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Al-Wali
Second Edition

APR
2016



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Service, Gratitude and Hope

Assalamu Alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh,

Welcome to Awards Gala, Islamic Art Expo and Fundraiser!

On this special occasion, let's remember rich past and amazing contributions of Muslim civilization to the sciences, mathematics, and philosophy. Regardless of what image the world holds of Muslims and Islam today, history can't be changed. Let us look at the following few verses from the Holy Quran, our source of true guidance, reflect the beautiful face of Islam and Muslims:

Worship Allah and join none with Him (in worship), and do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, Al-Masakin (the poor), the neighbor who is near of kin, the neighbor who is a stranger, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (you meet), and those (slaves) whom your right hands possess. Verily, Allah does not like such as are proud and boastful; (Surah An-Nisa 4:36)

Ye are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah. (Surah Ale-Imran 3:110)

So do not become weak nor be sad, and you will be superior (in victory) if you are indeed (true) believers. (Surah Ale-Imran 3:139)

Nay seek (Allah's) help with patient perseverance and prayer: it is indeed hard, except to those who are humble. (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:45)

Among many, the few short verses mentioned above provide us the guidance to succeed and maintain hope in such challenging periods. They highlight that the service, gratitude and hope are extremely important part of being a successful Muslim. They advise us to trust in Allah, be hopeful, and see good in all that happens.

As we know, Muslims are not new to West. Yet true Islam and Muslims are still unknown to many in this part of the world. It is probably that today we have forgotten our rich past, and we have cut back on our contribution to the societies we live in. The best way to address these issues is to engage in society we live in.

So, it is crucial for Muslims to engage in community organizations, social development, research, charity and other activities involved Muslims and non-Muslim alike. Insha'Allah this will help remove misconceptions about Muslims and pass the true message of Islam. Our beloved Rasulullah saw has said: "The best among you are those who are the most beneficial to others". (Hadith)

Finally, let us pray for Allah to help us use our strengths, talents, energy, and our belief for the betterment of our communities; and may He help us succeed now and in the hereafter. Ameen!

Administration

Masjid Al-Wali

Ameer's Message

Assalamu Alaikum,

On behalf of trustees, I thank you for attending this event, and being part of the history of Masjid Al-Wali. We are thankful to almighty Allah and the community who has been so supportive. We can say that we have completed the Masjid, but the truth is we are not done yet. Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala has sent an innumerable amount of blessings upon our community. On this Awards Night, we sit in a beautiful banquet hall, no less than any upscale hotel. We need your generous support to complete the 9 Olsen parking lot (100 new spots) and to fulfill the obligation of loans that are due upon us. We are very hopeful that you will continue to be generous and help us complete these two remaining major tasks.

We are trying to serve our community with more than a place for prayer. Our goal is to establish a complete community center that can address our needs today and those of generations to come. Just to brief you on what Masjid Al-Wali features –

- Open for five daily prayers
- Daily Quran Classes for children and adults
- Sunday School
- Weekly Lecture series on various subjects
- Ramadan activities - Taraweeh, Itikaaf, Weekend Iftaar
- Annual Quran night and Community dinners
- Online Presence – Website, Audio, Video, Mobile App
- Banquet hall for small to large events
- Janaza Preparation Facility, Graveyard Affiliation and Burial Arrangement
- Play room and Gym (coming soon)
- Library and Senior Citizen Center
- Family Counseling through qualified professionals
- Board member of Marlboro Muslim Memorial, fully owned and operated by Muslims

Last but not least, we cannot serve you unless you let us know your needs and be part of this organization. We are seriously looking to start programs targeted to our youth. We humbly ask you to meet us and discuss your needs and thoughts. Join our volunteers group, who are always looking for help from people with different skills. I also request that you engage in Masjid activities throughout the year, not just in Ramadan. Please bring your family and friends and utilize all the facilities including the banquet hall, library, and senior center.

Let us pray that Allah helps us complete the remaining work and makes this community a vibrant, righteous and prosperous one. May Allah reward all of you who have been supporting Masjid Al-Wali! Ameen!

Siraj Bora, Ameer, Masjid Al-Wali

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Awards Gala – Profiles

Community Service Award - Charles Tomaro

Charles Tomaro is a Freeholder of Middlesex county. He held many positions including councilman in Edison Township and several others. He sponsored many ordinances and received several awards for his service. His accomplishments reflect his dedication to the community and his goal to improve the quality of life for the residents of Middlesex County. He also served several charity organizations in various capacities. From the beginning of the masjid project, he has been actively supporting the masjid project and Muslims in general. Masjid Al-Wali recognizes his service to the Middlesex community.

Community Service Award - Moustafa Mahmoud Ahmed

Hajj Moustafa established Dar El Salam Travel in 1985 to provide Hajj services to the Muslim community in North America. He has worked tirelessly to improve every aspect of the services received by the Hujjaj (Haj travelers). Today his company a leading provider of Hajj services operating from many locations. Hajj Moustafa is a believer in a strong community. He has been supporting the schools, Masjids and various non-profit organizations that help the poor and needy in the communities across the USA. Masjid Al-Wali recognizes his service to the Muslim community across the country.

Visionary Muslim Award - Imam Hamad Ahmad Chebli

Imam Hamad Ahmad Chebli is the Imam (religious leader) of the Islamic Society of Central Jersey (ISCJ). Imam Chebli grew up in Lebanon, and attended Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt , one of the prestigious Islamic institutions. He received his Masters in Islamic Canonical Law from Al-Azhar University.

Imam Chebli has been the face of the ISCJ since 1986 and has become an indispensable part of interfaith dialogue throughout central New Jersey and beyond. He has been a regular visitor to the local churches, synagogues, public schools and town hall meetings, promoting unity through diversity. In recognition of his contribution to interfaith dialogue and diversity, the Governor of New Jersey appointed Imam Chebli to the Governor's Leadership Summit on Diversity. He has been invited to the President's State of the Union and given the opening prayer at Congress. He has been a recipient of many awards and recognized by local, state and national organizations for his service. He has given numerous interviews to the press, has appeared on radio talk shows and television programs, explaining Islam. Masjid Al-Wali recognizes his vision and service to the community.

