

Newsletter of the Islamic Centre of England

No. 79, May 2012

Living Islam



Islam's generalities



Characteristics of the Prophetic Teachings



Seasonal Allergy

Ya Fatima (SA)



Editorial

The madness
of the sane

By Amir De Martino

A more attentive research in the background of Anders Behring Breivik shows that this individual who the media have tried to associate to Christian fundamentalism is in reality a ultra-Zionist, freemason, Islamophobic who claims to belong to the Templar order of the Rose-Cross.

Our understanding is that the main media has said very little on the masonic-zionist ideology of this isolated "illuminato".

What is also not widely told is that those who were killed in cold blood on the island of Utoya were gathered to voice among other things opposition to the Zionist state of Israel by carrying banners calling for a boycott of the oppressive regime of Israel and an end to Zionism.

We do not wish to appear obsessed by conspiracy theories but it is sometime very difficult to understand how it is possible that certain details are systematically left out of the picture.

An interesting theory is that this barbaric massacre could have been the direct consequence of the discourses presented by astute manipulators. Invisible hands belonging to "new world order" that are intent to promote the clash of civilization.

In this view the "white terrorist" that is Breivik, will be made to appear as the reaction or a response to an alleged global Islamic plot against the West. In other words this "Christian" freemason fundamentalist is a madman created by the ideology of George W. Bush with his

famous crusade statement. Breivik, who was already near to this Atlantic and Zionist movement, has taken action on the words of the leader of the White House. He has started the war against what he calls; "the new Islamic threat effecting Europe and the rest of the Western world".

Is it a coincidence that all this has happened in Norway? One of the few western countries with anti-American and anti-New World Order stands. Norway has clearly expressed its opinion in the well known magazine 'Le Monde Diplomatique'.²

They presented the possibility that the government of the United State could have been the hidden hand behind the attack of 11th September 2001. This was a strong view that pointed the finger at the American government. Could Norway have become the target of a punitive action?

There is also the complain made by the American state department who appeared angered by 'the lack of motivation of Norway' in deciding to stop the bombing of Libya on the first of August.

The above scenario envisages the existence of a powerful secret network that could have taken care of this madman and push him to conduct an act in line with their policies. They would have prepared him mentally by exasperating his extremism and his Islamophobia and push him to the final edge.

In addition to this they could have provided him with all material and logistic needs to take his delirious act to the end.

It seems naive to believe that this cold bloodily executed action is act of a simple fool illuminato without any link to surrounding forces.

The Norwegian prosecution is struggling to prove that Breivik is a psychopath which if proven will make this the easiest justification for all.

Maybe the psychopathic option is the correct one, but even this can be linked to a principal mandatory; the society in which he lived. An entire society can suffer from an out of control psychosis that makes the affected, see everything in terms of black and white; with us or against us; of war of evil versus good.

We are living in an age where mass murders have become more frequent. These are perpetrated by adolescents and young men who in most cases take their own lives too, removing the possibility of a public action against them by the society. The fact that Breivik has not terminated his life may offer us an occasion to debate the topic related to the shape of this society.

It appears that the Norwegian legal system is unwilling to de-humanize this individual giving him all his rights and respect (see the reverential hand shake that took place between court's official and the accused) even when confronted by the tragic outcome of his action. The



reason for this may be in the reluctance in judging him as a sane person because this would imply accepting the existence of an ideology (the one that he followed) that is at the base of his action.

This would automatically widen the debate showing how forces that subscribe to the clash of civilization are actively engaged to promote it, making use and supporting elements who have embraced this divisive and disastrous ideology.

The trial would no longer be about him but about an ideology that is imperialist, racist and supremacist developed in the West and born paradoxically within a democratic value system.

Notes:

1- Illuminati. In more modern contexts the name refers to a purported conspiratorial organization which is alleged to mastermind events and control world affairs through governments and corporations to establish a New World Order (see Wikipedia for a quick reference)

2- <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2006-07-21-bredesen-en.html>

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20th Jumada al-Thani
Birth Anniversary of

Fatimah al Zahra^(as)

beloved daughter of
Prophet Muhammad (s)

*Congratulations
to all
followers of
Ahl ul Bayt (as) on
this auspicious
occasion*



May 2012 No.79

ANECDOTES FROM THE LIFE OF FATIMAH (AS)

By Raziye Shameli

Angel Gabriel's bottle of perfume

That night Ummi Salameh's room was crowded. The women peeped one by one, entered the room, gazed upon Fatimah and then went to other rooms. The women of the house had seated Fatimah on a simple bed. She was wearing simple clothes and was happy. The sound of Women rejoicing could be heard from other rooms. Ummi Salameh constantly turned around Fatimah and addressed her lovingly and affectionately and treated her like a mother. Khadijah - Fatimah's kind mom was missed. Surely she was happily watching her daughter Fatimah from heavens and was happy for her marriage to Ali (as).

A Woman stepped into the room and said out loud: 'We need some perfume for Fatimah!' One of the prophet's wives went close to Fatimah and asked, 'my daughter, do you have perfume in the house?' Fatimah stood up and quickly brought a bottle of perfume from her room. She opened the lid. Suddenly the room was filled with an amazing smell. The eyes of the guests were wide open from astonishment. What kind of perfume was it that its excellent odour had filled all the rooms?

One of the women enthusiastically asked Fatimah, 'Where did you get this perfume from?' Fatimah was deeply absorbed in thoughts and recounted her sweet memory. Fatimah remembered one day Gabriel entered the house of the Prophet (S) in the form of Dihyah Kalabi¹. His holiness treated him amiably and asked Fatimah to bring a pillow so that he could comfortable lean against

it. Fatimah brought a pillow for him. Gabriel was about to leave when something suddenly fell from under his wings. Everywhere was filled with a pleasant odour. The prophet asked Fatimah to pick up the pieces from the ground. Fatimah got busy collecting the pieces. When Gabriel left, Fatimah asked the Prophet (S), 'What are these pieces?' The Prophet (S) answered, 'It was amber that fell from Gabriel's wings to the ground.' That day Fatimah put those pieces in a small bottle and kept it for herself. When Fatima finished her story saw that all the women around him were so deep in thought. They asked if they could once again smell that bottle of heavenly perfume.

Note:

1- Dihyah Kalbi was the envoy who delivered Prophet Muhammad's message to the Roman Emperor Heraclius



Why is Bilal late?

There was a great uproar in the mosque

where people lined behind the Prophet (S) to pray. Everyone asked a question in mind. Where is Bilal, why is he late? The Prophet (S) was worried too and was looking at the entrance of the mosque hoping to see Bilal arrive soon.

Bilal was not there yet to say the adzan. Something was wrong. He was always on time to go to the roof and recite adzan with his loud voice.

