And their recompense shall be Paradise...

commandments do nothing but good for your nafs in this world, and grant you Jannah in the next. Win-win! What other person or book could come close to giving us this mercy?

Secondly, the Qur'an, like a true companion should be and will always be a source of comfort in times of need, a beacon of light for those who have nowhere to turn. I have always felt that whether or not you have a deep understanding of the Qur'an or know Arabic at all, its words have a powerful effect that are both soothing and strengthening. In Surah az-Zumar, He says, "Say, "O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful."" [39:53], clearly displaying the scale of Allah's mercy and forgiveness as He pardons even those who have sinned greatly. "Do they not know that Allah accepts repentance from His servants and takes the alms, and that Allah is the Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful?" [9:104]. Personally, my greatest source of comfort is when Allah says "We are closer to him than [his] jugular vein" [50:16], a clear reminder that throughout the lows and highs of life, there is no-one and nothing more dependable and pervasive than our Creator. Allah (swt) is with you in any time and any situation – what great comfort this is!

The mercy of Allah does not stop with forgiveness – the numerous descriptions of Paradise are enough to make my heart ache to be closer to Allah (swt). Can you imagine beautiful gardens, rivers of clear honey and clothes woven from the finest silk while we sit on thrones built from gold and precious stones?

"And their recompense shall be Paradise, and silken garments, because they were patient. Reclining on raised thrones, they will see there neither the excessive heat of the sun, nor the excessive bitter cold, (as in Paradise there is no sun and no moon). The shade will be close upon them, and bunches of fruit will hang low within their reach. Vessels of silver and cups of crystal will be passed around amongst them, crystal-clear, made of silver. They will determine the measure of them according to their wishes. They will be given a cup (of wine) mixed with Zanjabeel, and a fountain called Salsabeel. Around

them will (serve) boys of perpetual youth. If you see them, you would think they are scattered pearls. When you look there (in Paradise) you will see a delight (that cannot be imagined), and a Great Dominion. Their garments will be of fine green silk and gold embroidery. They will be adorned with bracelets of silver, and their Lord will give them a pure drink." [76:12-21]

The wonders of Paradise are unimaginable and come only to those who have lived in this dunya according to laws set by the Qur'an, becoming companions of the Qur'an and realising that it is a true source of guidance. Surely this is a small price to pay, for a reward so remarkable?

Even with my limited knowledge of Arabic, reciting its poetic words and listening to melodious recitations has always overwhelmed me with inner peace and tranquillity. The Qur'an has often been analysed as a great work of literature, with significant study undertaken on its grammar and lexicon. Where else can one be humbled the greatness of the verses, captivated by the beauty of its words and find socio-political direction all at the same time? No other Book is superior. This is why we need to revive our relationship with the Qur'an and restructure our lives around it, for undoubtedly we will never find a companion who is so beneficial, compassionate and gracious. It is a pillar of power in this life and will never forsake you even after you die:

"Read the Qur'an, for indeed it will come on the Day of Judgment as an intercessor for its companions." [Sahih Muslim]

To truly become a companion of the Qur'an and make the Qur'an our companion, we must not only read it, but take its message with us in everything we do and say. We must read it, study it, analyse it, memorise it, consult it, teach it and defend it from enemies. Becoming people of the Book and truly having the Qur'an as your ultimate companion, is equal to being people of Allah (swt). Insha'Allah we will all be of those Allah (swt) is most pleased.

"The people of Qur'an., they are the people of Allah and His specialties." [Ahmad, Nisaa'ee, Ibn Maajah]

ThisWolrdIsMyHouse

A Blacksmith or a Seller of Musk

Bismillah.

We, human beings, are by our very nature, social creatures. Most of us, if not all, cannot do without the company of others similar to our own selves. If you can and are, then you must lead a miserable life because people are not designed to live in complete isolation. This is, in fact, punishment in it's severest form. The act of just smiling and receiving one back from a stranger makes an uncanny difference to our mental wellbeing. Allah (swt) the Most High, of course, knows this; He, in His infinite Mercy deliberately made us dependent upon each other and made our relationships with one another one of the major factors that define who we are. This means the type of people you frequently accompany is the type of person you are because you wouldn't otherwise hang around with them, if it wasn't partly based on an unspoken, mutual understanding of being alike, at least in one way or another.

Perhaps for such reasons, or for other reasons we do not comprehend, by the Wisdom of Allah (swt), the Most High, a great deal of emphasis is laid on this issue of friendship in the Qur'an and Sunnah.

"And (remember) the Day when the wrong-doer will bite at his hand, he will say: 'Oh! Would that I had taken a path with the Messenger. Ah! Woe to me! Would that I had never taken so-and-so as a friend! He indeed led me astray from the Reminder (the Quran) after it had come to me...'" [Quran; 25:27]

After the knowledge of what our beloved Prophet Muhammad (saw) has come to us with, how we respond to this initial hearing and understanding of Islam, the next in line to resent over for the doomed, will be the people kept as close friends. Those whom we befriend will either be a source of extreme anguish and regret on the Last Day (the Day of Resurrection) or a source of extreme happiness and gratitude and there is

no in-between. It may be that because of this one person you strayed far from the Path of Allah, AzzawaJal, His Remembrance, and so Allah 'AzzawaJal made you reside for eternity in the same abode as this evil person, when really, had you simply spent more time with someone closer to Allah's Path and His Remembrance you would have been placed in the best of abodes. The above frightening depiction Allah (swt) has drawn for us in our minds evokes the idea that your close association can make you or break you, not here or now, but on a Day when not a single person will come to another's aid due to the intense preoccupation of self. Thus, a light-hearted, almost careless attitude of our choice of friends is a reckless abuse of the choice Allah, AzzawaJal has given to us and a reflection of our negligence of the Hereafter.

The manner in which we choose our friends is vital to the core of our Imaan (faith) for humans were created weak. "...for the human being was created weak." [Sûrah al-Nisâ': 28] We quickly succumb to or become very easily influenced by the words and actions of others. In the course of our lives we have learnt new words, new habits and new ideas merely because we've seen our friends do it so often. In many ways our friends are our educators, advisors and the people we rely on for help and reassurance. Therefore, if we are sincere in embarking upon the practise of our Deen in order to secure our Akhirah we should be smart enough to appreciate the part friendship plays as a hefty one; we must treat it with the care that is its due.

"A person is upon the religion of his close friend, so beware whom you befriend" [Abu Daawood and At-Tirmithi]

Which would you befriend?



No matter how knowledgeable a person is of Islam, knowledge by itself is not sufficient as a helper in staying away from all things displeasing to Allah Azzawajal and pleasing to Shaytaan. Tasting the sweetness of Imaan is not simply

acquired through retention and understanding of Islamic knowledge, though it does play a critical part in its development, but true and permanent piety and God-Consciousness in the heart is the consequence of always being surrounded by those committed to purifying their own hearts. Our commitment to Islam can go back and forth like the tides of the ocean, we cannot deny that, but when together as a group can you remain firm and strong, it is together when implementation of Islamic knowledge is made easier.