Visionary Muslim Award - Imam Khalid Latif

Imam Khalid Latif is a Chaplain at New York University, Executive Director of the Islamic Center at NYU, and a Chaplain for the NYPD. He was appointed as the first Muslim chaplain at NYU in 2005. He was also appointed as the first Muslim chaplain at Princeton University in 2006. Under his leadership, the Islamic Center at NYU became the first ever established Muslim student center at an institution of higher education in the United States.

In 2007, Imam Latif became the youngest chaplain in history of the New York City Police Department at the age of 24. Most recently, Imam Latif was selected as one of sixty NYC leaders to serve on May Bill Deblasio's Transition Team, helping to recommend and select individuals for key roles in the current NYC administration and also appointed to a "Task Force to Combat Hate" by NYC Public Advocate Tisch James to deal with the rise in Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and anti-Sikh sentiment in NYC.

Imam Latif has been featured on numerous media outlets including the Huffington Post, BBC, NPR, CNN, the New York Times and many others. Masjid Al-Wali recognizes his achievements and service to the community.

Awards Gala – Profiles *(continued)*

Visionary Muslim Award - Suzy Ismail

Suzy Ismail is the founder and the Head Communication Counselor at Cornerstone, a faith-based relational counseling center for youth, couples, and families. She is also the author of several books on the topic of marriage, divorce, family, and ethnic minorities in the workplace. She travels widely to speak on the topics of her books and offers diversity seminars to many universities and corporations.

Suzy is currently completing her Doctorate in Marriage and Family Intervention in the field of Human Services. She graduated with her Master's in Communication and teaches as a Visiting Professor at DeVry University and in a local high school where she has served as an officer of the Board of Directors for several years. She is frequently featured in magazines and news stories on the topic of Islam and families. She has made several media appearances including on Fox News, BBC, ART, PTV and on many more radio and television shows and newscasts. She has studied with local scholars in the US and abroad and resides in Princeton, NJ with her husband and three children.

Community Social Service Award - Islamic Relief USA

Islamic Relief USA is a humanitarian relief organization working for a better world for more than 20 years. Islamic Relief USA operates from seven regional offices in the United States headquartered in Virginia.

These IRUSA offices have been serving to educate, inform, and raise awareness about our various relief and development projects for years. Additionally, IRUSA holds seminars, banquets, concerts, and other public awareness programs across the country to help fund domestic and international projects. Islamic Relief USA provides relief and development assistance to all irrespective of religion and race.

Community Social Service Award - SMILE

SMILE is a non-profit organization that has been serving the underprivileged members of our community. It has been working with wide range of people from Syrian refugees, to domestic violence victims, to widowed mothers and wives.

One of their prominent programs include bi-monthly food pantry that offers healthy food for qualifying members. Additionally, their Zakat inspired fund offers assistance to members of the community that are struggling to get on their feet. Smile's main mission is to help struggling community members at home.

Community Pulse Award - APPNA NJ Free Clinic

APPNA NJ Free Clinic is first opened 2012, and has been serving patients since then. It is open every Sunday in Muhlenberg Hospital. More than 30 doctors from various specializations visit and serve the patients. All doctors and volunteers have been generous to donate their time and expertise.

The Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America (APPNA) is an American physician not for profit organization headquartered in Westmont, Illinois. APPNA members participate in medical relief and other charitable activities at home and abroad. Masjid Al-Wali is proud to recognize their service.

Community Pulse Award - Sight Savers Program

Sight Savers Program is a free eye clinic held at Masjid Al-Wali. Dr. Ben Szirth, Director of the Tele-Ocular Program at the Institute of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences of Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, has been serving along with his team. Since the program started earlier this year, many community members have benefited. Masjid Al-Wali is proud to recognize their service.

10 for 20 at 40 – Ten Pieces of Advice I’d give to my Twenty-Year Old Self Now that I’m Forty

Dr. Yasir Qadhi June 2, 2015 (Published on MuslimMatters.org)

Forty is a special age. It's the quintessential age of mid-life. It's older than 'young', but younger than 'old'. It's an age where one has typically finished jumping all the hoops that society and education and starting a family require, and where one now looks forward to thinking about the major accomplishments of life, and the legacy that one wishes to leave.

The Qur'an mentions forty as the age of reaching full maturity: *“Until, when (man) reaches his maturity (ashudd), and reaches forty years of age, he says, 'O My Lord! Allow me to thank the blessings that you have bestowed on me, and on my parents, and that I perform good deeds that are pleasing to you, and make my children righteous as well. Truly, I repent unto You, and are of those who submit totally to you”* [Ahqāf; 15].

No wonder, then, that our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him – PBUH) actually began receiving inspiration and preaching his message at the age of forty. For forty years, he was merely being prepared for the real purpose of his mission: the call to Allah.

This is the year that I reach that important milestone of life. I do not know what the future holds for me, although of course I have my visions and plans. But it seems fitting for me to pause and reflect upon the last four decades of my life, and ponder over its ups and downs.

I remember vividly many of my thoughts and emotions when I was twenty. It was exactly twenty years ago that I graduated from the University of Houston, and left for the Islamic University of Madinah, beginning a new phase of my life. I began thinking, “If I could, somehow, give my younger self some advice; if I could address the young man of twenty, now that I am forty, and hope that he would listen to my advice, what would I tell him?”

These are the top ten things that came to mind. I hope those of you who are still in their twenties (and perhaps some of you who are older!) will benefit from it.

1) Don't be so certain about your opinions and views.

Arrogance and cockiness define teenage years, and a

young man (or woman) at twenty really is just a teenager, plus one. Views about how to live, about interpretations of religion, about how you would do things differently than everyone else in the world – those views typically stem from a naïve and inexperienced view of the world. You will realize that over-enthusiasm and strongly held opinions are the quintessential signs of being young. Don't judge others who disagree with your views too harshly: you just might find yourself holding those same views a few years or decades down the line!