The Prophet (S) waited for some more minutes, but there was still no sign of Bilal. Some of the people were losing their patience. Suddenly someone from outside the mosque shouted: "He's here... Bilal is here!" Bilal hurriedly entered the mosque while the drops of sweat were rolling down his forehead. He went towards the Mehrab and said salaam to the Prophet (S). He saluted him and asked why he was late. Bilal, who was still out of breath said: "I was at your daughter's house. I saw that she was working with the hand mill to flour the wheat and her son, Hassan was crying too. I told her: "my lady, tell me which one can I help you with? Shall I turn the hand mill or look after Hassan?" She said she can quiet down Hassan better and asked me to flour the wheat. "I was busy with the hand mill and that's why I was late to the mosque. Do excuse me!"

The Prophet (S) looked at him kindly and said: "You had mercy on Fatimah, shall God have mercy on you!"

Bilal raised his hands to his ears and got ready to say the adzan. It was as though he was ready to fly to the skies. The sound of Allah o Akbar rose from the mosque like a white swan and flew in the beautiful sky of Medina.

Islam's generalities

By Ahmad Haneef

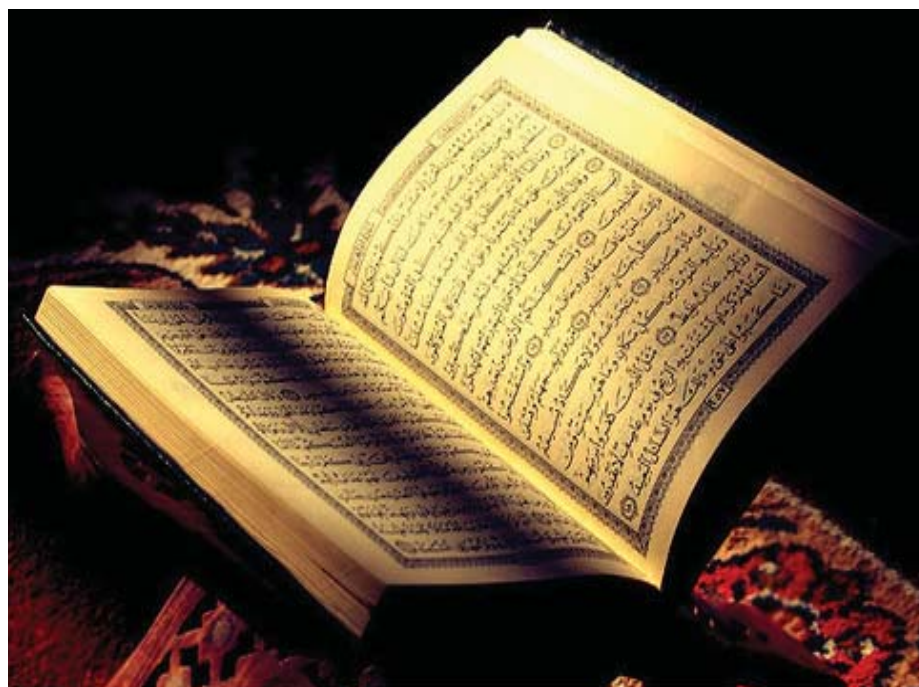
Islam is a 1400 year old religion and is followed by over a quarter of the world's population. It is also the most rapidly growing religion making it the second largest religion in many countries of the Western world.

The word "Islam" comes from the Arabic word "silm" peace and "tasleem" surrender and a practitioner of Islam is called a Muslim. In other words, real peace, being personal or social can only come through surrender to God. Peace in Islam is not simply the outward absence of conflict but is fundamentally an inner state of the soul. It is the result of the conviction of the reality of God in the heart that enables the believer to remain constant in the face of the vagaries of the life of this world.

The most appropriate term to denote Islam is the Arabic word, "deen", which we loosely translate as religion. It is derived from the word "dayn" which means a debt, and therefore deen implies a repaying of our debt to God for all that He has given us, most important of which is our very existence.

By assuming that belief in God or religion (deen) in the true sense of the word is a reality of the human condition, the *Shahadatayn*, or the "Two Attestations" that are essential to define a person as a Muslim, do not begin by asserting the existence of God. The first Attestation says: "I attest that there is no god but God". It begins with a denial of all other central tenets or gods and affirms the true reality, God, the Creator, Designer and Guide of all reality. In Arabic, the word for God is Allah. It is the formation of two words combined together, al (the) *ilah* (god) from which we get 'Allah', the God. This word is grammatically singular, gender free and incapable of pluralisation.

According to Islam, God is not a material entity so He is not a creature,



which by the very etymology of the word implies a created thing. As such He is neither male nor female, but we refer to Him in the masculine by way of metaphor. This absolute oneness is what is denoted in Arabic as "Tawheed" or Divine Oneness.

The second part of the two attestations which says that "I attest that Muhammad is the Messenger of God" concerns Man and how he should relate to God. It is only through complete submission that Man could transcend this limited plane and reintegrate himself with God. The Prophet Muhammad is both the manifestation of this reintegration as the Perfect Man and his way and teachings form the method and the model for the rest of us to follow towards knowing God. Thus the first attestation is the appreciation of the Truth and the second is the method of integrating and experientially witnessing that Truth.

God appoints prophets to guide mankind to Him and a Messenger is the highest rank of prophet-hood because

he brings a new revelation from God. The Prophet Muhammad has said that God has sent 124,000 prophets for the guidance of mankind since the time of Adam and that he is the last of them. Thus Islam accepts that other religions can be true and has a non exclusivist ecumenical attitude towards other religions. With few exceptions, the relationship of Islamic empires and states with non-Muslim minorities has been characterised by tolerance and protecting their rights to worship and develop their faith. Muslim Spain did not only see a flowering in the intellectual and empirical sciences among Muslims, but also among Christians and Jews as well and it was not unusual for non Muslims to hold high positions in government. In Byzantium, what is now contemporary Turkey, Constantinople remained the active seat of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the centre and head of Eastern Orthodox Christianity after Byzantium was conquered by the Muslim Ottoman Turks in 1453.

Islam has very precise criteria to

determine who a prophet is which makes it very difficult for imposters to claim the title. First of all, a prophet according to Islam could only be male, must be of the Abrahamic genealogical line and must be heralded by a prophet or prophets before him. Secondly he must be characterized by an impeccable character, high morals and must not be a worldly man and these traits must be better than those of all the people of his time. Thirdly he must be free of any kind of sin and incapable of making mistakes especially in matters relating to the doctrinal or practical aspects of religion.

Perhaps the most important sign and proof of prophet-hood is the performance of miracles. A miracle is an astounding feat performed by a prophet given to him by God that no other is able to perform. The Prophet Muhammad performed many miracles but the most enduring is the Holy Qur'an which has remained free from error and contradiction. It has remained unchanged and has remained inimitable for over 1400 years in the face of God's challenge to mankind to produce one like it.

The Qur'an is the Word of God revealed in parts to the Prophet by the angel Gabriel for a period of 23 years. The Qur'an is the primary source of Islamic doctrine, law, ethics, and spirituality, and even forms the background defining the parameters of the intellectual sciences and culture of the Muslim world. The beautiful verses of the Qur'an can be heard on the lips of Muslims everywhere from their greetings to their prayers, from their exclamations of surprise to their disappointments and their thanks for the bounties that God gives them.