A beautiful and perfect parable is given by our beloved Rasulallah (saw) which shows how friendship, transient or long-term, impacts us in ways that would normally escape our notice:

"The case of the good companion and the bad companion is like that of the seller of musk and the blower of the bellows (iron-smith). As for the seller of musk, he will either give you some of the musk, or you will purchase some from him, or at least you will come away having experienced its good smell. Whereas the blower of the bellows will either burn your clothing, or at least you will come away having experienced its repugnant smell." [Bukhaari and Muslim]

From this hadith, we can derive three levels of influences from the good people we encounter and two levels from the bad, perhaps indicating the overall greater benefit of good people. The seller of perfume, he will either give you some of this musk- out of the friend's great virtue, you will either be forced to learn and benefit from

his knowledge, piety, good manners and character and so it is like a gift this good friend has given you. This is something you may not have control over. Or that you will purchase his musk, meaning that the characteristics of the friend is so desirable that you willingly buy it off of him i.e. actively benefit from him or for example, he may encourage you to give charity or pray your regular salah and this demands some effort from your part. At the very least, however, you will have been exposed to his goodness which is goodness enough on its own. The righteous friend never fails to leave a positive impact. The blacksmith, on the other hand, is naturally a person you would not want to be near because of the danger he poses, "...will either burn your clothing" a bad friend leaves permanent marks of evil on you, or at least you shall experience its bad smell, thus, the distasteful smell would have gone up your nose, a smell you may never forget. How beautiful and accurate is this comparison, given by the most perfect friend one can ever possess, Rasulallah (saw)!

Now that we have established the seriousness of the issue of choosing friends who Fear Allah, Subhana waTa'ala, it is important to touch upon the reasons for the very friendships that we make. The intentions and purposes behind sealing a friendship can lead to the relationship deficient in blessings unless through it you seek a higher purpose. This is the very same higher purpose seek when praying, or reciting the noble Quran or giving charity.

Your best friend on the Last Day will be your worst enemy unless you both were categorized as Al-Muttaqoon by Allah, the Most High.

"Friends on that Day will be foes one to another except Al-Muttaqoon (the pious)" [43:67]

The muttaqoon are people who make their every action purely for the sake of Allah (swt), no one else. Through every deed, they seek His Countenance. No doubt, it's hard to be qualified for such a noble title, Allah 'Azzawajal is only entitled to designate and we are on constant struggle to be amongst them and there are pit-

continued...

pitfalls that only those very careful would dodge and we will make mistakes but by looking into the character and heart of your friend, it is a first step of a search into your own. This may cause a dilemma of "judging others", only Allah(swt) has the power of truly knowing an individual's secret thoughts, right? Yes, but we have something called intellect as well as an in-built idea of what is right and wrong, that we should use in the right situations. Observing speech and action of others is (almost) like a looking glass into another's personality, and the genuinely well-mannered, God conscious Muslim individual should not hard to recognise, befriend and love for the Sake of Allah (swt).

A scholar has said: "To seal a friendship for Allah's sake indicates the obligation of establishing relationships of love and trust for His sake; this is a friendship for the sake of Allah. It also indicates that simple affection is not enough here; indeed what is meant is a love based upon alliance. This entails assistance, honour, and respect. It means being with those whom you love both in word and deed."

The reward and significance of loving your brother for the sake of Allah(swt) is beyond imaginable. It is a reward each and every one of us would cry out in profound anguish, pain and regret for not achieving.

Allah, the Most High will say on Last Day, "Where are those who loved one another for My glory? Today I will shade them in My shade on the Day when there is no shade but Mine." (Muslim)
Hafidh Ibn Katheer narrates where Ali (RadiaAllahu anhu) told this story:

"Two who are friends for Allah's sake; one of them dies and is given good news that he will be granted al-Jannah, so he remembered his friend and he supplicated for him, saying: 'O Allah, my friend used to command me to obey You and to obey Your Prophet (sallallahu Alayhi wasallam) and used to command me to do good and to forbid me from doing evil. And he told me that I will meet You. O Allah, do not let him go astray after me, until you show him what you have just shown me, until You are satisfied with him, just like You are satisfied with me.' So he is told: 'Had you known what is (written) for you friend, would you have laughed a lot and cried a little.' Then his friend dies and their souls are gathered, and both are asked to express their opinions about each other. So each one of them says to his friend: 'You were the best brother, the best companion and the best friend.' And when one of the two disbelieving friends dies, and he is given tidings of Hellfire, he remembered his friend and he said: 'O Allah, my friend used to order me to disobey You and disobey Your Prophet, and commanded me to do evil, and forbade me from doing good, and told me that I would not meet You. O Allah, do not guide him after me, until you show him what you have just shown me and until you are dissatisfied with him just like You are dissatisfied with me.' Then the other disbelieving friend dies, and their souls are gathered, and both are asked to give their opinions about each other. So each one says to his friend: 'You were the worst brother, the worst companion and the worst friend.'"

Who are our friends? Is it founded upon the Love of the One who promises much? Allah, the Most High, has made complete our Deen and He never breaks His promises. May Allah, 'Azzawajal make us among those Muttaqoon whose friendships remain intact on the Day when the best of friends in Dunya will become the worst of enemies in the Akhira.



UCLU
University College London United Kingdom

UCLU Islamic Society Presents
as part of
DISCOVER ISLAM WEEK 2012

Prophet Muhammed (PBUH)

The most influential man in history?

Speakers: Wasim Kempson

Date: Tuesday 7th February

Time: 5PM

Location: Medawar Lankester LT

For more info please visit:

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Discover Islam Week (DIW)

UCLU Islamic Society presents as part of DISCOVER ISLAM WEEK 2012

Islam's Contribution to Science

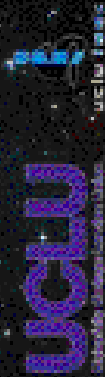
Speaker: *Dr William Maclehoose*

Date: *Thursday 9th Feb 2012*

Time: *1-2pm*

Location: *Roberts G08*

Refreshments will be served



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UCLU ISLAMIC SOCIETY PRESENTS
AS PART OF
DISCOVER ISLAM WEEK 2012

UCLU
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'MY JOURNEY TO ISLAM'
CONVERT PANEL DISCUSSION AND Q&A

LOCATION: CHRISTOPHER INGOLD AUDITORIUM, UCL
TIME: 6PM

SPEAKERS
MASIKAH (RAPPER) JAMES YEE (EX-US ARMY CHAPLAIN)
MYRIAM FRANCOIS CERRAH (FORMER ACTRESS)

For more info visit www.uclisoc.com
THURSDAY 9TH FEBRUARY

Brother/Sister?

It was not until I came to university that I realised the true meaning of brotherhood and sisterhood in Islam. When I think about my last few years at UCL the thing that automatically springs to mind are the wonderful sisters that have shaped my thinking and helped improve my character through genuine concern and sincere advice. The brotherhood and sisterhood at UCL never fails to amaze me. Yet writing this I know I have not always managed to fulfil my own duties to those I call brothers and sisters.

What does it mean when we call one another brother and sister? And why is it that the term slips so easily from our tongues yet our actions do not reflect the great responsibility that comes with the assertion that this is my beloved brother or sister in Islam? The Quran states "The Mu'minoon are but a single Brotherhood." (The Holy Qur'an, 49:10). The nature of this brotherhood is unique in that it transcends all boundaries including those of race, nationality, colour and class. Through Islam pure Arabs who were extremely wealthy such as Abu Bakr were made equal to and brothers of the African slave Bilal Ibn Rabah. But all too often brother and sister remains a term because we fail to understand the true value of our brother and sisters the way in which it was understood by the Prophet (pbuh) and his companions.

