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Eid-ul-Adha: The Eid of Sacrifice

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The tradition of the Eid-ul-Adha, also known as Eid of Sacrifice, for Muslims, is a remembrance of Prophet Abraham's faith and devotion for God. Abraham was a friend of God and lived the meaning of Surrender. One night, he had a dream, where he saw himself sacrificing his son. He became convinced that it was not just a dream but rather an allusion from God. He spoke of his dream to his son, who immediately accepted the sacrifice be performed. Abraham's son did not offer any excuse; rather, he told his father to fulfill God's will. The two walked off to the place of Sacrifice. Abraham covered his eyes so that his

love for his son does not get in the way of fulfilling God's will. As Abraham let loose his knife, his son was substituted for a lamb. And in remembrance of this ultimate act of sacrifice, this day was made sacred. Today, as millions perform the Hajj in Mecca, the billion Muslims around the world commemorate Abraham and his son's faith and surrender.

The Hajj, in itself, is a remembrance of the family of Abraham. As much as it is a remembrance of the ultimate sacrifice, it is also a remembrance of mother's love.

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A Day at the Shelter

Daniyal Afroz

On the morning of this past Christmas Eve I experienced something that I had not experienced before. I went to a food shelter for the first time in my life. A friend of my family told me that she was going to help out at a food shelter on Christmas Eve, and asked if I would like to go with her. Being grateful for the things that I have, I decided to go and give to those who aren't so lucky as I am. I had never gone to a food shelter before, and I wasn't quite sure what I was getting into. I wasn't sure what I would be doing, and having never met a homeless/hungry person, I wasn't sure how my experience would turn out.

When we got near the shelter we could see many people standing outside at the different shelters around the area. As I got out of the car and started to walk to the entrance of the shelter, I saw the faces of men, women, and little children. At this point it really hit me how lucky I am to be able to eat 3 meals a day, and have clean cloths to where every day. As I walked I met a woman who greeted me with my nametag and told me thank you for my help. Immediately I was put on potato duty. I started to peel potatoes twice the size of my fist. I

started talking to a woman and her mother. They were both very nice and fun to talk to. A little while later an old woman came in and also started peeling potatoes with me. She started talking and then went on to ask me why I was so good to have come down and help out. I told her that I came down to try and do my part to help others who weren't as fortunate as I was. She understood and smiled.

The potatoes seemed to never end. People were peeling like crazy. Boxes upon boxes kept coming in. I was told that the potatoes were going to be made into mashed potatoes and then served the next day. We prepared some of the food and then put it away to be served the next day. I started to wash dishes and met this boy. He was only in 5th grade. We had so much fun that the time flew by. I was one of the first to arrive, and one of the last to leave. At the end of the day I felt good because I knew that my work helped out others in need. That day I learned that you can never be too old or too young to help others.

Daniyal Afroz is a high school student in Salt Lake City.

"The phrase, "Allah is Omniscient" does not justify ignorance!"

Al-Biruni

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A Hajj for My Daughter

Hesham Hassaballa

For the rest of my life, this time of year in the Islamic calendar will always be dear to me. This is the Hajj season, and Muslim pilgrims from all over the world are already descending upon the holy cities of Mecca and Medina to perform the annual Hajj ritual. Many, if not most, of them are going for the first time, and I can feel their giddy excitement right here from my computer in Chicago.

My father-in-law gets Saudi Arabian television, which broadcasts live images of the daily prayers in Mecca. Whenever the prayer is broadcast, I smile, and my heart aches and yearns to go back to Mecca. These words do not do justice to how much I truly miss the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.

The Hajj was the most powerful and emotional spiritual experience I have ever had. The city of Mecca exuded with the Power of God, which humbled me completely. The prayers I performed in front of the Ka'aba, the holy shrine in Mecca, were unlike any others I have ever performed. After getting our fill of worship at the Holy Shrine in Mecca, the trip to Medina was like the most delicious dessert following a most satisfying meal.