As an organized religion and a social system, indeed a complete way of life, Islam cannot be without a spiritual and socio/political hierarchy. The necessity for this hierarchy became more crucial after the passing away of the Prophet. Two divergent ways were found that define the two principal schools of thought in Islam today, *Sunnism* and *Shiism*.

One approach (the Sunni) took the religion as being so complete, that all that was needed was the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah or established

“way of the Prophet”, to go forward. The other approach (the Shi'a) also saw Islam as a complete religion but one whose truths and insights were continually being unfolded as the needs and understanding of human beings changed over time.

According to the latter view there is a logical necessity for the last Prophet and the last revelation to have successors a ‘trustees’ (*awsa*) and custodians of the esoteric knowledge of the Prophet who would be able to interpret the inner and outer aspects of the religion. These were called *Imams* and the theory is known as *Imamate*.

As the protector of Islam itself the Imam must be, like the Prophet (but without revelation), divinely protected from error and directly appointed by God. To avoid usurpation, their identities have been announced by the Prophet himself and the Imams also identify those who will succeed them through their testaments (*nass*).

The Imams have been recognized for their amazing knowledge, and outstanding ethical behaviour and spirituality by both Shiites and Sunnis and have been the teachers of great scholars of even the Sunni school of thought. One example is Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad, who taught both Abu Hanifah and Malik, the founders of two major schools of Sunni jurisprudential thought. They have been prominent authorities for esoteric teachings in

the mystical paths in both Shiism and Sunnism. All of them with the exception of the twelfth Imam, who was the last, died horrible deaths at the hands of their enemies.

Muslims are also required to believe in the Day of Judgment, the Day when all mankind will be resurrected from the dead and will be judged. They believe in angels who are beings of light and whose duties range from maintaining the order of the universe, recording the deeds of man, transmitting divine revelations from God to the prophets and guarding the gates of hell. They believe in the Devil who is not an angel but of a species of intelligent and wilful beings called the *Jinn*. They believe in heaven and hell as final destinations of mankind after they are judged, and in the coming of the Mahdi (the Guided One), known as the Twelfth Imam for the Shi'as who will appear along with the second coming of Jesus in the Last Days both of whom will fight and destroy the Dajjal or the Antichrist.



“This poem was penned in response to a barrage of insults heaped upon South African Shia. The writer is a prolific African American poet and lover of the Ahl al Bayt.”

From A Shia Who's a Sunni

A Poem by Shaykh Ali Abu-Talib Son Of AbdunNur



Despite what the Foolish Ones Say, We
Shii are your Religious Kin.
We are your brothers and sisters, and we
are not some evil twin
Bent on destroying the fabric of God's
Great Deen.

But you should know that some folks are
stupid and just plain mean.
They have to accentuate the differences in
order to feel superior.

They are passionate and violent because
their logic's unsound.
Their scholarship is prejudiced, and
they're too tightly wound.

Yet some of you follow them without
scrutiny. Are you blind?
It is a Muslim's duty to be curious, study,
analyse, and then find
The Path that is the Most Balanced.

It should be no mystery
that these same people, who call us Kufar,
walk hand in hand
with the enemies of God, Gabriel and
Man.

We Shii are your brothers and sisters,

And even though the forces of division
blisters
Your shia siblings reputation, with
exaggeration, misinterpretation,
And Bald faced, and neatly cropped,
bearded lies,
Why do you set a prejudiced limitation on
your sense of
Justice and Reason, and allow yourself to
despise
Us without even a fair hearing of our side
of the story?

Will you just keep on thinking everything's
cool
while they're murdering us;
Spurred on by government sainted ancient
Shaykhs who you blindly trust?

What is our capital crime?
We Believe in Allah and To Him we're
submitted.
We believe that Muhammad, by Allah,
was sent
With a Way and a Book that guides souls
to repent, and bear witness.
We pray five times a day;
Standing and bowing in the Prophet's own
way.

We believe in the Hajj, in alms, heaven
and hell;
Angels and Demons that rose high and
then fell.

We believe in the day when the trumpet
will sound,
And the folks in the graves will rise up
from the ground.
And those in the garden will ask those
who fell,
"What brought you to burn in this inferno
called hell."
They will say, "We were not of those who
rose for the Prayer.

“We fed not the poor. We were proud and
unfair.”.

“And we denied Judgment Day. So we
didn't prepare

“Until THE CERTAINTY came. Then we
were aware.

“The Intercession of No Intercessor will
help them then.”

“We believe in Jihad and commanding to
right,

And forbidding the wrong.

We believe in all this. So what is our sin?

We do not believe that Quran's
incomplete.

This is certainly not some taqiyyah deceit
As most of the foolish slanderously say.
We believe in Quran. In its laws we obey.

Yes we pray on a rock or a small piece
of clay.

Is not the dust on the beard of a man a
great sign

That his face and his hands on the Last
Day will shine?

We don't worship Ali. Nor Hasan, or
Husayn.

But it still breaks our hearts and fills them
with pain

that our brothers and sisters are so
unaware;

too programmed to care.

Yes we cry and we mourn.

But you ignore us and scorn.

You won't wonder or ask what caused all
this grief.

You just keep living your lives, secure in
belief

that nothing can be that bad.

Not even 400 years of slavery, colonialism,
and iron clad

Domination by Kufr, has made you that
sad



And only we Shii can make you that mad.

You are too sleep to dream
That a nightmarish death for the Prophet's close kin,
Brought on by the Muslims is an unforgivable sin,
That rains curses on those who are allied with the perpetrators.

Yet you love those who kill us because we are the demonstrators,
Of the crime that was committed that has brought down the curse.
You'd think killing us is allowed because our lamentations are worse.

It's hard for you to see the legitimacy of our sect.
You were trained not to be circumspect, not to ponder and reflect
On anything except what you were taught as law.

Our judges can judge by your books and our own.
Your scholars can not, and they teach you that even to listen to us is a sin for which you must repent or atone.

But what of those who rose to take the law in their hand;
Who raised ranks of young soldiers to rebel and then stand
Against Ali, the elected leader of The Nation?
Is this not a crime; a gross deviation?

But this part of the story was swept under the rug.
Covered like Kufr, all nice, neat and snug.
Who will dare read the story from our point of view?
Or will you laugh and applaud on mechanical cue.

I, for one, do not see
how anybody knowing the history
would not wonder about the mystery of the alleged legitimacy of making war on the governmental agency which is supposed to be the last one that was "Divinely Guided."
How can we be murderously divided over such a ridiculously clear point of history?
Why is it such a baffling mystery?

But that's the real issue, isn't it?

You don't know the history. You only know one side of the law.
You hold demonstrations of might in great reverence and awe.
And the ruling class and their bullies are scared that you might link up with us.
Then, you might let loose of some awe, and rethink your trust.

And if enough Sunnis got in sync,
It might cause a stink.

So they made the issue illegal, and you're too scared to think,
That the king is un-cool, and a puppet rat-fink,
And his children who hate him are neck deep in the stink.

You're too ethnocentric to think that mom and dad could be wrong.
Your ego's real big, but your soul's not that strong.

Some Shias act right. Some Shias are wrong.
Some talk polite. Some speak out too strong.