Any thinking person will assert how can I love someone that I have just met? How can I truly care for them when I don't even know them? However, the bond that holds us together is the very essence of who we are for the Quran tells us that "I have created not the jinn and men except that they should worship Me (Alone)" (Qur'an, 51:56) It is through our belief in Allah (swt) and subsequently in Islam that we are taught to embrace each other as brothers and sisters and we therefore love each other for the sake of Allah (swt). This is why it does not matter whether we as Muslims have known each other for five minutes or five decades there is automatically love in our hearts for one

another. The example that comes to mind is the brotherhood the Prophet (pbuh) instigated between the Ansar in Medina and the migrating Mahajiroon. At that time a bond between individuals that was not based on tribal loyalties, marriage and blood relations was unheard of. Yet the Ansar and Muhajiroon loved each other as brothers to the extent that they not only shared all of their resources when they were alive but they also inherited from one another after their death.

There are many beautiful examples from Medina of how the companions of the Prophet (pbuh) understood brotherhood. The story of the brotherhood between Abd al-Rahman bin Awf and Sa'd bin Rabi is one such example. Not only did Sa'd bin Rabi (one of the wealthiest men in Medina) offer Abdurrahman bin Awf half of his wealth but he also told him 'Brother, you came here only for God's sake leaving whatever you had in Makkah. This is my house and these are my wives. You can use my house and whatever is in it just as you wish. You may also choose one of my wives. If she agrees, I will divorce her so that you may marry her.' Not only did Sa'd bin Rabi offer Abd al-Rahman one of his wives but he let him chose which one he liked best! Abd al-Rahman answered: 'Brother, may God bless your house and your wives! Please show me the way to the market. There I'll buy a rope and use it to bundle wood to sell in the market.' He did not wish to be a burden on his brother and understood his duties as a Muslim towards Sa'd bin Rabi. All too often we forget our own duties towards our brothers and sisters. We great each other with frowns and hear gossip about one another. You hear brothers and sisters saying did you hear what so and so said? Did you see what pictures he/she posted on facebook? By talking about the faults of our brother we are not only backbiting but leaving him at the mercy of others without giving him the chance to defend himself. Islam teaches us to keep away from such activities and matters that do not concern us. The prophet (pbuh)

commanded us to "Keep away from suspicion, for it is the most deceptive discourse. Do not attempt to probe, spy on, compete with, envy, or be hateful of one another, but be, O servants of Allah, brothers. The Muslim is the brother of his fellow Muslim: he does not oppress him, fail him, or scorn him. Taqwa is here [points to his heart]. It is wrong for a man to hold his Muslim brother in contempt. Everything pertaining to a Muslim is forbidden to another: his blood, his honour, and his wealth." (Muslim) We often forget to protect our fellow Muslims' honour and end up knowingly or unknowingly hurting one another's feelings in the process.

We should aim to be brothers to each other by understanding the term in the way the sahabah did. The next time we refer to someone as brother or sister we should use the term with full sincerity and give it the weight and honour it deserves. It is only by fulfilling our duties to our fellow Muslims as well giving them respect and love that we can truly be brothers and sisters to one another and be unified as one ummah. For Allah(swt) states in the Quran "The believers, both men and women, are awlia (helpers, supporters, allies) to each other." (Al-Tawbah, 71)

D.

Lessons in peeling an onion

Humans can be like onions sometimes and really should come with a warning. Every onion starts off growing in the secrecy and comfort of the earth. When it sprouts out of the earth, it bursts out with leaves that are sharp like swords, protecting and surrounding it. However, layer by layer, an onion can always be unwrapped; and beneath the layers, there is always a core – the centre of the onion. And when you get to the centre of the onion, it may just make you cry.

And so the same with the people you meet every day. You see their outwardly behaviour and you just don't understand them. A person's behaviour may make so little sense to you that you naturally then begin to assume and start to judge. You think about how much better you are and how that person is condemned to a lowly life of being a "non – believer " or among those who are "misguided". You feel smug that you haven't been misled the same way they were misled. You dismiss them as someone who will never know the beauty of Islam. You only see the outer leaves and don't take the time to peel back the layers.

Some of us may have made the very serious error of thinking thoughts such as "Oh, that guy is unbearable. All he ever does is drink. He could never come to Islam " or "Look at the clothes she wears! To think, she used to be a Muslim!" or even "That person is so astray. They will always be misguided; I really can never see this person being one of us." Did a person come to mind when you read this? Someone whose actions are so outrageously bad that you just can't understand why they do what they do? Take that person, multiply just how bad the things they do are by infinity and you have a pretty accurate description of myself just two years ago.

For a long long time, I was, if you will, a walking set of leaves. People observed my actions and I really felt they thought all the above things when they saw me - someone who was as far from Islam as one could possibly be and not

looking like they were going to make a trip back anytime soon.

No one took the time to peel back the layers. What does it take for a person to change their life? For everyone it is different. But for me, it was the patience and good character of a friend; a friend who didn't judge; a friend who didn't look down on me; a friend who was sincere in their actions of wanting to help me change my life.

This is the friend that we should all strive to be. What is the main purpose of sharing this? Firstly, it is to make you aware of the difficulties someone goes through in trying to change and overhaul their entire life. Do you know the difficulties of trying to change oneself and feeling like you will be judged for your past actions and the person you used to be? If you have (Alhamdulillah) never been in this position, you should know it is extremely difficult. So when you start peeling onions remember that.

Secondly, it is to serve as a poignant reminder to you that anyone can change. No one is beyond redemption, no one is beyond repair. Allah (swt) guides who He wills and we can never know for sure who He will choose/choose not to guide. Most importantly, the lesson we must learn is that YOU could be the instrument of change in a person's life. This, being someone who is a skilled onion peeler, is what separates a true friend and someone of true good character from the rest.

So here is the official guide to peeling an onion! It may not be easy, and you need to work hard to master the skill. But I can guarantee it will be worth it.

Guide to Peeling an Onion:

Don't be deceived by the sharp onion leaves – Every onion comes with a wreath of spiky leaves. Don't be fooled and don't get tricked into thinking the leaves are all there is

to the onion. Behind everyone's behaviour, lie reasons for what they do. Underneath all those actions that seemingly make no sense, there is someone who really wants to be understood. As a friend, it is your job to see beyond the actions and in to the core of what makes someone do what they do.

Onions have many layers – It takes time to get to the centre of an onion. It may not happen in a day, or even in a month. Be patient. Keep peeling back the layers and you will eventually reach the centre.

Onions can sting your eyes –When you try to advise someone, be wary that they may be extremely defensive in you questioning their actions. Don't take it personally. Onions are clever when it comes to defence and survival mechanisms. They will do everything they can to stop being peeled to the core.

Peeling onions takes skill – As Muslims, we are always trying to better ourselves. It takes time to become good at being an excellent listener, being understanding and compassionate and trying to not become emotional, angry, or judgemental when we see people act in a way that we do not understand. Keep at it and inshallah one day you will be adept at peeling back those layers.

A blunt knife gives bad results – It is a requirement for us to advise on what is right or wrong as Muslims, have no doubt about that. However the manner in which it is done is the difference between a cleanly sliced onion and an onion that has been torn up to shreds and pieces. How do you make sure your approach is right? By watching your intentions. If your intention is to exert your superiority, make yourself look or feel better about being so unbelievably righteous and pious or to show off your small drop of knowledge in an ocean of the infinite, it will show through your approach. So watch your intentions. Remember you are doing this out of love for your brother or sister for the sake and pleasure of Allah (swt). Be discrete, humble, kind and gentle. Mention your own faults. Be sincere. Every onion will tell you it is painful to be on the receiving end of a blunt knife.

