



FITRAH REVIEW

Read. Write. Inspire...



**IN A STORY
WHERE A MAN SAID
THE SHAHAADAH**

Collection of Top 25 Entries for Ramadan
Writing Contest 1440AH/2019

Edited by:
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THE FITRAH REVIEW

IN A STORY

WHERE A MAN SAID

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**Collection of Top 25 Entries for
Ramadan Writing Contest, 1440A.H/2019**

**TO HE WHO HAS TAUGHT
(THE WRITING) BY THE
PEN.
(QUR'AN 96 V 4)**

FORWARD

Having praised Allah, and sought for His Forgiveness, I join Muslims all over the world to seek refuge with Allah from the evils of ourselves and our evil actions. While I find it particularly inspiring reading through this collection of thoughts (essays, nuggets, poems and short stories) from budding writers, it excites me to see how Muslims are actively becoming vanguards of the pen -lending their once suppressed, unheard voices to amplify and contribute to contemporary issues as it concerns their fundamental human right, lifestyle and religion.

With such generous display of depth and variety, it is evident that this cluster of writers is set to take on the world. One way, sincerely, I am reminded of old times when writing, as an art, was only a thing for the elite. Today, however, there is an appreciable shift from the norm as more youngsters take up writing to express and contribute to current narratives.

Putting Islam at the centre, there is hope in publishing young writers who rightly own our future. It suffices, here, that an intellectually sound youth (as shown in the quality of entries from our writers) informs us of a promising future with harvests.

That this collection covers a carefully selected compendium from a contest hosted to celebrate the holy month of Ramadan makes it even more appealing, which by extension idolises the legacy of great Muslim scholars (such as Imaam Muhammad ibn Isma'il al-Bukhari, Imaam Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, Abu Dawud Sulaymān ibn al-Ash'ath among others) who are/were

known first by their writings and books before anything else.

Indeed, this is a worthy cause that deserves high mention, and, the brain (Fitrah Review) behind this project equally deserves a parallel encouragement.

Therefore, as this effort further demonstrates how the Fitrah Review editorial team is thrusting its right foot forward to support and promote literary activities amongst Muslims (and youth, in particular), the world can only expect more from this bench of promising scholars as they re-invent art in the blooming light of the deen, one genre at a time.

It's hoped that this initiative will not stop on this edition. With this opportunity, further explored, I am trusting that more minds can be inspired, and more lives can be enriched with halal contents, that is rare in the book market.

Ridwan Adelaja

Winner, Tony Fernandez Poetry Prize 2018.

Lagos, Nigeria.

EDITORS' NOTE

“Nun. By the pen and what they inscribe.” –Quran 68
vs. 1

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. We appreciate Him azza wa jalla for making this project a success for without Him nothing tangible can be achieved. May His benediction be showered upon the Noblest of mankind who would leave his mimbar for Hasaan bn Thabit to recite what he has written in the defence of Islam and the Prophet (pbuh) until one day he ordered the construction of a special mimbar for Hasaan for that purpose.

It is in the spirit of this recognition that we made a call for a writing contest in Ramadan 1440A.H for works written in the light of Islam. The works of the winners, runner-ups and honorable mentions make up the 25 pieces we have in this collection.

It is therefore from our greatest delight that you join us in welcoming the birth of this long anticipated anthology “In a story where a man said the Shahadah.” This is a new adventure for us, as we have never before published an issue entirely filled with creative writing. Much prayer has gone into this anthology which has been in the works for nearly a year and we hope that you find it refreshing, soul lifting and challenging.

As a new initiative of Islamic creative writing blended with the culture of pristine Islam in line with the word of our creator Allah (the most supreme and majesty) and the teaching of the Prophet (upon him be peace), Fitrah Review works to make accessible the intellectual

and creative ideas about spirituality, faith, adherence to the word of Allah and the teaching of the Prophet in our everyday live as Muslims.

While we acknowledge that there are several Islamic publications that engage in the important task of scholarly research on Islamic jurisprudence, Fitrah Review seeks to take other route in bringing this research to the masses, we plan to work this goals through publishing personal or fictional stories of Muslim creatives or devotionals on relevant hadith and Quran verses. But art and more specifically creative writing, plays a significant role in Fitrah Review's mission.