But all of our views are truth based on reason.
So how can it be, that speaking strongly about treason
Committed over a thousand years ago is sane reason
to condemn someone to death?
We're ostracized and condemned to excommunication and death
For having a logical historical perspective
That doesn't agree with an obviously illogical point of view.

And that's all it is; just a historical view.
One school has a view. The other has one too.

A view of the past, impacting on today.
Folks long dead and buried yet you're unwilling to display the family linen; fearing those blood spots did not come clean
in the government's media washing machine.

You're scared that you won't be able to tell fiction from truth.
After all, you're only a highly impressionable youth.
You can't tell wrong from right, or foul from fair.
So you better stay away from us. Don't you even dare
Read one of our books or hear our Shaykhs preach.

Go to school with those Kaffirs,
But don't let those Shii brothers teach
You anything from their school of thought.
So most of you wouldn't be caught
Dead with one of us as a friend.
To listen, then reason is a big anti-shi-ite sin.

Cuz the enemy of my enemy is my friend,
And the friend of my friend is my friend,
And my friend is my friend.
So how can you be the friend of my enemy and still be my friend.
How can you lend your support to people who would murder my kith and kin,
And still have the nerve to say you're my friend?

Listen. We follow the Sunnah.
The school where we learned is different from yours.

Is the difference enough to cause destructive wars

That keep us slapping each other like curly, Larry and Moe?

Is this the Islam that we want to show?

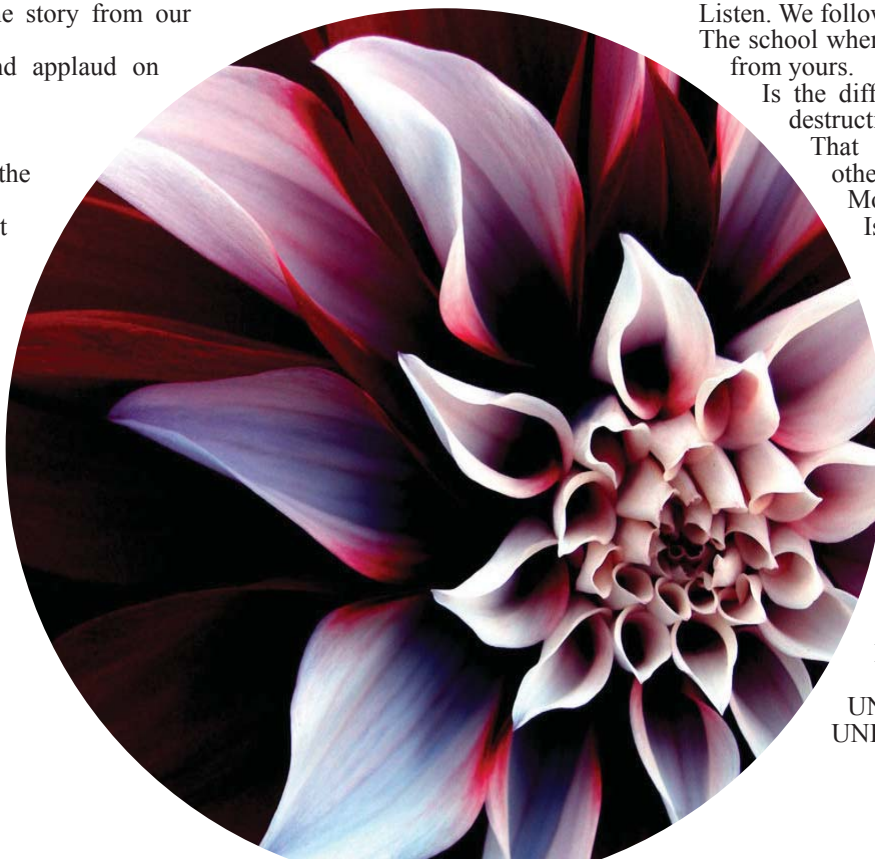
South African people open your mind.

And resign yourself to the fact that we're related.

The Prophet of God will be more than elated.

Allah is One. His Deen is One. The Believers Are One. Unity is One.
Neither East nor West, Islam's the Best.

UNITY UNITY UNITY
UNITY UNITY UNITY



Characteristics of the Prophetic Teachings

By Mohammad Rangiha

Introduction

It is pertinent for one who seeks to discuss the personality of the Prophet and the changes he introduced to Arabia and rather to the whole of humanity, to study the history of the era carefully and to draw a comparison between the pre-Islamic culture and customs; to the reformations introduced with the appointment of Mohammad by Allah (swt) as a messenger. Discussing 'Islam and its message', we refer to Islam in its technical meaning, which is the message brought by Mohammad (saw) and the principles contained in the Holy Qur'an; not the term Islam in the general sense, which would refer to the message of all the Prophets starting from Adam. Although all the Prophets in reality were Muslim, calling towards the same God; the difference between the messengers are found in the methods and rituals adapted by each Prophet, depending on the time and circumstances of that period, yet the universal message delivered, remains the same.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the principles which lies within the teachings of Islam and also the divine traits and behaviours found in the personality of the last Prophet was so vast and profound that it cannot be covered in any book comprehensively nor in the scope of this article for that matter. It is important to keep in mind that there has been a quest to document the biography of the Prophet from different angles relating it to the 21st century in a way that the modern world could relate to and understand the principles and values which the Holy Prophet of Islam and the Qur'anic teachings established. Short glimpses of the Prophet's life and only a few divine characteristics

of the messages found in the Islamic teachings are discussed in this article.