2) The most important source of practical knowledge is life itself.

Continuing from the last point, realize that the single greatest source of wisdom is learnt by living life itself. No matter how many lectures you attend, or books you read, or how deeply you contemplate or think, nothing substitutes the wisdom gained from simply experiencing the world around you. In order to be a good spouse, you need to learn to navigate the ups and down of a marriage. In order to be a good parent, you need to have your own children and learn to take care of them throughout their stages of childhood. In order to be a good human, you need to experience the good and bad of humanity.

'Facts' from books are great, but they must be shaped and seasoned and tested on the playground of life. Appreciate that you might not be in the best shape to judge everything, especially since you might not have experienced those things before. Through experience, and trial and error, one's methods for dealing with all types of problems are refined.

A corollary of this piece of advice (and if I had more than ten in this list, this would be number eleven) is: Respect and benefit from those older than you. Perhaps you know more than an elder about a certain matter (or, to phrase it more precisely: perhaps you *think* you know more than them about a certain matter), but no matter how knowledgeable you are about quantum mechanics, or investigating *sahih* hadiths, or understanding the latest psychological theories

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from your textbooks, you simply cannot match the wisdom of your grandmother when it comes to navigating the intricacies of human interactions and raw emotions.

3) *Friends come and go; family stays.*

Many young men and women act as if their friends are more important than their family. They will show more concern about hurting their friend's feeling than their family's. Much of the conflict at that age, in fact, comes from the frictions of interacting with and arbitrating between family and friends. Yet, as anyone older than you can tell you, your friends are not a permanent fixture of your life. They will come and go into and out of your room of life, and every few days or months or years, you will look around that room and realize that an entirely different set of friends are standing where once another batch stood. But, lurking in the background, never actually disappearing (until death!) are your family members. *These* are the permanent fixtures in your room of life, not your set of friends.

True, problems with parents, siblings, uncles and aunts, cousins and so forth are extremely painful, and all families have their internal disputes and major problems. It is

absolutely normal to have intra-family fights (particularly, for some bizarre reason, during and concerning marriages!). And it is normal, although not Islamic, to go for long periods with minimal or no contact with close family members. Yet, in the end, blood is thicker than anything else, and you will always be connected with family. Time heals all wounds, and even the worse of family arguments are healed (thankfully, family tragedies or celebrations act as catalysts in that regard). So never overlook your family for the sake of friends.

Having said that, and on a more cheerful note, in all likelihood the best set of friends you'll ever have are your college friends. College friends will always have a special status in your life, maybe because you were all young and lonely and single and naïve and at the prime of your youths, thrown together due to circumstances beyond your control, facing the ups and downs of a new environment away from home. Or maybe that special bond is the result of some type of unstudied scientific byproduct of the hundreds of times you all had to eat takeout pizza late at night and share cheap Chinese food together. Whatever the reasons – banal or mystical – no set of friends will have the status of college

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friends. But once again: even they will go out of your lives, some never to be seen again, others once every few decades, and a small handful with whom you'll remain in touch with forever.

One final comment about families: make sure you soak in as many memories as you can from your family elders, because you never know how long they will be with you. One of my greatest regrets in this department is that I didn't get to know my grandmother as well as I could have. I never met two of my grandparents; a third died when I was only ten. It was only my paternal grandmother (who lived with us until she passed away, when I was twenty-two) that I got to know somewhat. But as a teenager, I would always be irritated when she began reminiscing of the 'old days'. I would internally cringe every time she began a story that I had already heard a hundred times, yet I would still have to pretend as if each time were new to me. I never cared to ask her for more stories, or more details. 'When will she stop!?' I would internally ask myself as I fretted to get back to my TV show or college homework. It was only after I matured, and she and everyone of her generation passed on, that I truly realized my loss. How I wish now that I could

have learnt more about her, and her childhood. She talked to us of British soldiers in her village, of her parents and in-laws (my great-grandparents), of the ways of *pardah* in rural India, of distant relatives long gone from this world, of incidents that took place almost a century ago, and of the interesting customs of the time. Now that she has been gone for two decades, I vividly remember much of what she said, but I wish for so much more. How I wish I had quizzed her for more details, more incidents, more stories. Now that I reflect upon her stories, there are so many unanswered questions: questions that I never bothered to ask because at the time, I really didn't care to know, but now, have no answers to because I didn't care to ask them.

4) Habits developed now typically stay with you.

I have had the great fortune (or misfortune!) of studying twenty-two years continuously as a student at various universities (two undergraduate degrees and four graduate). What I found remarkable was that the habits I developed while studying for my very first degree pretty much stayed with me throughout my two decades of study (with, of course, modifications and developments). And the

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same went for my routines and other life-habits: how I dealt with early marital spats dictated my future navigation; how I reared my first child influenced my later habits with my other children, and so forth. True, I picked up some habits along the way (I never drank caffeine early on in my life; now, I am addicted to one freshly-brewed quality tea every morning, and one freshly-ground espresso drink every afternoon), and dropped others (I used to love sleeping on the floor, and felt it gave me a better sleep – obviously that is a habit that only single people can practice!), but by and large, my 'routine' and lifestyle has remained the same.

Hence, be extra vigilant of your habits at this age, and realize that the hard work and good habits that you incorporate earlier in your life will help you throughout the rest of your life. It is easier to develop good habits at a younger age than to drop bad ones later on in life.

5) Take advantage of your health and energy while you can!

Wisdom and maturity might increase as you age from twenty to forty, but alas, strength and power does not! Looking back at those years, I can't believe how much

energy I had. I could get by on small quantities of food (or even skip meals without any adverse effect); didn't require much sleep; had no trouble *falling* asleep; and could rough out the worst of conditions. I took my health completely for granted.

How much energy I had! Looking at people older than me, and seeing their aches and pains and arthritis and diseases, it never occurred to me that each and every one of those elders was at one point in their lives as young and vibrant as I was. I could never imagine *myself* with those problems.