To go and finally meet the Prophet, worship in his mosque, feel his cool, soothing presence all around you, was completely intoxicating. Tears still

come to my eyes when I think back of the first time I met and greeted the Prophet in his grave. God willing, I intend to go back one day, and I pray that day comes soon.

Looking back a year later, however, I am sad to report that many of the effects of the Hajj have since worn off. Once I came back, the harsh and difficult world of everyday life came at me with full force. It was as if life was itching to hit back, angry that I left it for three weeks to fulfill the fifth pillar of my faith. I once again get angry in rush hour traffic; I once again miss some of the extra rituals of worship; I once again do not read the Qur'an every single day. It makes me sad to admit this fact, but I hope that writing it down will help encourage me to work and rekindle the spirit and special feeling of the Hajj that so touched my heart and soul one year ago.

There is one thing, however, for which the Hajj was indispensable: my daughter. My oldest daughter is seven years old now, and ever since she was a young child, we always knew her to be a bit clumsy. It was cute at first, but the clumsiness did not go away with time. As she grew older, her walking was never normal, but I always attributed it to her clumsiness. In addition, she seemed to get more infections than most children her age.

Then one day, several months before we went on the Hajj, we asked our daughter to walk on a straight line, something any soon-to-be six year old should do. My daughter could not for the life of her. This was very abnormal and alarming. Being a physician, I knew what that meant: she had a condition known as ataxia, or an inability to balance oneself. In a child her age, ataxia frequently meant a tumor in the part of the brain that governs balance, the cerebellum.

Our daughter, however, only got worse. During the Hajj, she was hospitalized for pneumonia (unbeknownst to us), and when we came back my family told us what happened. We were still uneasy about the fact that she still was wobbly on her feet, and so we sought out another pediatric neurologist for a second opinion. She said pretty much the same thing as the first, but she ordered some extra blood tests just to make sure nothing else was going on.

To be continued in the next issue of the Forum Monthly. The above article originally appeared in <http://www.beliefnet.com>. For more information on the author, see page 7.

Islam and Freedom of Thought

Babak Darvish

I think there is a notion in the western world that Islam stifles individualism and the freedom of thought, which is far from the truth. Islam actually does the opposite; this is why so many dictators and oppressors do not like Islam. Islam stands for the freedom of humanity and nature as a whole from the evil bindings of the anti-Christ system (Satanic system). This freedom is not just physical; it is also spiritual and rational.

Islam is a firm supporter of logic, rational argumentation, and freedom of thought. Imposition of ideas or beliefs or the stifling of voices does not exist in Islam. "No compulsion

is there in religion. Rectitude has become clear from error." (Quran: 2:256)

In Islam, you are taught to investigate the foundations of beliefs, which is a duty for every individual. It is an obligation for everyone to reject anything that does not have proof. If there are commands and precepts which are obligatory and must be accepted without a reason, it is because they are from the source of revelation which cannot be in error and because they have been stated through the Prophet (pbuh).

Islam censures those who blindly follow the beliefs of their fathers

and ancestors. It commends self-investigation and deep examination. It rejects feeble-mindedness and vain speculation. It urges only to the perusal of knowledge and certainty. "And pursue not that thou hast no knowledge of; the hearing, the sight, the heart—all of these shall be questioned of." (Quran: 2:111)

This was the reason that many Jews, Christians, and those from other groups who originally took a stand against Islam, came to the Prophet (pbuh), sat down, and discussed their religious ideas. Many of these individuals accepted Islam after they heard what Islam had to say.

More Than Just An Issue For Muslim Women of France

A Look at the Proposed Ban on Hijab in France

On December 17th 2003 French President Jacques Chirac openly endorsed a proposed bill which bans all "ostentatious symbols of religion" in French public schools and institutions. Among things included in this ban are the wearing of oversized Christian crosses, Jewish yarmulkes and hijab.