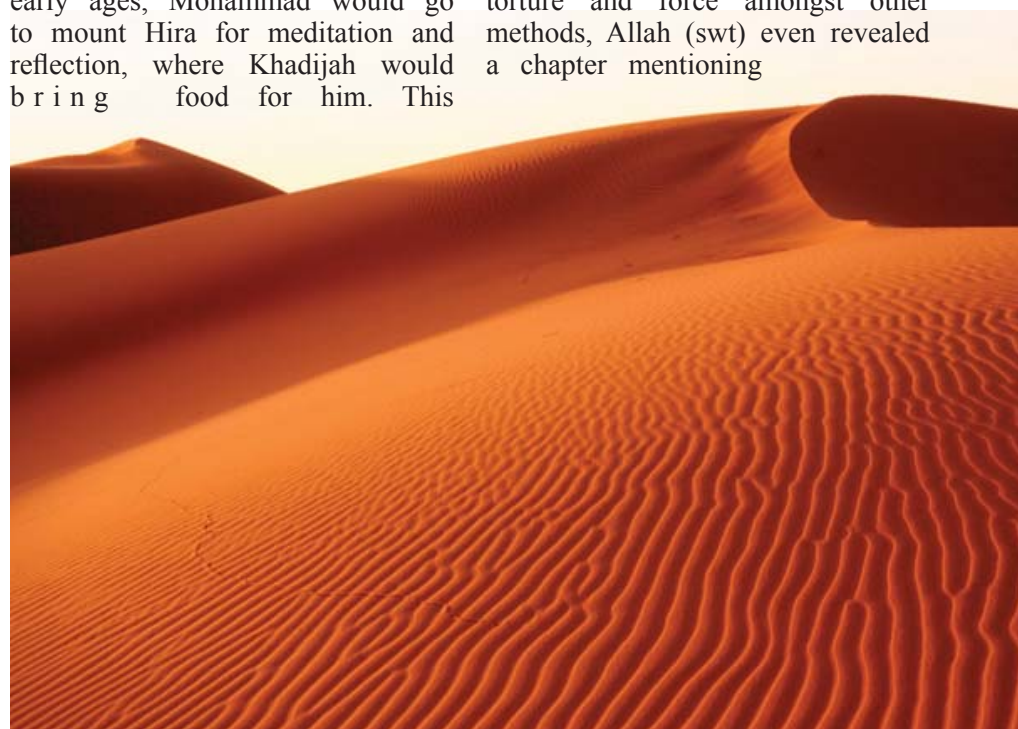
Mohammad at a Glance

As mentioned, to narrate the biography of this great individual one must dedicate many volumes of writings, however for the purpose of our discussion it suffices to say that Mohammad Ibn Abdullah was born on Friday, 17th Rabi' al-Awwal in the year of Elephant. Mohammad was orphaned at a very young age, after losing both his parents; he was therefore looked after by his uncle Abu Talib¹ who was powerful amongst Quraysh. From the young age he exhibited distinguishing characteristics amongst the Arabs and soon was given the title of 'al-Ameen', meaning 'The Trustworthy' amongst other praiseworthy attributes.

The young man, who helped his uncle in business and trading, got married to Khadijah, a successful business woman, at the age of 25. From the early ages, Mohammad would go to mount Hira for meditation and reflection, where Khadijah would bring food for him. This

continued until the 27th Rajab of the 40th year of the Elephant, when he received the divine message of Prophet-hood from the angel Gabriel. At the age of 40, Mohammad was now a Prophet appointed by Allah (swt) to call his people to the divine message; his wife Khadijah and his cousin, Ali ibn Abi Taleb were the first individuals to accept the message of the Holy Prophet. The call of the messenger to Islam took place on two different levels, the first was private which lasted about 3 years and the second was public which started in the 4th year after his Prophet-hood.

From the early days of his invitation Mohammad was faced with opposition from different tribes, amongst those who opposed the Prophet were: Abu Lahab, Walid Ibn Mughayrah, Umayya and Abi Khalaf and Uqbah Abi Muit amongst others (Dattoo, 2008). The opposition tried to stop Mohammad from his invitation and used different means such as bribery, torture and force amongst other methods, Allah (swt) even revealed a chapter mentioning





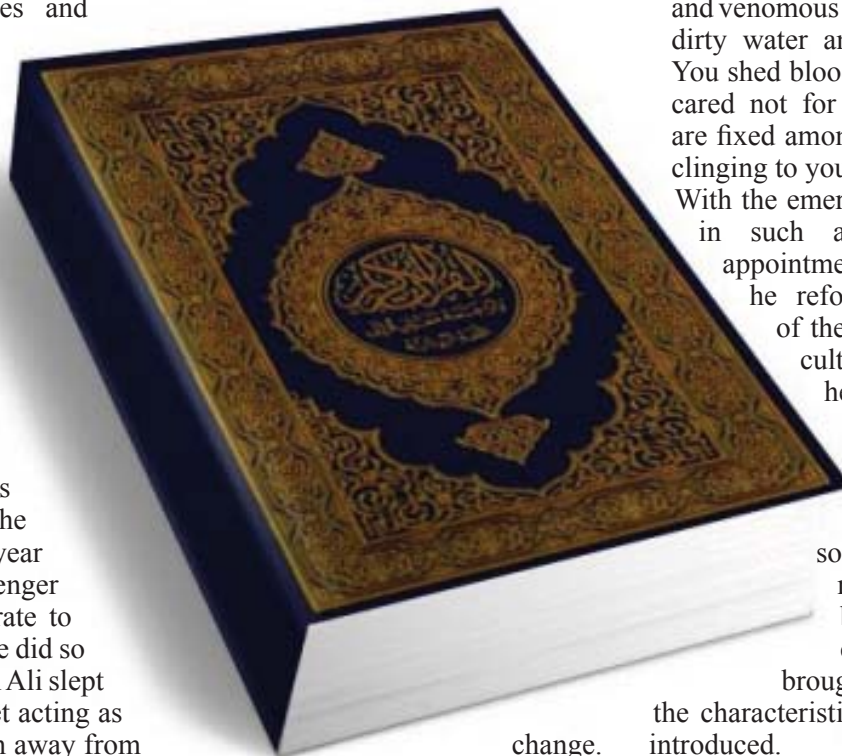
Abu Lahab and his wife Umm Jamil who both would give the holy Prophet a hard time and the history has clearly recorded it (Ibn Hisham, 1963, Vol1).; however the Prophet never stopped his mission and was determined in the message he was conveying. Despite going through difficulties and losing his wife Khadija and Uncle Abu Talib, in the 10th year of M o h a m m a d ' s Prophet-hood, he still did not give up the mission he was appointed to embark upon and day by day the number of Muslims increased.

After attempts to kill the Prophet and the increase in the pressures from the disbelievers, on the 2nd of Rabbi' al-Awwal year 622/633 AD the messenger of Allah decided to migrate to *Yathrib* (Medina) which he did so miraculously whilst Imam Ali slept in the place of the Prophet acting as a decoy to divert attention away from the Prophet and thus saved his life. He later returned to Mecca and toppled the idols which used to be worshiped during the times of Jahiliyah (period of ignorance) (Ibn Hisham, Vol4). There were also opposition from the Jews and Arabs living in Medina, however the Prophet established the basis of an Islamic Government and continued to fulfil his duty as Allah's apostle, despite different battles and events which took place in Medina; until on the 28th Safar in the 11th year after Hijrah, the messenger falls ill and bids farewell to the world with his head resting on Ali's lap.

Message of Mohammad (saw) and Islam

Pre-Islamic Arabian society had many social and individual habits which would now be perceived as incorrect. Amongst these were arrogance, ignorance, killing of baby girls and tribal sectarianism which would lead them to fight for years over a small dispute. Perhaps the huge amount of opposition which the Prophet faced from people used to such customs

was due to them not wanting to submit to anything, since this would infringe upon their status because of the influence they held in their tribes, and also they wanted to continue following the way of their forefathers and not to be subjected to any



change.