When you finish, you may just find tears streaming down your face – It is emotional to get to the core of who someone truly is, when you believed that they were someone completely different. It is emotional to see the struggles someone has gone through and see that underneath it all, most people just want someone who understands and cares. Not only emotional, but it will make you question all your judgements you have held about people in the past.

When you mix onions with some vegetables, you get a tasty dish – An onion starts to lose their sting when mixed up with a good dish. People are no different. Surrounding a person with good friends can be the make or break between that person changing their life. Be that person, be that friend.

There are always countless onions needing to be peeled – You may have just peeled your first onion. Great! Now get back to work. There are many people who are waiting for someone to try to understand what they do; hoping that one day someone will see them for what they are. It is our duty to use our potential to help as many people as we possibly can. The work does not stop. You know when you peel an onion, the smell stays on your fingers and it's just so hard to remove the persistent odour? Just like the clinging, unforgettable scent of the onion, that stays with you long after you have peeled away the layers, let this be the day that you learn a lesson you will never forget.

"If only you relied on Allah a true reliance, He would provide sustenance for you just as He does the birds: They fly out in the morning empty and return in the afternoon with full stomachs."
[Ahmad, Tirmidhi and others]

May Allah make you and me from among those who are able to see things with clarity and for what they truly are.



Never forget!

"Children In Body Bags Reportedly Photographed In Homs"...

For the past year we have all been reading headlines as brutal as this, and for a second we think 'this is outrageous, how can this happen?' but then we put down that metro, get off the train and move on with our *easy* lives. But the people of Syria can't get rid of those headlines as easily as we can...they live it, and have been living it every day since early 2011.

Inspired by the Tunisian and Egyptian uprisings, the Syrians took to the streets of their beloved country protesting; asking for democracy and greater political freedom. The unrest began in the southern city of Deraa where peaceful demonstrations took place asking for the release of the arrested school children, whose only 'crime' was writing "the people want the downfall of the regime" on a wall. This peace was disrupted on the 18th of March after Jumma prayers where security forces opened fire on the protesters killing 4 people. Ever since this moment things began to spiral out of control with more and more protests happening in the city, and more and more people losing their lives as a result of the Bashar Assad's (current Syrian dictator) corrupt regime, who commanded the shelling of his people. But the government soon came to understand that their attempts of stopping any potential uprising only triggered it, as cities in all of Syria began to take to the streets demanding justice.

Amongst those that died was the beautiful Hamza Ali Al-Khateeb, who was only 13 years old when he was tortured to death at the hands of the Syrian regime. It was April 29th and Hamza was arrested amongst others during a protest in Deraa. He was held in the custody of Syrian security for nearly a month before he was returned to his family...Dead. This innocent 13 year old boy was shown no compassion and left covered with bruises and bullet holes, he

had a broken neck, genitals were cut off, he was electrocuted and whipped with a cable. His family were told to keep quiet about what happened to him, but they didn't and uploaded a video of his corpse on the internet which led to his father being arrested.



Just writing about Hamza's fate has brought me to tears; I cannot imagine how his family felt when they saw what was left of their little boy. Every time I remember what happened I can't help but think 'what if it was my little brother? What if it was his humanity that was degraded?' I know I would want the rest of the world to stand up for the injustice that he would have faced. Hamza has ever since, become the new driving force of the revolution, the symbol of this uprising. But the truth is he is only one of many thousands who have been tortured and murdered at the hands of Assad's regime over the years. In total so far 5000 have been murdered during this uprising alone, hundreds injured, 14000 arrested and are probably being tortured as you read this. Entire village massacres have occurred where this corrupt security force has attempted to silence people by taking away their lives. It's not the Syrian army that is filled with soldiers; the real soldiers are the Syrian people that will always be remembered as the brave and courageous people that fought for freedom

against a very sick dictator! I guess the saying 'there are decades where nothing happens and weeks where decades happen' is very true as the world has witnessed over the past year.

At the moment the City of Hama is being shelled severely, and as a result families have had to seek refuge in other parts of the same city as they cannot escape due to the siege. In eastern Damascus Mosques have been turned into hospitals and activists say that they have cut off the electricity and "Petrol stations are empty and the army is preventing people from leaving to get fuel for generators or heating." After months of torture, the UN is finally considering intervention, but as a result "the Syrian regime is trying to finish the uprising militarily now that the case is being taken to the United Nations" according to Rami Abdul Rahman, head of the UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. The capital is facing, at the moment, the most severe fighting since the uprising began 10 months ago. The Syrian people are literally living in a war zone.

I can go on telling you the facts about what is happening in Syria for days, and yes you will be horrified and one or two of you will possibly make dua for them that Allah (swt) grants them freedom. But then you will forget. You will forget about the hurt and pain that they are going through every second of every day. Whilst we are 'busy' laughing, they are crying. Whilst we are 'busy' sleeping, they are dying, defending their families. Whilst we are 'busy' wasting time, they are BUSY making a difference. How can we even sleep at night knowing that a part of our Ummah is in pain? How can we read about the injustice that they face and then move on? How can we forget? What happened to brotherhood? Is this really what we were taught by our beloved Prophet (pbuh)? The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, "The believers, in their love, mutual kindness, and close ties, are like one body; when any part complains, the whole body responds to it with wakefulness and fever." [Muslim]

So feel the pain they are feeling. Pray every day that Allah grants them freedom. Raise awareness about what is happening there, so the world can wake up and realise that something must be done to stop the torture of these innocent people. Remember that these are our brothers and sisters, we should cry when they cry and smile when they smile. One day, we will be asked by Allah (swt) what we did to help them...what will your answer be?

Yours truly,

NHA

Your forgotten friend..

It all started in the early 90s. A young, well educated, enthusiastic Saudi Arabian by the name of Shaker Aamer moves to the UK to work as a translator at a legal firm. Time passes and as this young man starts to feel more at home over the next decade, he meets his soon to be wife, making a home for himself, having 3 wonderful children, living what seemed to be the UK equivalent of the American Dream. In the summer of 2001, ever the keen community worker, Shaker began to realise that his skills could be of better use in foreign lands where he may bring some social benefits to people less fortunate than himself. In a brave move he visited Afghanistan in June 2001 to undertake voluntary work, working on projects to support a girls' school and the building of wells.

This is the story of Shaker Aamer. The long-term British resident, who has spent close to ten years in Guantánamo Bay – without charge or trial. Some of you may know his name, have heard of him, but some of you may know nothing about him at all.



Following the US war on terror in Afghanistan, it is believed Shaker, like hundreds of others, was sold for a bounty of \$5000 by Afghan tribal warlords eager to receive the lucrative rewards offered for foreign Muslims by the US military. At first he was held in the 'Dark Prison' in Kabul, where he suffered 'vicious torture', and was

later transferred to Guantanamo Bay. Like a majority of the Guantanamo detainees Shaker has never been trialed in a court, and has never been presented with ANY evidence against him. Shaker has spent much of his time in much of the last decade in solitary confinement in Camp Echo, a facility that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has described as 'extremely harsh'. It is believed he was put there as a result of his vociferous advocacy for prisoners' rights in Guantánamo.