We set into this journey of collecting and publishing the work of Muslim creatives first because, art can serve as a prophetic voice. It can challenge us to clearly see problem that we otherwise would not recognize. The prophet (upon him be peace) acknowledged that art serves this purpose, he said “Indeed some forms of speech are magical” (Bukhari) and “Indeed there is wisdom in some forms of poetry” (Bukhari),

To the goal of being prophetic and empathic voice that resonate with the mind of Muslims, we are pleased to have collected best 25 works of Muslim creatives who had entered for the maiden edition of Fitrah Review Ramadan Writing Contest 2019. This anthology includes a variety of creative pieces in the line of Quran and Sunnah, including original illustration, narratives and many types of poetry.

In furtherance of the honour due to Islamic literature as infinitive and prophetic, we assure you that more is still

coming from our stable, in shaa Allah. This we trust in Allah and in His verse that reads "Say, "If the sea were ink for [writing] the words of my Lord, the sea would be exhausted before the words of my Lord were exhausted, even if We brought the like of it as a supplement." Qur'an 18 vs 109.

Please take note of the sincerity that the writers brewed in this work. May it help us to engage more deeply in our call as Muslims to “pursue what makes us the best of Ummah for calling people to goodness, forbidding evil and building mutual spirituality (Faith in Allah)” (Qur'an 3 V 110).

Blessing to you as you read and reflect.

Yusuf Olanrewaju (Yusful)
Taofeek Ayeyemi (Aswagaawy)
~The Editors

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FICTION



IN A STORY WHERE A MAN SAID SHAHADAH

by Anifowoshe Ibrahim

And when they board a ship, they supplicate Allah, sincere to Him in religion. But when He delivers them to the land, at once they associate others with Him(Sura Al-Ankabut, verse 65)

IN A STORY WHERE A MAN SAID SHAHADAH

Sometimes in the first days of May when the incoming rain alerted humans with generous winds, a bus had swerved off the road, plunging head first into a tree, before, upon impact, disappearing in quick acrobatic contortions into the green embrace of a forest, not to be seen by anyone driving by but the blue shadowing sky. It slumbered on with passengers stuck in the back seats, and the driver dripping blood as a swollen ocean of red water spurted from his head. Amongst all these, there lay motionless, a man, on checkered shirt with his legs mired in-between the iron holdings of the seats. His skin, each inch of it, matted-down to groans and moans that all that was his paling thighs cascaded into sharp tints of pain as he to tried to wrangle himself out. There was a body beside him, a girl, with her eyes white and lifeless that she shifted only when he moved. Her body cold like the patchwork of the wind. Then he made energetic jerks as if to tear out the window of the

bus. He heard quick groans from others too, then there was silent sobbing, and silence, and more silence as if each souls exited the bus after their groans. Then, with rivulets of perspiration running down his whole body, as if to accept his quick fate, he had made his Shahadah, sought that he be forgiven, closed his eyes, and took comfort in the knowledge that he was gone.

But

In May, a man walked every morning to his farm in preparation for the incoming rain. He had been on his way back when he saw the yellow paint of the bus hiding in a congregation of thick columns of green trees. It was as if the bus, hiding in revelation, had wriggled it way into the colossal conscience of the forest. The man, surprised by his discovery, cut through the clutched copulations of vines strangling their own kinds as he reached quickly for the bus. Upon arrival at the scene, he saw the bodies of ten people splayed out as if in a deep indiscriminate sleep. The skull of the driver had exhausted all it blood, and there was a little hole where a white-coloured thick mucus seeped out. He saw that it was the driver's brain. And his stomach rumble as if to expect an imminent blow up. He headed to the back of the bus, pulled open the booth, found the man in checkered shirt muttering silent prayers.

But

In July, legs still recovering as he limped with little pains around his thighs, the man in checkered shirt was again on the same road. His destination was the house of the woman he took refuge in, save his wife.

ROFIQOH

by Babatunde Roqeebah Adeola

"We will surely test you with something of fear & hunger, & the loss of wealth & lives & the fruits (of your toil), but give glad tidings to those who patiently preserve, who say-when afflicted with calamity- "To God we belong & to Him we shall return!" They are those who descend blessings from their Lord, and Mercy. Such are the rightly guided." (Quran 2:155-157).

'Can we talk?'

he said out of the blue.

'There's nothing to talk about', I replied.

We both stood in silence. No tension. A convenient silence that wrapped us both together.