How ever Mohammad despite having been raised in this society remained distanced from such practices and customs. He was sincere and firm in his message to the extent that after he was appointed as a Prophet, the Meccans realised torture and force would not change Mohammad's course of action. One of the influential leaders of Mecca 'Utba Ibn Rabi'ah made some suggestions to Mohammad that they would give him wealth, power, position and anything he wanted to stop his invitation. Upon hearing those offers from 'Utba, the Prophet recited some verses of *Surah Sajdah*.² 'Utba was impressed by the Prophet and after listening to the verses he told the Arab leaders they should leave Mohammad and let him do what he wishes. (Choudhury1993). It is also important to note that the Holy Prophet was from the tribe of Quraysh which was one of the greatest Arab tribes which possessed honour and dignity, so this shows that Mohammad was not after position nor social status in his call to Allah, since he already

possessed them. (Ameli 1995, vol2). Imam Ali (as) describes the status of the Arabs in the pre-Islamic era by saying:

'While you people of Arabia were following the worst religion and you resided among rough stones and venomous serpents. You drank dirty water and ate filthy food. You shed blood of each other and cared not for relationship. Idols are fixed among you and sins are clinging to you'.³

With the emergence of the Prophet in such a society and his appointment by Allah (swt), he reformed many aspects of the pre-Islamic Arabian culture and society and he was essentially implementing the divine message of Islam in both his personal and social life. It would require number of books to detail the changes the Prophet brought to the society and the characteristics of the religion he introduced.

Notes:

- 1- Ibn Athir, Vol2, p.301
- 2- '(This is) the revelation of the Book in which there is no doubt,— from the Lord of the Worlds. (2) Or do they say "He has forged it"? Nay, it is the Truth from the Lord that thou mayest admonish a people to whom no warner has come before thee: in order that they may receive guidance' (32:2-3)
- 3- Sermon (26) Nahjul Balagha:<http://www.nahjulbalagha.org/SermonDetail.php?Sermon=26>

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Repugnance and compassion two sides of the same coin

By Mirsaed

In this article I would like to address those of you, who are struggling with your inner battle with hate and detestation. You may not be aware but this hatred will hurt you more than anything else and in reality you have pushed your self- destruction button. Losing such anxiety would not be an easy job. Hatred is like a weed, you may cut it but it will soon grow back and spread with vengeance, especially if you let it go.

Extreme dislikes

Feeling of abhorrence not only makes a young person moody and unpleasant it would actually kill other feelings too. Love is one of those beautiful feelings which will get a direct hit and can be wrecked if we do not get rid of our deep rooted feeling of annoyance and sulkiness.

Revulsion can take control of our lives and can compromise our peace of mind. You would be a slave of this feeling whilst it overshadows your self-control and confidence, you will become restless and in a constant state of anger. Hatred traps us in the past and feeds our old wounds. Feeling of victimization will develop which stops our mental growth.

Hatred is a commodity we cannot afford. You can chose to remain with

such feelings if you want to, but in an honest observation I would tell you the cost of such a mistake. Abhorrence is a heavy burden which will result in the followings:

- You can never be able to get the person you have problem with out your mind.
- Being in constant state of anger prevents you to enjoy all other blessings you have in your grasps.
- Sulkiness is contagious. Our problem can ruin other people's life resulting in prolonging bad behaviour.
- One of the problems which can easily lead to depression is self-victimization. You start hating yourself for the feelings you are unable to do anything about.
- Your anger causes all sorts of relationship problems with other people

- You will find others bad or inconsiderate whose concept is only hurting you.

- You may say or do something you later regret, or put you in trouble.

Cutting off the unwanted weed from the garden of our heart could be easy only if they are new, small and on the surface so it is essential to get rid of them as soon as possible. We should prevent this feeling to get rooted or grow.

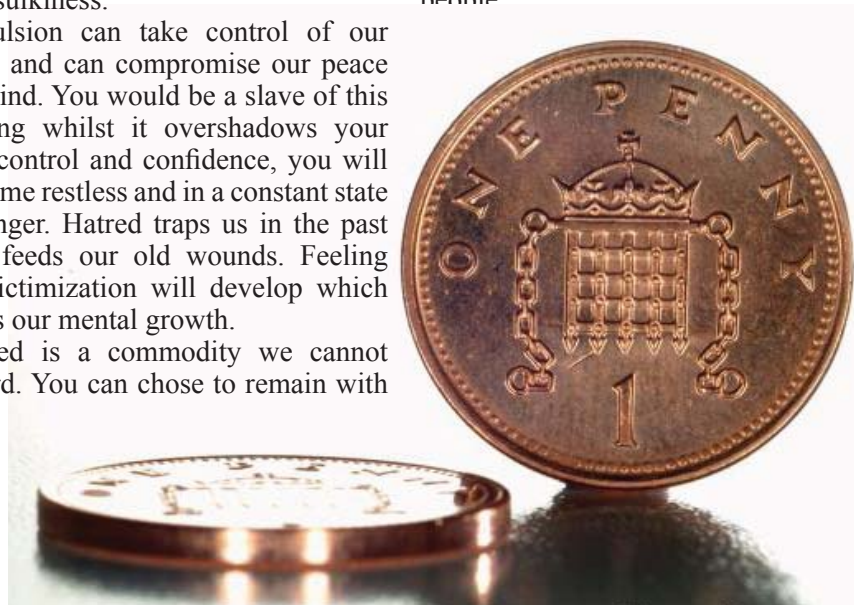
Speaking your mind might sometimes make trouble but in this scenario the best solution is to be direct and honest. Get down to the origin of the problem to un-root the issue. The easiest and quickest way is to address people you have problem with right away and politely tell them how their action have hurt you and why you are angry with them. This is a sign of compassion and mercy.

Forbearance

If you feel that unwanted plant of hatred and abhorrence is suffocating you or has distorted your vision in life, and the burden of it has taken over your life, this is when you have to consider forbearance and tolerance.

Forgiveness has two meanings. One is to let all the hatred and abhorrence to go away; and second is giving up any claim on the opposite side. Forgiveness means that the other side would not be under your debt anymore, neither for money, apology nor love.

Now you might ask what one would gain by forgiving the people who so obviously have hurt you. Forgiveness



takes you out of state of victimization; you would gain the control of your life which can only help you to enjoy the life. Your personality will grow and you develop to a mature person because you chose to forgive which is the strongest sense of humanity. Forgiveness is a life-held treasure especially for short tempered people. It is a well-known fact that one cannot learn not to become angry if one does not learn how to forgive. It is said that we cannot expect to be forgiven if we do not forgive. Forgiving others and getting rid of bad feelings give us an opportunity to experience a new life. However there are exceptions to this role. Forgiving is a choice. There is no obligation in forgiving; you do not have to forgive just anybody especially if you are not ready to do so. Leniency should be by choice, you should want to be a tolerant person,

- Are you emotionally feeding on your anger?

- Are you used to feeling like this?

- Are you afraid to face the future without it?

We forgive because it gives us a good feeling. We are not doing it out of force or obligation. It is us who define the meaning of revenge, hatred or intolerance for ourselves. This self-destructive feeling consumes our energy of living in the present. We constantly try to design a strategy to descend a damaging blow on the person we dislike. We hold a grudge against them while they might not even be aware of our feelings towards them. Forgiveness is a gift which we bestow upon ourselves so we can safely say we are in control of our life.

Being magnanimous is a lengthy process, it is a slow path. It needs a

burden of abhorrence for such a long time, now that you have come to your senses you are angry as you wasted time, you felt bitter, blaming yourself for not acting sooner. You got to go easy on yourself.