In 2006 Shaker wrote; "I am dying here every day, mentally and physically. This is happening to all of us. We have been ignored, locked up in the middle of the ocean for many years...I have problems many problems from the filthy yellow water...I have lung problems from the chemicals they spread all over the floor...I am already arthritic at 40 because I sleep on a steel bed, and they use freezing air conditioning as part of the interrogation process. I have ruined eyes from the permanent, 24-hour fluorescent lights. I have tinnitus in my ears from the perpetual noise...I have ulcers and almost permanent constipation from the food. I have been made paranoid, so I can trust nobody, not even my lawyer. I was over 250 lbs. I dropped to 130lbs in the hunger strike. I want to make it easy on everyone, I want no feeding, no forced tubes, no 'help', no 'intensive assisted feeding.'"

I know what's going through your head. Well he must have done something? Why was he in Afghanistan? There must be a reason he's there? I'd like to propose a question to you. How will we ever know if he is never tried in a court? The persona of Shaker Aamer is such that it has indeed left a lasting effect on many of those who have been in his company - from both sides of the divide. Former Guantanamo guard Terry C Holdbrooks commented on Shaker:

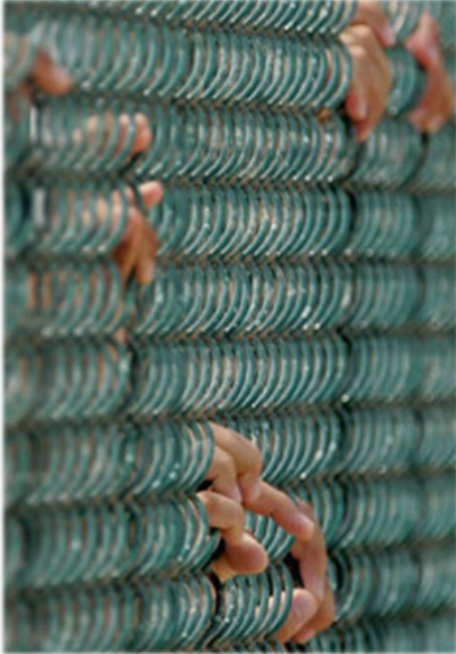
"He's a wonderful character - unbelievably intelligent, very polite, very well-mannered,

great etiquette... no matter whom the guard was he was working with - whether it was a very ignorant uncaring American with no recognition for his situation... He was a wonderful person - I absolutely enjoyed spending time with him."

A British resident. A family man with 4 children, one of whom has never seen him. Gone for almost 10 years. What, have you done to help him get a fair trial? What have WE done to help him get a fair trial? How many of us know of his family's whereabouts and how they are coping without their father?

"Whosoever relieves from a believer some grief pertaining to this world, Allah will relieve from him some grief pertaining to the Hereafter... Allah will aid a servant (of His) so long as the servant aids his brother" - Sahih Muslim

This is just one story.



One man. Of many. You hear the names, Shaker Aamer, Aafia Siddiqui, the 117 Guantanamo Bay detainees who still aren't free, amongst many many others. From secret prisons across the Middle East and Asia to muslim families left helpless, alone in foreign countries without their husbands, fathers brothers, sons, mothers and wives.

I urge you to get involved. To be proactive the way some of you were with the Babar Ahmed Campaign. There is more to be done. Contact your local Amnesty International, the society here at UCL - get involved. For sisters, contact HHUGS an organisation there to aid families with their fathers/husbands/sons in prison, or missing abroad. The Muslim Ummah is one body, and so many parts of our body is aching right now. There are proactive ways to get involved to ease the suffering of our brothers and sisters and I urge us not to be engrossed by our deadlines, job, internship applications and MTAS forms and to get involved and do something proactive.

"A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim - he does not wrong him nor does he forsake him when he is in need; whosoever is fulfilling the needs of his brother, Allah is fulfilling his needs; whosoever removes distress from a believer, Allah removes from him a distress from a distressful aspect of the Day of Resurrection; and whosoever conceals the faults of a Muslim, Allah will conceal his faults on the Day of Resurrection." Bukhari and Muslim.

Maryam

Every Muslim living in the West, be it the UK or as far away as New Zealand, is fascinated by the idea of living in a place where Islam is the norm and where wearing the Islamic attire would not turn heads and the odd snide remark. Where they would hear the athaan penetrating the cacophony of idle chatter as they go about their day. Where a masjid lies in wait in every street corner. Where your neighbour, colleague, manager are all Muslims. These are all noble goals that excites the very fabric of every Muslim but just how practical is it to make hijrah? What are the rules concerning making hijrah? And, finally, is grass really that much greener on the other side?

Firstly, hijrah becomes incumbent upon a Muslim if he is unable to practise his religion freely, as was the case at the time of Prophet (PBUH) when he (PBUH) and his companions fled to Madinah following their persecution in Makkah at the hands of the Quraish. Since Muslims in the west, toward which this article is targeted, are relatively safe to practise their religion in public without fear of persecution or outward discrimination, we can safely say that hijra is not mandatory for them but rather optional. However, the scholars have all agreed ('ijma) that Muslims living in a non-Muslim land must be giving dawah otherwise their stay in that country is in fact haram.

But before we get into the thick of the article it is important that we first define what hijrah is and what exactly is meant by an Islamic land. Hijrah (migration) is moving from a land of shirk, where Islam is not the prominent religion, to a land of Islam where Islam is the main religion and Muslims dominate, for the sake of Allah. For example, moving to and taking permanent residence in Makkah because of a job opportunity would not be classified as a hijrah whereas migrating to Kuala Lumpur because of the countless mosques and religious opportunities would be a hijrah. Why? Because the former, albeit it

being Islam's Holiest site, was done for a sake other than Allah, namely employment, while the latter was done for the sake of Allah.

"Indeed actions are tied to the intentions and every person will earn that which he intended. Therefore, he whose migration was for Allah and His Messenger (PBUH), then his migration will be for Allah and His Messenger; and he whose migration was to achieve some worldly gain or to take a woman in marriage, then his migration will be for that for which he migrated." [Bukhari and Muslim]

And, secondly, what do we mean by an 'Islamic Land'?

This is a term that raises many an arguments because it is said that there technically isn't a country that is completely Islamic today to constitute an 'Islamic Land'. However, many countries in the Middle East have the Sharia as part of their constitution with Saudi Arabia being the only country that exclusively governs its provinces with the Sharia. To simplify the matter, we can say that an Islamic Land is a country where Muslims comprise the majority of the population of the country in question, which includes but not limited to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bangladesh, Yemen, Somalia, Pakistan, Egypt, Libya and Algeria.

There is long-standing belief that doing hijrah will make your life easier and all your life's problems will disappear into the oblivion. That as soon as you touch down on Islamic soil your eemaan will shoot through the roof and not only will you be able to pray all your five compulsory prayers in the masjid (if you're male), you will do so with enviable khushoo'.

Sadly, that simply isn't the case.

of Riyadh | Part 1

Living in a Muslim country is indeed a blessing but irrespective of where you are in the world there is and will always be injustice and widespread oppression, admittedly some more obscure and hidden than others. Also, many a Muslim think that the temptations and trails they face daily in the West, namely that of the fairer sex and the constant, relentless exposure to the love of the dunya in its many guises, will simply disappear never to be seen again once on Islamic Soil - although there is some truth in that, living in a Muslim land is far from your utopian dream.

So what are the blessings of living in a Muslim land?