While the right to cover in public is not a new issue in Europe. France's estimated Muslim population of 5 million have been battling the issue of scarves in school rigorously for the last few months. As girls refusing to remove their scarves throughout the country have been expelled from school and have taken their cause publicly.

Showing their outrage and solidarity over the President's announcement, Muslims took to the street in protest on January 17th 2003. "As many as 10,000 people," according to the Associated Press "took part in the peaceful march on the capital, while several thousand others protested in half a dozen cities around the country."

The purpose of the protests are to halt the bill going before French lawmakers in February, that if passed will go into effect at the beginning of the new school year in September.

French officials insist that the ban is about defending secularism and protecting women "from fundamentalist pressures." French Premier Jean-Pierre Raffarin is reported as saying, "This is not about religion, it's about lifting constraints on women."

A claim that many Muslim women countered during their march by chanting, "My scarf, my choice" and "Is my scarf a threat to democracy." Muslims throughout the world joined their voice and many continue to feel it is France's attempt to hold back the swell of Islamic growth or as Khaled M. Batarfi, a writer for Arab News says, "My best explanation to this twisted logic is: racism and Islamophobia."

Batarfi continues his argument

by rhetorically asking, "Why when a Muslim girl covers her head with a scarf, it is forbidden, but a Christian nun, a Gaelic peasant or anyone else covering his or her head with a hat, fur, silk or any other sort of material, it is not a problem?"

Other Muslims worry about the future of Islam in France. John Leices-ter who writes for the Associated Press quoted a man named Muhammed, who refused to give his full name as saying, "If you make me choose between breaking the law and breaking the Quran, I'll break the law. Today, they forbid us from wearing veils. Tomorrow, they'll forbid us from being Muslims."

Noting the specific targets of the proposed ban as being mainly Muslim and Jewish may not be an over sensitivity by these two groups. Bernard Stasi, the head of a presidential panel that recommended the law against head scarves and other specific religious symbols, said, "the law will not solve all of the country's problems with its large, often poorly integrated immigrant community. But," he said, "France cannot allow Muslims to undermine its core values, which include a strict separation of religion and state, equality between the sexes and freedom for all."

Stasi further used Muslims as a reason for the banning of religious symbols on a France-Inter radio program by saying, "There are indisputably Muslims or groups seeking to test the resistance of the Republic, that bear a grudge against the values of the Republic, that want France to no longer be France. We cannot tolerate that."

The debate whether hijab is a personal choice or a form of oppression is not limited to France, people all over the world are weighing in on France's proposed bill. An article in the Desert News on December 23, 2003 by Georgie Anne Geyer strongly agreed with the ban and feels it is a savior to French women.

Geyer writes, On a personal note "For those of us Western women

who have spent a lot of time in Muslim nations...the abominable situation of women in many of those countries...is a personal insult. We know all too well what it's really about. I am personally insulted by these practices. They have a perfect right to continue them in their own countries, but not here. Bring the very symbol of that repression into our own societies? Welcome it into our schools? Have we gone mad?"

Perhaps more surprising however, are the different points of view that Muslim scholars themselves have publicly voiced. The Grand Sheikh of the al-Azhar mosque in Egypt, Sheikh Mohammed Sayed Tantawi, according to BBC Arab affairs analyst Magdi Abdelhadi, said, "wearing the scarf was a duty for Muslim women- non-Muslim countries could pass any laws they wished." He continued by saying "Muslim women had to obey the rules of the host country in which they live."

On the other hand, Yusuf Al-Qaradawi according to Al-Jazeera has reportedly said, "Measures like banning the headscarf will feed extremism" and "If passed," he plans to, "file a legal complaint because this law will be in contradiction with the French constitution."

The French Constitution ensures in Article I "the equality of all citizens before law, without distinction of origin, race or religion."

If the bill passes it would further violate international law in the form of the European Convention on Human Rights, which France ratified in 1974 that states, "everyone has the freedom to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance."