Yet, as the years turn into decades, slowly but inevitably time begins to catch up, and you no longer can be as vigorous, as vivacious, as energetic, as you once were. Knee joints begin to hurt, back pains become more common, sleep becomes an issue, you can no longer skip meals so easilyand the list goes on, and continues to grow, year by year.

Indeed, it was none other than our Prophet (PBUH) who reminded us to take advantage of our youth before we become old.

continued on page 13

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6) You've all heard of the adage 'time flies'. Life will teach you how true that really is.

I have such vivid memories of those years, and yet they seem so far away. At times, when I recall memories from those years, I am startled to realize that fifteen or twenty or twenty five years have passed since then. How could two decades have gone by so quickly? Where did that time all go?!

And I know that as I grow older, I will also look back at these very years that I am currently living in in the same way.

Do not procrastinate what needs to be done today until tomorrow. You want to fill up your time with matters that will benefit you religiously, and worldly. Accomplish much, aim high, get things done, and you will live a full and wonderful life. Waste time, and you will end up watching the years fly by as you stand bankrupt of any lasting good. The choice is yours.

7) Life will get tougher, not easier.

We tend to exaggerate our problems at a younger age, thinking that no one has it worse than us. Looking back, I

am now amused at what I considered to be 'huge' problems (the first time my first car broke down, I quite literally felt as if my life had come to a halt!). For those of us who live in stable family environments, away from war zones, with adequate financial stability (meaning: we will not starve to death no matter what happens), it is a very safe bet to say that the most painful problems of our lives are yet to come.

I say this not to make our young men and women depressed, but to make them put things into perspective. One of the most painful moments of most people's lives comes when they see their children extremely sick or in some type of threat. At that moment, nothing that has ever happened to you as a twenty-year old could ever have been a serious problem. So, when you are tense about that exam or having missed a paper assignment or going through a tough patch with someone whom you love, take a deep breath, and realize that life is not *all* that bad!

8) The single most important decision of your entire life will probably be made in this decade: the choice of a spouse.

I cannot imagine a decision that will have more impact

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on the entire rest of your life than choosing the partner whom you intend to spend the rest of your life with! Your careers may easily change, and the field that you initially studied for typically becomes a launching pad into an entirely different trajectory. However, 'changing' spouses is not something that anyone willingly undergoes, and choosing a life-partner will have an immediate and a long-term effect on you. It will influence your character, shape your religion, bring you untold happiness and sadness and joys and pains, affect the genes of your progeny, and dictate the nature of the rest of your life (and even afterlife).

As a person who was going into Islamic studies, I knew that I needed to find a life partner who would be willing to sacrifice much for me. I am very fortunate to have been blessed with a wife who has always supported me in my efforts, and I am extremely grateful to Allah that I have 'my Khadija'! But I can honestly say that many, many of my friends who wanted to become students of knowledge or otherwise benefit their communities, were forced to abandon their plans because of spousal issues. And the same goes for other choices that you will have to make: spouses must sacrifice for each other, and who sacrifices what for

whom will decide the both of your fates.

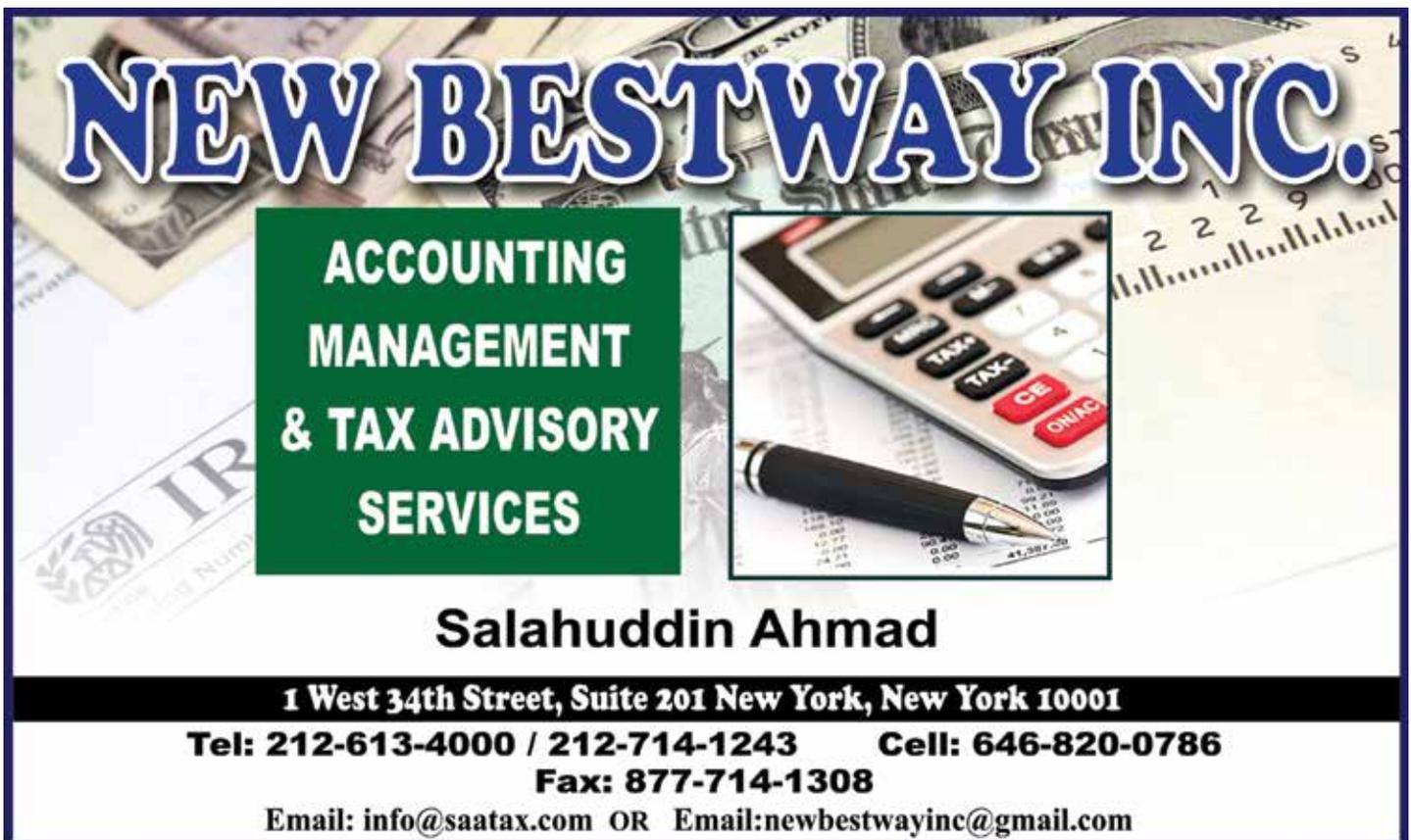
So, be picky, and look at the most important criterion: character. Beauty truly is skin deep, and what really counts is good manners and religion. When you are all alone with your spouse, with absolutely no one to help or support you, nothing will bring about a better relationship than the both of you fearing Allah for the consequences of your actions.