Without doubt, by far the greatest blessing is being surrounded by people who profess the same faith as you. Living in the west it is inevitable that we encounter and have dealings with non-Muslims on a daily basis. Although this isn't haram as Allah permits us to have just and amicable dealings with non-Muslims who do not try and persecute us [60:8], it can take a toll on a Muslim in the long-term as it is very difficult for a Muslim heart that has eemaan to tolerate someone who not only is not a Muslim, but denies the existence of Allah altogether. I am certain we have all found ourselves in situations where we were the only Muslim in class or lecture theatre and we find out that the person to whom we were talking or sitting next to was a Muslim and out of complete thin air an instant connection transpires from the simple fact that you both share the wonderful testimony of "There is no god but Allah and Muhammed is His Messenger". And when the majority, if not all, of your colleagues or classmates are Muslim there exists a complete understanding of your religious beliefs and ideals, therefore no need to explain to your lecturer that you will be late to class because of Friday prayers!

Further, we have all heard the hadith of the man who killed 99 people and, out of his desperate need for redemption, he sought advice with a

worshipper who, upon finding out about the man's sinister past, told him that he had no hope and was destined for the hell-fire. Enraged by this, the murderer killed the worshipper bringing his total kill count to a staggering 100. His search for redemption continued and he came upon a scholar who advised him to leave this land and go to such and such a land where people who worship Allah and obey His laws reside. The murderer took the advice on board and on his way to the land of the believers death came upon him before he reached his destination and a dispute ensued between the angels of Mercy and the angels of punishment, both groups wanting to take him to Paradise and Hell-fire respectively. Ultimately, the murderer was taken to Paradise by the simple virtue of his travelling towards the land of belief so he was written as of amongst them in the sight of Allah.

Glory be to Allah! What of those who actually live and die in a Muslim land? We can only imagine. To conclude, living in a Muslim land is a blessing that only Allah grants to Whom He wills. Muslims are in abundance, mosques are literally everywhere, everything is halaal and although alcohol may still exist it won't nearly be as prevalent. At the same time, many of the efficient systems and customs-such as online applications, state welfare or something as simple as opening up a bank account-that are so accustomed to us in the west are either non-existent or extremely laborious in Muslim lands. Although many will argue that living in the west is better financially, the living costs of living in an Islamic country are astronomically cheaper.

Hijra is not compulsory for the believer but what is compulsory is hijra to Allah and His Messenger which will be discussed in a forthcoming article InshaAllah.

Bosnia and Herze

Day 13 – 03.07.2011 Srebrenica

A very early start (8am) and we left for the famous town of Srebrenica (now Serb in majority). We weren't quite sure what to expect from visiting the memorial of over 8000 victims from the worst massacre in Europe since World War 2. On arrival at Potočari, the memorial site, we were given a lecture on the happenings of that fateful summer of 1995 when Serb forces, lead by General Ratko Mladic, encircled Srebrenica and shot down men and boys trying to flee. People were shot, tortured, raped and humiliated in factories and schools in the surrounding areas. For what purpose? This was the question on every Bosnian's lips and all of ours...



Lecture on the events of July 1995

The sheer number of graves is what takes your breath away in Potočari. As I walked with Mohamed, he told us of war stories, showed me his grandfather's brother's name on the memorial. Whole families had been wiped out. He also pointed out a massive billboard:

Srbija = Agresija = Genocid = Dejton = Republika Srpska

Serbia = Aggressor = Genocide = Dayton Agreement = Republika Srpska

The political connotations of the poster speak for itself. Many feel here that Serb nationalists have won the war with the creation of the entity of Republika Srpska, and their own government. However, he pointed out that "we (Bosnian Muslims) would never ever leave, and they will never win..."

Men and boys as young as 11 had been killed and many had not been found yet. This year, over 600 are to be buried on July 11th, the day Bosnia commemorates its war victims. Walking through the factory where 6000 refugees were cramped into a small area, it seemed impossible to us how people could survive in such a small space and be subjected to this kind of treatment. A video lecture would give us a brief insight into some sinking stories, but I realised then that you could only feel the pain of the people if you were actually there on those frightening days to live their experiences. One can only imagine what these brave and innocent people went through on those traumatic few days. A crime against humanity it was, and always will be.



Plaque in Potocari Memorial

Lunch followed in a restaurant, Motel Olic, in the heart of Srebrenica. The town itself seemed rather dry, and lacking character. A woman on the film had mentioned that Srebrenica was not

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the same as it had been before the war, a beautiful city, vibrant and the pride of many Bosnian Muslims and Catholics. Mohamed also echoed this on the drive up, saying he hates going to Srebrenica. I can only begin to imagine why.

The psychological scars are felt most deeply in this part of the region. One cannot fathom how the women who lost many brothers, fathers, husbands, uncles, grandfathers and sons carry on with such bravery and strength. Some of course, don't, and there have been many attempted suicides since the massacre. What is also important to note is that 20000 women were raped in this campaign; the deepest of psychological scars are not talked about as much...

After lunch, a group meeting followed in a local Prosvjetitelj-Srebrenica office (our partner organisation) where we had an insight into the workings of Muslim Aid Bosnia. A mobile library campaign had been set up, called 'Molly' which helped in donating books to primary schools and helping village children and returnees to Eastern Bosnia. A coordinator from Prosvjetitelj then took us all to the amazing farm they run near Bratunac, started by Muslim Aid. This farm was set up a few years ago, starting off with a small base, yet had now flourished into a large, multi-crop facility. Tomatoes, strawberries, cows, plums, refrigerators and even WiFi were all present on this symbolic piece of land.

Senad Omerovic, a truly inspirational man himself, gave a poignant speech on the story of the farm, the history behind it and the purpose of our visit to Eastern Bosnia. He expressed how as Muslims and people we are to be kind, respectful, and live side by side with our neighbours, regardless of their religion and race. To be Muslim, to be human, means to be better than the oppressor. We were told how the money we raised for a strawberry farm would supply a family, victims of the genocide, with enough for a year of living. He concluded that it would be nice were we to be sustainable volunteers, and were always welcome to help and stay in villages with our hosts, whom he trusted with all his heart.

The day finished in glorious sunshine and a stop off at the beautiful lake of Zvornik, for a spot of football. We now realised the enormity of Srebrenica, and the genocide in general, on the lives of Bosnians.

Day 14 – 04.07.2011 **Snagavo Haystack Part Two**

Today we received an early call (by early really I mean 11am) saying that Lucy, our supervisor was slightly under the weather and that her family in Snagavo were planning on making another haystack. Dilwar and Wasim to the rescue! After a quick nutritious breakfast we paced uphill to the village and got to work in the intense heat of the day. Dilwar repeatedly reminded us of how dark he was going. At one point I wouldn't have been surprised if he asked us to watch his arm getting tanned.

A coffee break at their neighbour's house and a sumptuous chicken barbeque followed courtesy of the hosts Maliha and her brother Semir. A game of volleyball to burn off the fat ended badly with most of us realising we were totally inept at the sport! Maliha was indicative of the warm heart's Bosnians possess, offering us food and showing us that people in Bosnia's Eastern villages were extremely intelligent, modest and funny at the same time!

Time to catch up with Lucy, Leila and Dilwar on the hilltops with a great backdrop was a pleasure, and many jokes were shared, not least about how Dilwar and I now looked like gypsies! A good shower and sleep was well in order after a tough day raking on the fields. Hard work it was. A pleasure, most definitely.

The Life of Sheikh 'Abdu

Translated by Ejaz Taj



The Ummah may soon lose one of its most eminent personalities with illness of Dr Abdur Rahman As-Sumayt. At almost sixty four years of age, he was a true luminary who strove to uphold and make the Word of Allah uppermost. More than seven million people are said to have accepted Islam through his efforts in Africa. He spent more than twenty nine years of his life propagating Islam in the African continent; participating in the construction of approximately 5,700 mosques, provisioning care for than 15,000 orphans, the drilling of around 9,500 artesian wells and the establishment of 860 schools, 4 universities and 204 Islamic centres.