The implications of such a ban in France is yet to be seen, but perhaps Batarfi is correct when he says, "Muslims everywhere, please take note: France, our champion at the UN, has finally joined the Anglo-Saxon crusade."

Kirin Fatima Nabi

Servant-Leader Approach

Adnan Abed

Servant-leader approach is a moral leadership in the Western literature that leans towards values, ethics, principles, virtues, mortality, spirituality and authenticity. The term servant-leadership was first coined by Robert Greenleaf in 1977 who identifies servant-leader as:

“The servant-leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The best test is: do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?” (Greenleaf, 1998, p. 43).

Servant-leadership as a specific leadership and management concept continues to create a quiet revolution in workplaces and people. In organizations, knowledge is used rather than power to dominate, and values such as cooperation, caring, love, diligence, interpersonal relations, perfectionism, hardworking, and efficiency are emphasized. Robert Greenleaf (1998) identified ten characteristics of the servant-leadership such as listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, and commitment to the growth of people, building community, and stewardship.

Servant-leadership approach advocates that leaders should serve those under them by helping them to reach maximum effectiveness, and the higher up in an organization a person goes, the more he is to serve (Rush, 2002). Stewardship is intimately related to service. Peter Block (1993) has defined stewardship as holding something in trust for another. It is holding in trust, using and investing that which belongs to someone else (Clinard, 1980).

Beekun and Badawi (1999) defined leadership from an Islamic perspective as a trust. Islamic leadership is both Guardianship and service oriented. The servant-leader approach and the leader is a servant has been part of Islam since its beginning, 1400 years ago (Chowdbury, 2001). Allah says “Indeed, this brotherhood of yours is a single brotherhood and I am your Lord and Cherisher: therefore serve me!” (Qur’an 21: 92). One of the main principles, which the Prophet Muhammad (saw) taught Muslims, is the principle of leadership through service.

Narrated by Ma’qil: The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said:

“A ruler who has been entrusted with the affairs of the Muslims, but makes no endeavor for their material and moral upliftment and is not sincerely concerned for their welfare will not enter Paradise along with them” (Al-Bukhari, 1997, V. 9, Ch.9, No. 7152, p. 166).

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) also said:

“Indeed, from amongst the servant of Allah, there are servants who are not prophets, who the prophets and martyrs will envy.” The Prophet Muhammad then was asked, “Who are they, so that we may love them?” He replied, “They are the people who love each other due to Allah’s light, not because of relationship or kinship.

They do not fear when the people fear, nor do they grieve when the People grieve.” (Al-Tabri, 1987)

Dilnawaz Siddiqui (1993) said that the concept of servant-leader came out of the Islamic system, and leaders are servants of their followers. The real meaning of Islamic administration as a public service was enhanced under the Second Caliph, Umar, who was quoted as saying to the people: “I have appointed over you governors and agents not to beat your bodies or to take your monies, but rather to teach you and service you” (Abdel-Hadi, 1970).

Khilafah is another term that connotes the meanings of service, agency, stewardship, trusteeship, and vicegerency. Khilafah is developing and handling resources on behalf of the real owner (Atari, 2000; Bangash, 2000). The human being (khalifah) is what a Muslim whether a leader or otherwise, should work hard to become. It is obligatory upon the Muslim community that someone be placed in the position of Caliph in order to continue the work of the Prophet in his capacity as defender of Islam and in worldly governance (Sonn, 1996). From this perspective, Islamic leadership is the application of khilafah in an organization. Thus, it is anchored in the purposes of Shari’ah, which are meant to provide happiness for human beings in this life and in the hereafter (Atari, 2000). So, the Islamic organization is a micro-Ummah, a community of learners who view their work as worship, who compete for the best, and at the same time extend a hand to serve and help others to catch up.