9) Your obnoxious behavior will come back to haunt you, while your love and kindness will always benefit you.

Sadly, people (especially family) don't forget. Yes, they might forgive, but they don't forget. If you hurt someone, or do something stupid or rude, it will always be remembered, and occasionally brought up. One harsh incident might cost you an entire relationship,

As Maya Angelou said, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." One incident in which you humiliated a friend, or were caustic to a family member, will always affect your future with that

continued on next page



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person. And an incident where you showed your mercy, or kindness, can win over someone as a true ally for as long as you live.

So be wise, don't act rashly, and err on the side of mercy.

10) No one – and I mean no one – will ever love you, or care for you, or be as concerned for your welfare, as your parents. Cherish them in every way possible for as long as you have the opportunity to do so.

It is one of the saddest aspects of growing up that children, and especially teenagers, treat their parents in a rude manner. We are all familiar with the Quranic and prophetic commandments regarding good treatment of parents. Unfortunately, for many of us, those commandments do not seep into our hearts at a young age (and for a few unlucky ones, never!).

I have said many times in my talks, “You will never understand the love of your parents until you become a parent yourself, and it is only then that you will realize all that they did for you, they did out of love.” Even if you don't have children of your own, however, try your best to give

them the love and kindness that they deserve, and honor them with kindness.

It is true that all of us are at times extremely frustrated with parental expectations, or parental advice and rebukes, but our religion teaches us to control that anger and not express it verbally. 'Zip it up!' I advise my own teenager when I see he is about to get irritated with his mother (or me!). 'Talk to us when you've calmed down. It's okay to feel angry, it's not okay to show it.' (Alas, that advice doesn't always work on him!!).

No one knows how long one's parents will be around; take advantage of their presence, to earn your place in Paradise, and to have the best memories of serving them for as long as you live as well.

Now that I've passed this milestone, I ask Allah that He blesses me and my family to see many more positive milestones in my life and in theirs.

O Allah! Allow me to be thankful to you for all that you have bestowed upon me, and upon my parents! Bless me to continue to do good deeds that are pleasing to you! And make me from your righteous and beloved servants! Ameen.



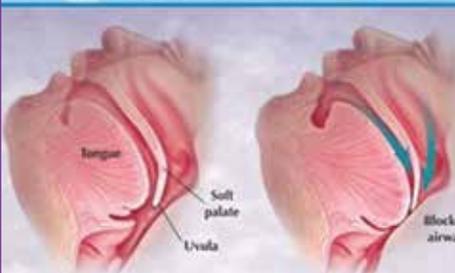
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Slavery

By Dr. Hatem al-Haj

The issue of slavery may be of the hardest issues to discuss. Our collective conscience as a global community is extremely averse to the discussion because of a variety of factors, not least of which is the cruel treatment slaves suffered for centuries. Many preachers find it difficult to talk about the issue, particularly when they are asked why Islam did not take an immediate and absolute abolitionist stance from it. Furthermore, reference books of Islamic law have extensive discussions of the rulings pertaining to the slaves, which cause many educators discomfort when they have to address them. In the following article, I will attempt to highlight some of the facts about Islam's stance from slavery.

A Historical Matter

To begin with, any discussion of slavery in Islam that doesn't put the issue in its proper historical context will be flawed. No heavenly religion sought to deplete the institution of slavery more than Islam. Islam would, therefore, welcome

the current state of abolishment of slavery worldwide, and it would be certainly keen on maintaining it by all nations of the world. A central credo of Muslim conduct is that when they engage in any agreement, they must make good on their agreement. To this point Allah said:

“دَوْقُ عِلِّ أَبٍ أَوْفُوا أَوْنَمَاءَ نِي دَلْ أَاهِي أَلِي”

“O ye who believe! fulfill (all) obligations.” (Q:5:1)

This article's defense of the Islamic stance on slavery and its mention of the excellent treatment of the slaves in Islam is only a matter of historical importance.

Never Racist

The second most important point to highlight is that slavery in Islam has never been a racist practice. There were slaves of all nations in the early history of the Muslim state. Even before Islam, the Arabs had slaves of all races. The most famous slaves in the history of Islam are: Salman, the Persian,

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Bilal, the Abyssinian, and Suhayb, the Roman. Indeed, as British historian S.H Leeder writes, the issue of color was irrelevant to the early Muslims: "Take away the black man! I can have no discussion with him," exclaimed the Christian Archbishop Cyrus when the Arab conquerors had sent a deputation of their ablest men to discuss terms of surrender of the capital of Egypt, headed by Negro 'Ubaydah as the ablest of them all. To the sacred Archbishop's astonishment, he was told that this man was commissioned by General 'Amr; that the Moslems held Negroes and white men in equal respect judging a man by his character and not by his colour." [Leeder, S.H., Veiled Mysteries of Egypt (London, 1912), p.332.]