Life and Upbringing

His full name is Abdur Rahman bin Hamood As-Sumayt, a well-known Kuwaiti Islamic daa'ee (caller to Islam) and founder of the Kuwait based charity, "Direct Aid Organization" previously known as the Africa Muslim Agency. He served as its President of the Board of Directors as well as the Chairman of Research and Islamic Studies. Born in Kuwait in 1947, he was a qualified doctor specialising in internal diseases and gastroenterology, before becoming involved in charity work; graduating from the University of Baghdad with a Bachelors degree in Medicine and Surgery then going on to obtain a diploma in Tropical Diseases from the University of Liverpool in 1974 then completing his postgraduate studies specialising in internal diseases and the digestive system at McGill University in Montreal, Canada.

Throughout his life As-Sumayt was awarded a vast number of honours, awards, trophies and certificates, in acknowledgement of his efforts in charity work. This included one of the highest most prestigious awards, the King Faisal International Prize for Service to Islam; the beneficiaries of which also donated 750 Thousand Saudi Riyals as an endowment for the education of the children of Africa. The fruits of this endowment are visible today by way of a large number of Africans who received and are con-

tinuing to receive education at various universities throughout the continent.

The pursuit of his vision however was not always a smooth task, often he was faced with dangerous and perilous situations. As-Sumayt was the target of several unsuccessful assassination attempts by various armed militias perturbed by his wide reaching and overwhelming presence and influence amidst the poor and needy, as well as a number of close calls with the deadly cobra which almost took his life on more than one occasion in Mozambique, Kenya and Malawi, being saved by Allah each time. He was also subjected to the hardship of imprisonment, the worst of which came at the hands of Arab Ba'athists.

A quarter of a century of his life was spent in undertaking his charitable works in Africa, returning to Kuwait only for short visits or to receive medical treatment. He remained undeterred by obstacles and undertook a number of trips deep into the African jungles and subjected himself to the dangers and terrors of travel through its remote forests (in order to carry out his work). These were selfless actions which can be considered to be from the acts of a living martyrdom frequently subjecting himself to danger in his relentless efforts to bring peace, aid and relief to Africa; be it with a loaf of bread in his

Dr Rahman As-Sumayt

hand (food), or a lamp (essential supplies) or a book (education).

As Dr Sumayt advanced in age, his physical armaments began to weaken; his body afflicted by high blood pressure, diabetes and a number of blood clots (once in his heart and twice in the brain) as well as two bouts of Malaria. None of these affected his resolve as his spiritual armaments, the armament of faith with which As-Sumayt drew upon to fight his battles in the path of Allah for the weak, destitute and needy and to overcome his obstacles, remained strong, firmly lodged in his heart.

His Work

Dr Sumayt helped establish or participated in a plethora of professional and charitable organisations throughout his lifetime. These include:

- Founder and chairman of a branch of the Muslim Physicians Society, United States of America and Canada 1976, East Canada Branch.
- Founding member of the Montreal branch of the Muslim Students Society, 1974-1976.
- Founding member, Malawi Muslims Committee - Kuwait 1980
- Founding member, Kuwaiti Relief Committee.
- Founding member, International Islamic Charity Authority – Kuwait
- Founding member, International Islamic Council for Call & Relief – Kuwait.
- Member of Charity Rescue Society – Kuwait.
- General Secretary of the African Muslims Committee, 1981 - 1999.
- Chairman of Direct Aid, 1999 - 2008.
- Member of the Kuwaiti Red Crescent Society – Kuwait.
- Editor –in- chief of Al Kawther Magazine, 1984 until his passing.
- Member of the council of trustees of Islamic Call Organization- Sudan.
- Member of the council of trustees of Science &

Technology University – Yemen.

- Chairman of the board of Faculty of Education – Zangbar
- Chairman of the board of Faculty of Shari'ah and Islamic Studies- Kenya
- Chairman of Charity Work Studies Center – Kuwait

His Journey towards Compassion for the Poor

Dr Abdur Rahman As-Sumayt's journey towards his compassion for the poor and needy began during his days as a high school student in Kuwait. He would observe poor workers waiting without shade in the extreme heat for their transport to arrive. Moved by this scene, together with some friends he collected some money and purchased an old car. From then on every single day, he would drive these workers for free; an act stemming from his mercy and compassion for them.

At university he would set aside the majority of his monthly stipend for the purchase of Islamic books which he would then distribute at various mosques. He once received an academic grant of forty two dinars yet would not eat more than one meal a day and would not 'indulge' in sleeping on a bed, even though the price of one was not more than two dinars; considering it to be an unnecessary luxury. During his postgraduate studies in the West, he would collect money every month from Muslim students to pay for the printing of Islamic pamphlets and then would have them distributed throughout South East Asia and Africa. These are just a small number of examples of his earliest righteous actions.

(continued...)

Detention and Imprisonment

As-Sumayt twice was imprisoned. The first time was in Baghdad in 1970, almost being executed. The second time was in 1990 when he was arrested by Iraqi intelligence forces during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. He was completely unaware of what his fate would be at the time. They shipped him to Baghdad where he faced severe torture to the extent that flesh from his face, hands and feet tore off, yet he remained steadfast and patient. Later in his life when looking back at this terrible ordeal he stated, "I had no doubt whatsoever that I would not die except at the moment Allah had ordained for me", demonstrating his unswerving reliance upon His Lord.

As-Sumayt's keen interest and concern for Africa in particular developed as a result of a field study carried out by the African Muslim Agency which confirmed that millions in the continent knew nothing about Islam except myths, legends and unfounded superstitions. As a result of this the people, and in particular their children, became vulnerable to Christian evangelisation. This was already the case with tens of thousands in countries such as Tanzania, Malawi, Madagascar, South Sudan, Kenya, Niger and others, who had converted to Christianity, affiliating themselves with this religion even though their parents and forefathers were all Muslim.

As-Sumayt firmly believed that Islam precedes all theories, all ideologies, all cultures and civilisations when it comes to social and humanitarian voluntary work (as well as in every other sphere). His story dates back to his return to Kuwait at the completion of his post graduate studies. It is here in his home country that he witnessed an enormous potential for charity that lay dormant, a capacity he wished to split asunder so that that it's benefits would pour forth and rain help, aid and goodness upon those most in need of it. Thus he proceeded to the Ministry of Endowments and presented to the officials his desire to participate in charity work. However the immense amount of beauracracy and red tape he was forced to deal with almost nullified his headstrong efforts and nearly killed off his enthusiasm. Despite this eventually he

was willed by Allah to travel to Malawi to help build and setup a mosque on behalf of a charitable female Kuwaiti benefactor.

Upon his arrival he witnessed first hand the scene of millions of human beings slowly being killed by hunger, poverty, ignorance, backwardness and disease. He also witnessed the literal fall of the Muslims under the influence of Christian missionaries, who gave them crumbs to eat and education for their children in their own missionary schools. Hence forthwith a deep love for this spot took root within him, settling over his heart and conscience, taking control of his thinking and shaping his actions for what was soon to come.