Leadership is centered on learning how to exercise leadership among one’s peers as well as in the public at large. In fact, leadership is part of the Islamic personality. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) emphasized the idea of a guardian-leader to protect his community against tyranny and oppression, to encourage God-consciousness, and to promote justice. Ibn Umar (ra) reported:

“All of you are guardians and are responsible for your wards. The ruler is a guardian and the man is a guardian of his family; the lady is a guardian and is responsible for her husband’s house and his offspring; and so all of you are guardians and are responsible for your wards” (Alim, 2000, Sahih Al-Bukhari, V. 2, No. 18).

In conclusion, Servant-leadership in both Islamic and Western literature put serving employees and community as the number one priority. It is a holistic leadership approach that aims to provide services to other, to encourage a sense of community, and to increase understanding of the spirit and culture of organization. The servant leadership uses religious texts to articulate perspectives and values that orient management, leadership, thought, and practice.

Adnan Abed is the Principal of the Iqra Academy of Utah.

Kid's Corner

Dear Kids,
Eid Mubarik to all of you!
We would like to receive stories and poems you have written. While not all of them will be printed in the newsletter, all these stories and poems would be set aside and looked at very carefully. Those whose stories and poems stand out will receive a \$25 gift certificate from Borders or Barnes and Noble Bookstore. There will be one gift certificate for short story and one for a poem. This competition will end at the end of April and winners will be announced in the June issue. Submit all entries to newsletter@muslim-forum.org. Again, wishing you all a happy Eid!!!



The Blackbird

Amna Sial

Ali ibn Hanafi, nicknamed Ziryab which in Arabic means "blackbird" was an extraordinary musician that contributed many things to the world we know today. He served Abd al-Rahman II during the Umayyad Dynasty in Medieval Spain. He was nicknamed blackbird because of his dark complexion and the clarity of his voice. If you use toothpaste, start your meal with soup and end with a dessert, or wear your hair in bangs you owe a lot to this person.

Born in the year 789 in a land now called Iraq, Ziryab was said to have been a personal servant that served the family of al-Madhi, who was a caliph of the Abassid Dynasty which is in Baghdad. Ziryab learned under a famous singer and royal court musician, Ishaq al-Mawasili. How Ziryab went from Baghdad to Spain is a story that goes a little like this:

Haroun (successor of al Mahdi and had a love for music) asked Isaac to hear Ziryab. When Isaac was asked this he himself had not known how much Ziryab had learned but presented him to the caliph anyway. Ziryab told the caliph that he had prepared songs that no one had hear of and made especially by him to present to the caliph. When Ziryab preformed to the caliph the caliph was very impressed with Ziryabs song and told Isaac that he had been hiding Ziryabs talent when Isaac himself didn't know Ziryab had. Struck by jealousy and fear of losing his position Isaac ordered Ziryab to leave Baghdad and if Ziryab did this Isaac would provide him with money to live. Without hesitation Blackbird took the money and fled to Spain in 822 where he was invited to serve al-Hakam. Devastated, Ziryab learned that al- Hakam had passed away but his successor Abd al-Rahman II was willing to renew the invitation to Ziryab. Abd al-Rahman II offered a handsome salary and Ziryab naturally accepted.

The point of Abd al-Rahman II of hiring Ziryab was to bring culture and refinement to the rough and warrior like culture of Al Andulas (present day Spain) and Ziryab did just that. In Al Andulus Ziryab was known as a "Minister of culture" and one of his first projects was to open a school of Music which not only gave a chance to talented sons and daughter of upper classmen but also to lower class Musicians. Ziryab added a fifth string to the lute and instead of using wood to work the strings he replaced the wood with an eagles talon. Ziryab loved well prepared food as much as he did music. He divided up dinning with different types of food starting with soups or broths and then fish, fowls and meats and then concluding with sweets and nuts. For women Ziryab opened a Beauty parlor/cosmetology school. Here he composed daring styles such as having women cutting their hair shorter, having bangs, and exposing the ears instead of the usual braid down their back. Ziryab developed Europe's first toothpaste and introduced the idea of men to shave their beards.