Slavery before Islam and in Other Religions

Slavery existed before Islam, and it spanned nearly every culture, nationality, and religion. While it may have not been known among hunter-gatherer populations, it was a part of every ancient civilization. In both a socio-geographic and religious context, slavery was both normalized and tolerated worldwide, including pre-Columbian America. Upon further research it becomes apparent that no religion encouraged the

ending of the practice as much as Islam did. Moreover, no religion encouraged the beneficent treatment of the slaves as much as Islam did.

Here are some mentions of slavery in the Bible (Note that the new translations changed the word "slave" to "servant," to be politically correct!):

Numbers 31:17

"Now kill all the boys. And kill every woman who has slept with a man, but save for yourselves every girl who has never slept with a man." This is a clear communication attributed to Moses (peace be upon him) allowing the enslavement of concubines and having sex with them.

Leviticus 25 44-46

"Both thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. Moreover of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land: and they shall be your possession.

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And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bondmen forever: but over your brethren the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigour.”

Exodus 21:2-11

“If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve... If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master’s, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him forever.”

Will Durant describes the position of the Church as follows: “The Church did not condemn slavery. Orthodox and heretic, Roman and barbarian alike assumed the institution to be natural and in-destructible. Pagan laws condemned to slavery any free woman who married a slave; the laws of

Constantine [a Christian emperor] ordered the woman to be executed, and the slave to be burned alive. The Emperor Gratian decreed that a slave who accused his master of any offence except high treason to the state should be burned alive at once, without inquiring into the justice of the charge.” [Lecky, W.E., History of European Morals, vol. II (New York, 1926), p.61, as quoted by Will Durant, op. cit., vol. IV, p.77.]

Islam’s Answer to the Dilemma of Slavery

It may be said that Islam did not take an absolute abolitionist stance from the institution of slavery. To some extent this is true. However, one must remember that during the time of the ministry of the Prophet, not only was the immediate abolitionist approach not proposed by any religious or secular order, it would have been infeasible. Furthermore, it could have resulted in much social and economic turmoil, not only for the communities at large, but firstly for the many slaves who would have not been able to fend for themselves. In addition to this, the dilemma of the war captives and what to do with them made slavery the surest path to the preservation of their lives. In the past, due to the scarcity of resources, armies could not keep the

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captives in prisons and feed them, etc. It was also not always possible to free them because then they would regroup and go back to fighting. Finally, since the enslavement of the captives was a common practice of all armies, it would have been unexpected of the Muslims to be taken as captives if they lost and be mandated to free all the captives if they won.

Hence, Islam's answer to the dilemma of slavery can be summarized into two major points:

1. Gradual depletion of the institution by cutting off its tributaries and widening its runoffs
2. The enjoinder of the excellent treatment of the slaves as long as the institution survives

In the following paragraphs, I will address these two points.

The Gradual Depletion of the institution of Slavery

When one wishes to deplete a river of its water, there are two ways one could do this: either cut off its tributaries or increase its runoffs. Relating this analogy to slavery, in terms of the cutting off of tributaries, before Islam a person could be condemned into slavery through various means, including a man selling his own wife or child, child abandonment, debt-

slavery, captivity in war, kidnapping, or as a punishment for certain crimes. Islam cut off all of those tributaries feeding into the river of slavery except for the captives of war, for, as aforementioned, it was a logistical necessity at times, and more importantly, enslavement helped protect the captives' lives. However, despite that, Islam recommended freeing those captives. The Prophet said:

“ضِيَ رَمْلًا أَوْ دُوْحًا وَعَىٰ أَجْلًا أَوْ مَخْطَأًا وَرَيْسًا أَلَا يَنْعَىٰ يَدْنِ أَعْلًا أَوْ كَفًّا”

“Free the captives, feed the hungry and visit the sick.”

[Al-Bukhari]

Islam's Encouragement of the Emancipation of Slaves

The emancipation of slaves is considered one of the greatest virtues and sources of the Lord's pleasure in Islam. Listed here are some pieces of evidence to this effect from the Quran and the Sunnah:

Allah said:

“كَفًّا * عَبَقْعَالًا أَمْ كَارِئًا أَمْ * عَبَقْعَالًا مَحْتَقًا الْف * نُنِيْدُجَزَلًا هَانِيْدَمُو”
”عَبَقْر”

“We pointed out to him[man] the two conspicuous ways

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[of good and evil]? But he would not attempt the uphill road [to righteousness]. What will make you comprehend what the uphill road is? It is the setting free of a slave....” (Q:90:11-13)

“نَكَوْبِنَعْمَلْ أَوْ قَرَشَمَلْ لَبِقْ مُفْعُوْجُوْ أَوْلُوْت نَأْ رَبِّ لَأْسِيْلَ
بَاتِكَلْ أَوْ عَيْئَلْمَلْ أَوْ رَخَالْ جُوَيْلْ أَوْ لَلْ أَب نَمَّ أَنْ مَّ رَبِّ لَأ
عَمَّ أَنْتِيْلْ أَوْ عَيْبُزْقَلْ أَوْ يَدَّ بِيْحْ يَلْع لَأْمَلْ أَيْتَأْ وَ نِيْ بِنَلْ أَوْ
...بِأَقْرَلْ أَوْ يَفُوْ نِيْلِيْ أَسْلْ أَوْ لِيْ بَسَلْ أَنْبَا وَ نِيْ كَأْسَمَلْ أَوْ

“It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces Towards east or West; but it is righteousness- to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves...” (Q:2:177)

Abu Huraira narrated: The Prophet said,

نَمَّ أَوْضِعْ هِنَّمْ وَضِعْ لَكِبْ لَلْ أَلْ قَتْعُ أَمَلْ سَمَّ عَبَقْرَ قَتْعُ أَمَّ
...بِرَانَلْ

“Whoever frees a Muslim slave, Allah will save all the parts of his body from the (Hell) Fire as he has freed the body-parts of the slave.” Said bin Marjana said that he narrated that Hadith to `Ali bin Al-Husain and he freed his slave for whom

`Abdullah bin Ja'far had offered him ten thousand Dirhams or one-thousand Dinars. [Al-Bukhari]

Abu Huraira also narrated: The Prophet said,

“هَلْ أَوْلَامْ هَلْ نَأْ نَأْ لَكْ قَتْعُ أَدْبَعْ يَفْ هَلْ أَصْرَقْشْ وَتْعُ أَمَّ
”هَلْ عَرَقْ وَوَقْشَمَّ رِيْغْ يَعْ سَتْسِي

“Whoever frees his portion of a common slave should free the slave completely by paying the rest of his price from his money if he has enough money; otherwise the price of the slave is to be estimated and the slave is to be helped to work without hardship till he pays the rest of his price.” [Al-Bukhari]

Islam also made the expiation of many sins by the freeing of slaves, (a much more conducive way of redemption than giving money to a religious institution).