The main point we should remember is that as humans we have choices to make and forgiving is one of them which makes us a better person. To start with you can make a list of people you are angry with (including yourself) or those who you think have hurt you. Write the reasons to stay angry with them and the reasons you should let them go. Explore the outcomes of those reasons. Remember how you were as a person before and how you perceive yourself now. Then make another list of the same people but this time note as many good characteristics as you can find about them. If you finally decide to let the grudge go, then promise yourself to stop having negative thoughts. This will give another chance to the person to have a new beginning with you. There should not be "buts".

Conclusion

Our current acts shape our future life. If we want to be taken seriously we should take ourselves seriously first. Self-importance does not necessary mean self-indulgences. People will think twice before saying anything unlikeable about us. If we are in proximity with people who we do not get along with very well, we should not show it, respect brings respect. At the end of the day if you find it difficult to deal with your feelings and problems that you face in relation with others ask for help.

Some people feed their anxiety on hatred and anger, for these people hatred is a dream and a nightmare both. The admirable way forward is to be tolerant but if the person persists then we should confront them; depending on their reaction we can decide to heal the wounds and forgive them or to withdraw for our own self-respect.

and this choice is what makes us different. Forgiveness which is not from the bottom of the heart soon will give way to another kind of hatred and abhorrence. If you are not ready to forgive, you have to train yourself not to live with hatred or search for reasons to prolong it. If you do not feel ready then ask yourself:

- If you are content with your feelings?

- Is your life more meaningful and excited due to it?

will power and an open heart. Hatred means living in the unchangeable past, to leave the past you ought to have a broad mind and an open heart but not necessary forgetting the past. We got to remember the past to shape the future and to protect ourselves.

Having compassionate towards others starts with being lenient towards ourselves. Sometimes we are angry with ourselves over things we did not do or things we should have done or said. You have carried the heavy



Health Issues



By Dr Laleh Lohrasbi

Seasonal Allergy

Have you ever felt like cutting off your nose or head when endless coughing or sneezing attacks you? Sometimes it is really intolerable when your runny nose does not give you a minute of relief.

What makes one an allergic person and not the others? Why people are so much different in showing reactions to seasonal changes? What are the cures?

What is the seasonal allergy and who gets it?

Allergy is the over reaction of the body immune system following exposure to a usually harmless substance called allergen. Whilst these allergens mean nothing to some people, they can make others suffer immensely.

In the most developed countries, every one out of five people are affected by allergic diseases. Allergic reactions tend to run in families, if one of the parents is allergic then the chance of developing allergy in their children would be one in three and if both parents suffer from allergy, then their children would probably become allergic. Usually children develop seasonal allergy after age of 5 and before that, the only symptom shown is asthma, which may occur around ages of 1-3 years old. Having allergy to a particular substance, increases the susceptibility to other allergies. Exposure to risk factors like passive smoking, air pollution and pets, also are important factors in developing allergies including to seasonal allergy. We are usually exposed to almost more than 60,000 chemicals existing in our environment, and nearly 500 new ones are being created annually. Although seasonal allergy or hay

fever, can happen in all seasons but it is more common in spring, when trees and plants start pollinating. Each season has its own allergens; grass pollen or fresh cut grass itself is one the major allergen of summer and pollination of weeds in autumn is what triggers seasonal allergy in autumn.

If the allergy symptoms persist all through the year and there is no specific period for it, then it is called perennial allergy or indoor allergy, which may have other reasons like; mites, foods, pets or other foreign substances that are indoors.

How does an Allergy reaction start?

In a simple way, when an allergen gets inside the body of an allergic person for the first time, the immune system recognises it as an invader and begins to make large amounts of defensive antibody named immunoglobulin E (IgE). This antibody is naturally produced in small quantities in normal body. For each allergy producing substance, a specific kind of IgE is produced. The IgE molecules then attach to cells such as mast cells (tissue cells) and basophiles (blood cell). When the allergen gets into the body for the second time, it fits into the attached IgEs on the cells, like a key fitting into a lock, and by signalling the cell makes the cells to produce inflammatory chemicals like histamine, prostaglandin and leukotriene. These chemicals travel around the body and rest on the regions such as respiratory system and eyes and begin the process of finding and destroying the allergens, therefore causing the allergic symptoms. In fact the mechanism of occurring Allergy

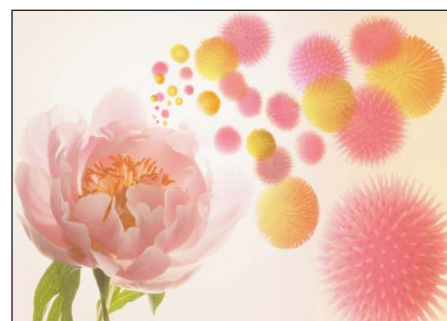
is the same as defensive mechanism against the infections, the only difference is that, the allergens are not harmful for the human body and this mechanism is merely an overreaction of the Immune system.

Symptoms and diagnosis

No matter what causes the allergy and when it happens, the symptoms are usually the same and inclusive;

- Sneezing,
- Runny nose,
- Itchy eyes, nose, ears and skin,
- Congestion,
- Sore throat,
- Coughs that may be worse at night or in the morning,
- Allergic salute, small crease in the skin of the lower part of the nose due to the rubbing nose upward.
- Allergic shiners, dark circles under the eyes caused by the increased blood flow near the sinuses.

Proper distinguish between allergy and cold symptoms is very important,



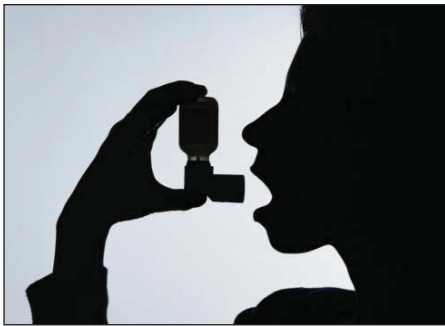
as they are similar in symptoms but different in treatment. Allergy is usually diagnosed by the symptoms and the family history, but there are also some diagnostic tests which can determine the case such as:

- Skin test; one minute application of some known allergens on the skin measures the amount of IgE.
- Blood test; by testing blood the amount of IgE in blood is measured.

By using these tests the exact allergy inducing substance for each individual can be exactly determined which brings the possibility of avoiding them.

Treatment

While some people are only mildly



affected by hay fever, and the symptoms are usually harmless, for many, symptoms may be so severe and persistent that they are unable to carry out their daily tasks at home, work or at school. In addition, the most important consequence of an uncontrolled allergy is the elevated risk of getting a secondary sinus or ear infection, so treatment seems necessary in some cases.

The best treatment for allergy symptoms is to prevent exposure to the allergens, which in seasonal allergy would be pollens. One can also undergo some tests to find out what exactly one is allergic to and when to avoid that specific allergens and stay indoors. The following actions may be helpful:

- ❖ Keep doors and windows closed to avoid pollens getting inside.
- ❖ Hair and clothes are good traps for pollen. To avoid bringing in the pollens, use hat outside the house and take shower followed by wearing clean clothes.
- ❖ Do not dry washed clothes outside the house during high pollen count days. Pollen count is usually announced on TV, radio, internet or

daily newspapers.