Most of Ziryab's ideas came from different cultures, some from the elites of Baghdad. These ideas of Ziryab spread quickly likely due to the fact that he was a celebrity and people gained status by simply following his ideas.

If you are under 19 years of age and are interested in writing for the Kids Page of the Forum Monthly, please contact us at newsletter@muslim-forum.org.

The editors and reporters of the Forum Monthly are always eager for new stories, fresh ideas, and original works. The *Forum Monthly* covers every subject: international, national, and community news, religion, health and science, business, media and entertainment, sports, education, cuisine, and the arts. We are also interested in analysis, commentaries, and opinions on subject areas of interest to both Muslims and non-Muslims in the the Salt Lake community. The views represented in the *Forum Monthly* do not necessarily represent the views of the Muslim Forum of Utah.

There is also a section for children called the Kids Corner. If your child has written a great story or a beautiful poem, submit it to us. If a beautiful drawing or a cartoon, we welcome it as well. If there is a book you have read, a movie you have seen, or a favorite restaurant you have visited, provide us a review. We are interested in subjects that interest you. If you are interested in being a writer for the Forum Monthly, we are interested in hearing from you. While we don't guarantee that we will publish everything that will be submitted to us, we hope that what we publish will make the *Forum Monthly* one of your favorite newsletters.

How to Submit your story or work to the Forum Monthly?

Please type your story and attach an electronic copy (text format) of your work to the e-mail addressed to: Newsletter@muslim-forum.org. Deadline for all submissions is the 15th of every month!

Forum Monthly Editors and Staff: Kirin Patel (Women's Editor), Amna Sial (Kids Page Editor), Benan Zahawi (Contributor), Asif Saberi (Editor), Babak Darvish (Editor), and Nadeem Tusneem (Editor-in-Chief)

Muslim Forum of Utah Elects New Officials

The Muslim Forum of Utah has elected new officials to its management team. The new positions are Nadeem Tusneem (President), Babak Darvish (Vice President), and Benan Zahawi (Treasurer). Other individuals rounding up the planning body are Asha Patel, Sami Kergaye, and Shaimaa Ferhad. Abtihal Raji-Kubba is currently an observer. The new team replaces Asif Saberi (outgoing President who now resides in Atlanta), Cameron Kergaye (outgoing vice president who is in Washinton DC for a year), and Shariq Khan (outgoing treasurer who was recently promoted to a top level position at his company and would not be able to dedicate the time to the activities of the Forum.

Going in to the year 2004, the Muslim Forum hopes to develop a full-fledge program in media activism, a quarterly program at the downtown City library, a bimonthly program on education for Muslims, youth development program, and look in to establishing a Muslim radio station in the Salt Lake valley.

The Muslim Forum of Utah is looking for dedicated individuals to help in implementation of its programs. If you fit this description, please contact nadeem@muslim-forum.org.

Cuisine Corner

Recipes From Malaysia

Satay

1 kg tender beef , boneless chicken or turkey breast (first clean the meat and then cut into small pieces about 1,5cm x 2cm)
 2 stalks of lemon grass (thinly sliced) or you can substitute
 2 tsp powdered lemon Grass
 1 tsp tumeric
 1 tsp ground coriander
 1 tsp ground cumin
 1/2 tsp salt, 4 tsp sugar
 1 med. size onion, cut into smaller pieces
 2 cloves of garlic
 about 50 small bamboo skewers



served with peanut sauce, rice cubes, sliced cucumber and onion.

Peanut Sauce

1 jar crunchy peanut butter about 350 gr
 1 tsp chili powder mix with 1 tbsp of water
 2 tsp onion/lemon grass mixture (from above)
 2 tsp dried shrimps (soak until soft and then finely grinded)
 1/2 tsp salt, 3 tsp sugar
 1 tsp cooking oil

Heat up the oil and saute the onion mixture, chili powder and shrimps under med.heat for 5 min. Add 2 cups hot water. Mix in peanut butter and stir well until all clumps disappear. Let cook under low heat for 20- 30min and stirring regularly.