Humble Beginnings

As-Sumayt began his foray into charity and da'wah; his efforts to raise up and advance the poor and needy of Africa from the humblest of beginnings while still in Kuwait, completely enveloped by great aspirations. This was during the late 1970's. He initially spent three months toiling wearily in earnest, networking with many many people yet despite his arduous efforts and the sheer amount of wealth present in a rich nation such as Kuwait, he was only able to collect the sum of a thousand dollars. As disappointed as he was he refused to raise the white flag and give up just yet. He decided to change his strategy by instead shifting his attention from the rich and upper class to the middle class masses, in particular the female demographic. He soon realised that this was the great treasure of Abdur Rahman As-Sumayt that had been lost to him, and by the Grace of Allah it had been unlocked and bestowed upon him after three difficult and lean months.

With provision in hand he finally set off vigorously in pursuit of his dream of uplifting and changing forever the African continent; a place many would associate with desolation and barrenness. Yet it is only the eagerest souls, in love with challenge and adventure, who actively seek out such trials. A challenge that would eventually result in a resounding success by any standard.

Commencement of the Islamic Call

Amongst the things that affected As-Sumayt the most, such that he would be frequently brought to tears, was something that occurred regularly in areas he would visit. Upon his arrival into a new area he would successfully convert a large number of the youth into Islam. Many of which would cry profusely, their emotions overtaking them as they reflected upon the passing of their parents who died as non-Muslims. They would often ask the questions, "Where were you O Muslims! What took you so long to finally reach us after all these years!" As-Sumayt would weep bitterly over these words as he would feel a sense of partial responsibility and accountability for those who died upon disbelief.

As-Sumayt left behind him a life of ease, comfort and abundant wealth and moved to Africa with his wife, who was also a prominent figurehead in her field. They took residence in a very humble abode in the city of Manakara in Madagascar, close to the indigenous "Antaimoro" tribe. The two of them alone began inviting to Islam, an invitation whose hallmark was humanitarian work with pure intentions, enshrined in principles of mercy and compassion. As a result, thousands accepted Islam. The two of them continued to live amongst different peoples in villages and forests, providing them with medical, social and educational services. More importantly, As-Sumayt implanted the love of bestowal and magnanimity and the art of leadership to all those around him, becoming among the most distinguished in this methodology. A methodology he adopted from his wife; a woman who donated her entire wealth and estate for the benefit of their humanitarian work.

As-Sumayt vowed to himself that he would spend the rest of his life here in Africa, calling to Allah. Frequently he would travel long distances by road and sometimes would spend up to forty hours on a train journey, eating nothing but bits of bread he had with him. He would even visit extremely remote areas, hours away from the nearest roads having to traverse forests, thick dark frightening jungles, desolate rivers in tiny boats and unpleasant swamps, in order to reach

them. Whenever he would reach a village he would gather the people and say,

"الأحد الذي خلقتني ورزقني وهو الذي يميتني ويحييني ربي الله الواحد"

"My Lord is Allah, the One, the Absolute. He Created me, Sustains me and is the One who will cause me to die and once again, give me life."

This statement is concise and powerful yet simple to understand and remember. Through the power of these words and their deep meaning, a great number accepted Islam.

As-Sumayt's methods of da'wah were wide ranging and varied. One specific method he used was to buy new clothing and present them as gifts to the heads and elders of any village he entered, as a way of softening their hearts towards Islam. He would gift the children with sweets hoping simply to bring them happiness. He fully involved himself with the people, becoming familiar with the life of African villages and the various tribes, the issues that affected them as well as their customs and traditions. He was known to bring his workers to account with extreme precision for each and every little thing and was the most stringent with his own self, right down to the food of the orphans even. He would say, "It is not possible for me to indulge in (or be negligent towards) a single riyal of the money donated by the people for charity".

(continued...)

Every evening just after nightfall, As-Sumayt would observe the various study circles in which the orphan children would be gathered to study and recite the Qur'an, as a reassurance of the progress of their hifdh, smiling at them proudly as he did so. After the 'Isha prayer he would once again check up on the children to make sure they were all safely asleep. Whenever he was questioned about his extreme dedication and workmanship he would say,

"My dear brother, we are not awaiting the reward or approval of any individual. We are busy in fieldwork and are awaiting nothing except the acceptance of our deeds by Allah"

Dr As-Sumayt mentioned once in a Kuwaiti newspaper, "We rarely offer cash to the poor. Rather we offer development projects such as opening a small grocery store or the provision of sewing machines or the establishment of fish farms. This generates a regular income for the people and helps lift them out of poverty. This kind of help leaves the greatest impact upon them and as such is the most helpful in guiding them to Islam."

The efforts of Abdul Rahman al-Sumayt resulted in the conversion to Islam of at least 10 million people including tens of thousands from tribes which became Muslim in their entirety, tribal leaders and even propagators of other religions who in turn, themselves became callers to Islam. As well as receiving deliverance from the good doctor, by the Grace of Allah, he contributed in helping them through the provision of housing, employment, hospitals, schools and the fulfilment of many other needs.

More than seven million people in the African continent alone accepted Islam through him. Some directly and others, indirectly through his efforts and the hard work of his ambitious team. The "Direct Aid Organisation" which he had set up there, soon became the largest global organisation in all of Africa. There are currently more than half a million students studying in their educational institutes including four major universities, as well as a large number of broadcasts and publications. They dug more than 8,600

wells and trained more than 4,000 Islamic callers, teachers and academics in this time period. He helped transform the lives of thousands who were able to go from being recipients of charity and Zakah to fully able donators. Firmly keeping his faith at the root of his principles, he kept the Islamic methodology as the backbone of his endeavours in creating sustainable development of nations and peoples.

No Stranger to Harm or Hardship

He would take frequent long journeys spending twenty or so hours in a car in order to reach extremely remote places and sometimes would even travel on foot through mud and wetlands. Dangers were always apparent and he, his wife and his children many a time were exposed to volatile and potentially harmful situations. One time he passed by a large gathering of people (not knowing why they had gathered) when he sat down next to them out of fatigue after a long journey. Suddenly, one by one each member of the gathering came to him and began spitting on his face! Shocked, he later found out that indeed the gathering was a tribal 'court hearing' to which outsiders are strictly forbidden from entering!

Another more dangerous encounter took place when As-Sumayt and his wife met a tribe for the very first time. These people were so shocked (for some strange reason) at the site of a woman in hijab, they wanted to attack her and almost killed her had they not sprinted back to the car (and gotten away)!

Prayer Timings

Date	Day	Fajr	Sunrise	Zohar	Asar	Magrib	Isha
03	Fri	06:01	07:37	12:14	15:03	16:52	18:28
04	Sat	06:00	07:35	12:14	15:05	16:54	18:30
05	Sun	05:58	07:34	12:14	15:07	16:56	18:31
06	Mon	05:57	07:32	12:14	15:09	16:58	18:33
07	Tue	05:55	07:30	12:15	15:10	17:00	18:34
08	Wed	05:54	07:28	12:15	15:12	17:02	18:36
09	Thu	05:52	07:27	12:15	15:14	17:03	18:38
10	Fri	05:51	07:25	12:15	15:15	17:05	18:39
11	Sat	05:49	07:23	12:15	15:17	17:07	18:41
12	Sun	05:48	07:21	12:15	15:19	17:09	18:42
13	Mon	05:46	07:19	12:15	15:21	17:11	18:44
14	Tue	05:44	07:18	12:15	15:22	17:13	18:46
15	Wed	05:43	07:16	12:15	15:24	17:14	18:47
16	Thu	05:41	07:14	12:15	15:26	17:16	18:49
17	Fri	05:39	07:12	12:14	15:27	17:18	18:51
18	Sat	05:37	07:10	12:14	15:29	17:20	18:52

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