Yet, the most ingenious system Islam legislated was to give the slaves control over their passage into the world of the free by purchasing their freedom with the help of the community that was ordered by Allah to support their cause. Allah says:

نَزَّ هُوْبِتْ أَلْفْ هُكْنَمَّ حِيْ أَمَّ تَكَلَمَّ أَمَّ بَاتِكَلْ أَنْوَعْتْ بِيْ نِيْ دَلْ أَوْ

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The Messenger of Allah commanded us repeatedly to treat the slaves with mercy and compassion. One of his last recommendations to the Muslims prior to his death was to fear Allah regarding their slaves. A quick review of the following ahadeeth will further testify to the excellent treatment of slaves he instructed us of:

“يَمْلُغُ يَتَاتَفُ يَاتَفُ لُقَيِّلُو يَتَمُّ أَيَدْبَعُ مَكِدْحُ لُقَيِّلُو”

“None of you should say: “My slave” (abdi) and “My slave-woman” (amati), but he should say my boy, my girl” (Muslim), and In a different narration, he added, “for you are all (Allah’s) slave and the Lord is Allah, Most High.” [Abu Dawood]

Al-Ma'rur bin Suwaid Narrated: I saw Abu Dhar Al-Ghifari wearing a cloak, and his slave, too, was wearing a cloak. We asked him about that (i.e. how both were wearing similar cloaks). He replied, “Once I abused a man and he complained of me to the Prophet. The Prophet asked me,

“مُكَلِّوْحُ مَكْنُ أَوْحُ إِهْيَلْهَاجْ كَيْفُ وُزْمَا كَنْ. إِهْمُأَبُ هَسْرَيَّ عَارِزَا أَبَا أَيَّ
أَمُّ مُمْعَطِي لَفِ دِي تَنْحَتْ هُوْخَا نَاكَ نَهْفُ مَكِي دِي أَتَنْحَتْ هَلْلا مَهْلَعْج
نَافْ مَهْبَلْغِي أَمْ هُوْفَلْ كَنْتْ أَلْ وَسَبَلِي أَمْ هُسْبَلِي لَوْلَا كَأَيَّ

”هَوْنُ يَعْأَفُ هُوْطَنْفَلْ كَ”

“Did you abuse him by slighting his mother? You are a man who has ‘jahiliyyah’ (pre-Islamic ignorance and disbelief)’ He added, ‘Your slaves are your brethren upon whom Allah has given you authority. So, if one has one’s brethren under one’s control, he should feed them with the like of what he eats and clothe them with the like of what he wears. You should not overburden them with what they cannot bear, and if you do so, help them (in their hard job).” [Al-Bukhari: 3:46:721]

The Prophet unequivocally prohibited the separation between a mother and her slave child. Abu Musa reported that he (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

”نَيْبَ قَرْفَ نَم - مَلَسُو هَيْلَعِ هَلْلا يَلِصْ - لَلْ أَلْ وُسْرَ نَعْلَ”
”هَيْخَا نَيْبُو خَا أَلْ نَيْبُو أَدَلُو وَهْدَلْ أَوْلَا”

“May he be cursed, he who separates a mother from her child or a brother from his sibling” (At-Tirmidhi)

And for one who humiliates his slave by beating him or slapping him, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said,

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“مَوْتُهُ عِيْنًا مُتَرَاكَفًا مُبْرَضًا وَأَهْلُكَ وَوَلَدُكَ حَمَلٌ نَمٌ”

“He who slaps his slave or beats him, there is no expiation for this but to free him.” (Muslim)

Because of the aforementioned examples of the divine and prophetic instructions regarding slavery, no other nation or religious group in the world treated slaves better than the Muslims did, and here are the testimonies of the non-Muslim historians and leaders regarding this very fact: (quotations from www.al-islam.org/slavery)

On the attitude of the Muslim master with his slaves, Will Durant says, “...he handled them with a genial humanity that made their lot no worse - perhaps better, as more secure - than that of a factory worker in nineteenth-century Europe.” [Hurgronje C., Mohammedanism, (N.Y., 1916), p. 128 as quoted by W. Durant, The Story of Civilization, vol. IV (N.Y., 1950), p. 209.]

At the end of the 18th century, Mouradgea d’Ohsson (a main source of information for the Western writers on the Ottoman Empire) declared: “There is perhaps no nation where the captives, the slaves, the very toilers in the galleys are better provided for or treated with more kindness than among the

Muhammedans.” [As quoted in The Encyclopaedia of Islam, vol.I, p. 35.]

P. L Riviere wrote: “A master was enjoined to make his slave share the bounties he received from God. It must be recognised that, in this respect, the Islamic teaching acknowledged such a respect for human personality and showed a sense of equality which is searched for in vain in ancient civilization” [Riviere P.L., Revue Bleaue (June 1939).]

Napoleon Bonaparte is recorded as saying about the condition of slaves in Muslim countries: “The slave inherits his master’s property and marries his daughter. The majority of the Pashas had been slaves. Many of the grand viziers, all the Mamelukes, Ali Ben Mourad Beg, had been slaves. They began their lives by performing the most menial services in the houses of their masters and were subsequently raised in status for their merit or by favour. In the West, on the contrary, the slave has always been below the position of the domestic servants; he occupies the lowest rung.” [Cherfils, Bonaparte et l’Islam (Paris, 1914).]