Add salt and sugar to taste. The sauce is done when the oil come up to the surface. Just add some hot water if the sauce is too thick and let cook for few more min.

Blend together Lemon grass, onion and garlic using an electric mixer until fine (save 1 tbsp for peanut sauce). Add mixture to the meat together with the rest of the ingredients, mix well and let it stand for 1 or 2 hours (over night for best result). Skew the meat pieces, about 4 to 5 pieces per skewer leaving no space in between to avoid skewers from getting burn. Best grilled on charcoal,

Submit your favorite recipe to the
Forum Monthly at:
newsletter@muslim-forum.org

What if God Put Life on Mars?

Hesham Hassaballa

Astronomy and space have always fascinated me (maybe that is why I am such a Star Wars fan). Now, with the new pictures of the Red Planet's rocks and soil appearing on my television and computer screen, I am actually looking at the planet's surface. I begin to wonder what it is like on the planet, and the next thing that comes out of my mouth is: "Glory be to God, Lord of the Worlds."

Invariably, the next question that comes to my head--the same question that drives the exploration of the Red Planet--is, "What if they find life, or evidence of it, on Mars?" Would such a discovery throw religion a loop? Reading the sacred scriptures, one gets the sense that we humans are the only living beings in all of the universe; Earth is the only planet in the vast expanse of the firmament that can sustain life; everything we see around us has been created for us. In fact, the scriptures say just that.

In the Qur'an it says: "It is God who hath created the heavens and the earth and sendeth down rain from the skies, and with it bringeth out fruits wherewith to feed you; it is He Who hath made the ships subject to you, that they may sail through the sea by His command; and the rivers (also) hath He made subject to you. And He hath made subject to you the sun and the moon, both diligently pursuing their courses; and the night and the day hath he (also) made subject to you" (14:32-33).

In Genesis 1:26 it says, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." Indeed, for decades the Catholic Church maintained that the earth was at the center of the universe, until Galileo and Copernicus proved otherwise.

If we one day discover life on Mars, does that mean religion had it all wrong? Is religion then false? Not at all. The discovery of life on Mars, in fact, would only increase my praise, glory, and adoration for the Most Holy One. Science tells us that the atmospheric and other physical conditions on Mars should not sustain life as we know it. Yet, God can do anything. It is well within His Awesome Power--in fact, quite easy for Him--to create a life form that is perfectly suited to live on Mars. Right here on earth, microbiologists have discovered bacteria that can live in the hot sulfur pits of Yellowstone National Park, a place where human beings could not survive at all. Why could not God do the same on Mars?

It is quite arrogant for us to think that we are the only living things in the entire universe. Scientists have long known about the existence of other planets and solar systems. Why can't those planets have life on them? In fact, God could have created whole civilizations on those planets and even sent Prophets and Holy Books down to them as well. If God could create such a perfect world as Earth once, He could certainly do it again. So why tell us in Scripture that He created the heavens and earth for

us? Why tell us that He has given us dominion over the heavens and earth? It is quite natural to conclude that we are the only ones that matter in the universe, right?

He told us this, I think, for two reasons: to test our stewardship of the gift of heaven and earth, and to remind us to thank Him for all of His favors. In fact, the Qur'an hints at such. The conclusion of the passage I quoted above declares: "And He giveth you of all that ye ask for. But if ye count the favours of God, never will ye be able to number them. Verily, man is given up to injustice and ingratitude" (14:34).

God, I believe, wants to test us to see if we squander the gift of the earth and its delicate ecosystems and atmosphere. Do we, in exercising our God-given dominion over the earth, end up destroying it in the process? Or, can we find a way to extract the maximum benefit from the earth and still save it from environmental melt-down? Unfortunately, human history suggests that we have done the former. This may be the "injustice" that the Qur'an talks about in the verse.