- ❖ Wash your eyes with clean water regularly to clear them from pollens. Rubbing a thin layer of Vaseline inside and around the nostrils is effective in trapping the pollens.
- ❖ Cut or reduce meat and dairy products from your daily diet, during the allergy season. These types of food contain a fatty acid named Arashidonic which facilitates the production of leukotriene.
- ❖ Use as much fruit and vegetables as you can in your diet. Existent Flavonoids in these foods effectively inhibit leukotriene and histamine release, from mast cells.
- ❖ Do not keep flowers and pets inside the house and avoid exposure to smoking or become secondary smokers.
- ❖ Dust all the surfaces in the house at least twice a week and wash bed sheets in hot water once a week.
- ❖ Wearing mask when going out can be useful too.

• Medication

There are several conventional drugs with different mechanism which can be used:

* Antihistamines: According to



the name you are right to believe that they prevent the production of the histamine, but it is not so. Antihistamines just block the histamine's action at receptor sites and only decrease the symptoms. In another words these drugs do not influence the underlying cause, but can only be helpful in reduction of the symptoms. Antihistamines may have side effects like dizziness and drowsiness, however new generations of this group of medications have fewer side effects.

* Corticosteroids: Drugs of this group are available in the forms of drop, oral

and injection and are usually used in severe forms of allergy. Long term use of these drugs may have serious side effects.

• Alternative medicines

In one study, published in the British Medical Journal, a group of Swiss researchers showed just how one tablet of Butterbur (a wild flower growing along rivers, ditches, and marshy areas in northern Asia, Europe, and parts of North America) four times a day is as effective as a popular antihistamine drug in controlling symptoms of hay fever without the traditional symptom of drowsiness.¹ In a second study, presented at the 60th annual meeting of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology (AAAAI), a group of British researchers put their stamp of approval on butterbur's effectiveness in quelling symptoms of grass allergy.²

A study carried out by researchers at the University of Melbourne, suggested that acupuncture is also effective in the treatment of persistent allergic rhinitis.³



Notes:

1. Randomised controlled trial of butterbur and cetirizine for treating seasonal allergic rhinitis, Andreas Schapowal, British Medical Journal, 2002;324:144 (19 January)

2. Butterbur, a herbal remedy, protects against allergen-sensitized mast cell priming in seasonal allergic rhinitis, I.J Carstairs, D.K.C lee, K. Haggart, C.M Jackson, G.P. Currie, B.J. Lipworth, Volume 111, Issue, Supplement 2, PageS76 (February 2003).

3. Acupuncture for persistent allergic rhinitis: a randomized, sham-controlled trial, Charlie C L Xue, Xuedong An, Thomas P Cheung, Cliff Da Costa, George B Lenon, Frank C Thien and David F, The Medical Journal of Australia, 2007; 187 (6): 337-341.

Children's Corner

The Chinese child
with a long name

Once upon a time in China there was a village where it was a tradition to give long names to their first born boy. They believed long names make people great and important personalities. That was the reason names got longer and longer by the day.

One day God gave a little boy to a couple. They named him; "Ricky Ticky Tambonosy Ramoohari Bari Boushki Pari Pim". People hearing the name came to see the new born baby and his parents and would congratulate the parents on such majestic long name. They would say how beautiful and long the name was.

Some time passed and God gave another son to this family. They simply called him Afoo. Ricky Ticky Tambonosy.... and his brother slowly slowly got bigger and now they could play together. Every day they raced each other from their home to the well of the neighbour and they put their head inside the well and shut. As their voice echoed in the well they would laugh and clap their hands with excitement.

One day when Ricky Ticky and Afoo ran to reach the well as usual, Ricky arrived first, but as soon as he bend to put his head inside the well and shut, his feet slipped and he fall into the well. Afoo was a bit further but he saw what happened to his brother, falling into the well. Afoo got so afraid that in a matter of seconds he reached the well carefully lowered his head in the well and with a loud voice shouted: "Ricky Ticky Tambonosy... are you ok?" Ricky Ticky with a very faint voice replied: "I am ok. I am holding the rocks of the well not to fall into the water. Afoo go and bring help, please be quick, I cannot hold on for long."

Afoo ran as he never ran in his life. The neighbour's house was nearest, whilst running he was shutting: "Ricky Ticky Tambonosy Ramoohari... has fallen into the well." The neighbour who was an old man said: "what! Ricky Ticky Tambonosy.... has fallen into the well! Oh my God, we have to pull him out. I go and see if I can find a rope."

Poor old man went to find a rope, but he was slow and short sighted. Anyways he was very weak, Afoo thought to himself; how could this old man be able to help him. Afoo decided that he could not

afford waiting any longer and ran towards his own house.

On the way whenever he saw someone he asked them for a rope but the problem was each time he had to stop give all the account of what has happened and explain to everyone that Ricky Ticky Tambonosy..... had fallen into the well. He was losing a valuable time.

By the time he finally reached his house, Ricky Ticky.... had been in the well for at least half an hour. He found his father and tried to explain what has happened to his brother whilst trying to get his breath back. His father immediately found a rope and together, they ran towards the well.

When they reached the well all the neighbours and whoever heard the news were gathered around the well. The father called for Ricky Ticky.... but all he could hear was Ricky muttering a few words.

It was an intense situation. The rope was thrown inside the well and the father told Ricky Ticky.... to hold on to the rope so he can pull him up. At the first sight of his head everybody had a sigh of relief and above all Afoo became very happy.

Few days later when Ricky Ticky.... was feeling a bit better he asked Afoo: "what made you so late, I was in the well almost for half an hour?"

Afoo said: "What was I supposed to do. Every time I asked someone for a rope I had to explain what has happened to you and your name being so long it took me forever to do it that

is why I was delayed for so long."

When Ricky Ticky.... heard what trouble his brother had to go through simply because his name was too long he asked his father to shorten his name.

The father accepted to shorten his name. Since then the name of "Ricky Ticky Tambonosy Ramoohari Bari Boushki Pari Pim" was shortened to Ricky Ticky only. The people of the village decided to keep the names of the baby boys limited to one or two words maximum and do not consider long names as a reason for greatness of their children.

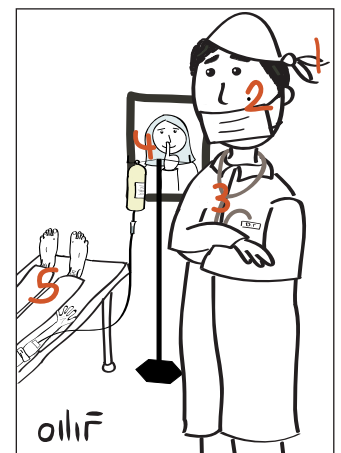
Translated by Tahereh Shafiee

Illustration by Ghazaleh Kamrani





Spot the differences



Last month Spot the differences



IMAM KHOMEINI

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2012

Reflections on

LEADERSHIP

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SHEIKH MOEZI

INTERFAITH RELATIONS
REVEREND FRANK JULIAN GELLI

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