With regard to the question of concubines and having sex with the slave girls, we must begin by saying that the

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Prophet encouraged the masters to free their female slaves and marry them. He said:

“أَهْبَدَا نِسْحَافَ أَهْبَدَا هُتْ أَمَّا ذَغْنَسْحَافَ أَمَّا ذَغْفُفُفٌ مَلْ تَنَّاكُ لَجَرَوُ
”نَارُجُ أَلْفُ أَعَزَّتَوِ أَوْتَعُحُ أُمَّتْ

“He will be doubly rewarded,...the man who had a slave girl, and he fed her well, taught her manners and educated her, and then freed her and married her” [Al-Bukhari and Muslim.]

Secondly, this system was not new or introduced by Islam; all the prophets before Islam acknowledged it and used it. There is no argument between the Jews, Christians and Muslims that Hagar was the concubine of Prophet Abraham; in the Old Testament, there are countless stories about concubines, including those of the prophets such as David and Solomon (peace and blessings be upon them all).

We can never view having sex with the female slave nowadays from the same perspective of those who lived during those times. It is illogical to deal with historical matters without understanding their context; judging a practice as good or bad is not an abstract, separate from its context and

the norms of the time. Prostitution refers to sex outside of the socially acceptable context, and in the ancient times, the concubine, like the wife, was allowed to have sex with the master as a legitimate partner. No woman would ever be allowed to have two partners at any time, so this concubine was not a sex tool to be enjoyed by the master and his relatives and friends. Additionally, she was to be only wed to one person, and her rights and the rights of her children, akin to any legitimate children of the master, were all preserved. Ultimately, sex with the female slave was not only a way of fulfilling her needs, she was also given a special status once she delivered a child. She would become unsellable, and was freed upon the death of the master.

I would conclude by emphasizing that Islam was keen on the emancipation of the slaves, and enjoined this throughout its teachings. The original and natural state in which God created his servants is the state of freedom, and He desires a return to that freedom. Let us all pray for the deliverance of all people from all forms of disguised slavery that exist in our world today and the end of all manifestations of subjugation of people by others.

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April 4, 2016

Masjid Al-Wali
10 Olsen Avenue
Edison, NJ 08820

Dear Friends:

It is with great pleasure that I write today in celebration of Masjid Al-Wali's Award Gala, Islamic Art Expo and Fundraiser on April 9, 2016. I would like to thank you for the invitation to attend this special evening, and I apologize that I am unable to join you.

I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to Masjid Al-Wali for presenting me with the Community Service Award. I am honored to be the recipient of such recognition and regret that I am unable to receive the award personally. I am proud to represent Masjid Al-Wali and will continue to fight for equal rights and opportunities and an inclusive society free of fear and intimidation for all of the constituents in my district and across our nation.

Once again, I would like to thank Masjid Al-Wali for hosting the Awards Gala, Islamic Art Expo and Fundraiser, and for the honor of the Community Service Award. Please accept my best wishes for a wonderful event and my appreciation for your continued efforts to serve the Muslim American community.

Sincerely,



FRANK PALLONE, JR.
Member of Congress



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Some Great Inventions of Muslims

- Ibn al-Haitham, a 10th-century Muslim mathematician, astronomer and physicist realized that light enters the eye. He invented the first pin-hole camera Obscura (from the Arab word qamara for a dark or private room)
- Abbas ibn Firnas, musician and engineer, attempted to construct a flying machine thousand years before Wright Brothers. Baghdad international airport and a crater on the Moon are named after him.
- Jabir ibn Hayyan, scientist, invented many of the basic chemistry processes and apparatus still in use today. Processes include liquefaction, crystallization, distillation, purification, oxidization, evaporation and filtration.
- Al-Jazari, muslim engineer, invented one of the most important mechanical device the crank-shaft device which translates rotary into linear motion and is central to much of the machinery in the modern world. He also invented many other devices such as valves, pistons, mechanical clocks. He is known as the father of robotics.
- Al-Zahrawi, 10th century Muslim surgeon, invented many surgical instruments which are exactly same as modern instruments.
- Ibn Nafis, Muslim medic described the circulation of the blood, 300 years before William Harvey discovered it.
- Persian Caliph invented the windmill in 634 and was used to grind corn and draw up water for irrigation.
- The fountain pen was invented for the Sultan of Egypt in 953.
- Algebra was named after al-Khwarizmi's book, Al-Jabr wa-al-Muqabilah, much of its contents are still in use. The work of Muslim math scholars was imported into Europe 300 years later by the Italian mathematician Fibonacci. Algorithms and much of the theory of trigonometry came from the Muslim world.
- The modern check comes from the Arabic saqq, a written vow to pay for goods when they were delivered, to avoid money having to be transported across dangerous terrain. In the 9th century, a Muslim businessman could cash a check in China drawn on his bank in Baghdad.
- Paper, originally, was brought from China into Muslim Civilization and developed it into a major industry. The impact of Muslim Civilization's manufacture of paper helped paved the way for the printing revolution.
- Ibn Sina, or Avicenna, lived in Hamadan and Jurjan from 980 to 1037 CE, developed encyclopedic book Al Qanun Fi Al-Tibb (The Canon of Medicine). It was translated into Latin at the end of the 12th century CE, and became a reference source for medical studies in the universities of Europe for 500 years.
- The Lighthouse of Alexandria is one of the wonders of the Ancient World. It was still a great tourist attraction well into the medieval period, and was visited by many travelers who were impressed by its magnitude.
- Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406 CE), through his work in economics, explained economic growth in his influential book Al-Muqaddima (The Introduction [to history]). Ibn Khaldun's reflection on the economy, the sociology, and the material aspects of human civilization is well known to scholars.
- Khalid from Ethiopia, introduced the roasted coffee to the world.

Sources: Muslimheritage.com, 1001inventions.com



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