Yet it is also important to take a step back and sincerely thank God for all He has given us. He has given us the ability to conquer the earth and inhabit its surface; travel over and explore under its oceans; conquer the air and fly through the firmament. He even has given us the ability to conquer gravity and explore the tiny part of the universe around us. Once we reflect on all these gifts, we must never forget to thank the Lord profusely; we must never be "given up to ingratitude."

So, if we ever do discover life on Mars, I would say, "Glory be to God, Lord of the Worlds." In fact, maybe the Qur'an even hinted that there is life on other planets by giving God the title, "Lord of the Worlds." We'll just have to wait and see.

As a physician, I often wonder at what sort of organism a Martian life form would be, and if I had to guess, I would say that scientists would discover cockroaches. They can survive in any condition. And then I would know for a fact that God has a sense of humor.

Hesham A. Hassaballa is a Pulmonary and Critical Care physician currently practicing in Chicago. He is a columnist for Media Monitors Network and has written extensively for the Independent Writers Syndicate, a group of academics, journalists, and professionals who comment on issues from an American Muslim perspective. His commentaries have been published in newspapers around the country and around the world.

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MUSLIM FORUM OF UTAH

The Eid of Sacrifice

Mission: To improve the image and condition of the Muslim community in Utah by providing educational opportunities for Muslims and non-Muslims; foster the correct representation of Islam in the mass media; and develop and establish programs that will improve the conditions of all Utahans.

Vision: We envision a Utah where Muslims can become strong contributors to the economic, intellectual, and political growth of their communities.

E-mail: info@muslim-forum.org

Submissions: newsletter@muslim-forum.org

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muslim forum of utah

Hagar had run back and forth between the hills of Safa and Marwa, looking for water for her and her son after Abraham had abandoned them near Mecca upon the command of God. She had told Abraham not to worry, for God was not capable of giving a command which would have brought her and her son harm. Indeed as she ran back and forth, an angel appeared and pointed her to the direction of water. The pilgrims of the Hajj perform this act by running seven times between the twin peaks of Safa and Marwa. Today, the pilgrims continue to drink the water that Hagar had found. The well holding this water is called Zam Zam.

For Muslims, Abraham has become the symbol of ultimate sacrifice and faith. An example that everyone should strive to become. In an attempt to be like Prophet Abraham, Muslims around the world offer a sacrifice to God to give their thanks for everything that God has provided. A third portion of that sacrifice is given to the poor, another third is given to loved ones, and the last is kept for the self.

The faith and dedication of the family of Abraham has immortalized them and Abraham became the cornerstone of the three monotheistic faith- Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Today, he is revered by half of the world's population.

Community Calendar

February 2004

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 <i>Eid-ul-Adha</i>	2	3	4	5	6	7 <i>Men's Swimming</i>
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 <i>Women's Swimming</i>
15	16 <i>President's Day</i>	17	18	19	20	21 <i>Men's Swimming</i>
22	23	24 <i>Utah Primaries: Go out and Vote!</i>	25	26	27	28 <i>Women's Swimming</i>
29						

Events for the Month of January

- Friday (Juma) Prayers
Khadija: 1:30 pm
Noor: 1:30 pm
- Swimming: At Dive Utah 4679 S. 2225 East from 2-4 pm \$3/adult and \$1.50/child
- Quran Study at
Khadeeja: Friday 8 pm
Noor: Friday 7:30 pm
Iqra: Friday 7:30 pm
- Youth Open Discussion at Al Rasool center around Maghrib time
- Dua Kumail at Al-Rasool on Thursdays at Maghrib time.
- Women's Convert Support Group: 1st Saturday of Each month at Whitmore Library. 11:00 am to 1 pm; potluck lunch at Iqra Academy of Utah
- Women's Friday Meeting is held at Masjid Al Noor every Friday at 7:30 pm.

Eid-ul-Adha

Will be on February 1, 2004 at the South Towne Expo Center- 9575 South State Street, Sandy at 9:15 a.m

Vote in the Utah Primaries on February 24th! Make your voice be heard!!!!