My mind travelled back to the first time I met Abdulatif or rather heard of him. A friend of mine who happened to be a close one asked if I was interested in knowing a guy. 'No problem', I said. I asked her to give him my cell phone number.

After some days, I received a whatsapp message from an unknown number. Deep down, I knew it was him. But the childishness in me decided to pretend.

"I'm Abdulatif from Sis Sumayah" he texted.

"I'm Rofiqoh, how may I help you?" I replied.
"You already know why I am messaging you".

Maybe his not wasting time attitude is what attracted me to him, I can't say. All I could think about then was I've reached my bus stop.
"Can I asked you something" he texted randomly one of those days.

"Hmnn, what" I replied
"What do you want badly?"
"It's funny but a niqob and freakishly colored socks. You?"
"You....."
I blushed behind my phone.

Adhan from the mosque near my hostel brought me back to the present.
'Maybe I should go' Abdlatif said
'Yea, bye' I replied and walked out.

I couldn't wait to get to my room before I flung off my jilbab. I was exhausted emotionally and physically. Tears streamed down my face as I remembered the only person who betrayed me. I know it's his time but I couldn't help it. He was supposed to be the light at the end of my tunnel, my strength and inspiration. He left

too soon.

I dialed his number to hear the same automated voice saying it's not allocated. Silly me, what was I expecting.

Ridwanullah, as he liked to be called. We met during a 3-month carpentry training in Ibadan. We never saw eye to eye at first. We became friends after we were paired to be in the same workgroup. He was kind. From professional texts to personal ones, he was the one, who talked sense into my head.

"You deserve to be happy, you know that, right?" he texted

"Lolz, of course. Who doesn't?" I texted back

"I'm referring to you, just be happy"

"I'm trying"

"Try harder, some people just don't deserve it"

"OK!!!" I ended the conversation.

I switched my data off and went to sleep. To think about it, he really hits home. Then I slid into the dreamland where everything is perfect.

My ringtone jerked me awake from my deep sleep. I picked it up without checking who the caller was.

'Ridwan', I called excitedly

'Yes, Rofiqoh. It's me' the voice over said.

'I missed you, why did you have to leave me in the cold?'

'I'm sorry, go back to sleep'

'No.....' and the line went off.

I went back to sleep with a smile on my face.

It was 'Ishai time when I woke up. I hurriedly performed my wudu' and salah. Later, I took my phone to check my whatsapp. Abdlatif's message caught my eye, I clicked on it.

"I'm sorry to have disturbed your sleep. We really need to talk, for Allah's sake. Please reply me ASAP."

I was beyond shocked. I made a fool of myself. To think that Ridwan would call. Abdlatif, of all people, he played along. Fine. I called him back yelling at him to never call or see me again.

Almost a week later, Abdlatif messaged me saying he is front of my hostel. I went out to him.

'What', I snapped

'You're still angry with me, Rofiqoh. It's been 3 years' he said

'I don't keep grudges, 3 years is a long time' I gritted

'Anyway, I want you to reconsider me, please' he pleaded

I chuckled, 'And who told you I'm desperate?'

He swallowed with Adam's apple going up and down.

He extended a gift bag which I noticed him holding. I eyed it.

"Please take it" he pleaded

"I don't want anything from you" I snickered

"I said I am sorry, can't you just let it go?"

"About?" I asked

"He is dead and not coming back" he stood to rest on his feet facing me squarely with a straight, poker face.

How dare he, I thought. How dare him!

"How dare you" my voice came out squeaking

"You deserve to be happy"

"Funny, he said the same thing about you" I smiled

I sat alone in the basket ball court to clear my head. I leaned back on the chair, resting my head in the head of the chair. My mind drifted back to Ibadan with Ridwan. It was during the lunch break, I went to sit opposite him. He continued eating, pretending not to notice my presence.

'You're right' I broke the silence

He nodded.

'He's getting married in two weeks,' I continued 'I saw his IV on his status. I'm pained but I will survive. God! I can't believe he would do that to me. After everything.'

'Sorry' Ridwan said, stifling his laughter. Our eyes met, we burst out laughing.

A tap on my leg opened my eyes. I saw little Aisha smiling up at me. I carried her to sit on my lap. I asked her about her mother. She stretched her hands and I directed my gaze to where she was pointing at. I saw my friend Sumayyah coming towards us.

'Now that you've seen Aunt Rofiqoh, happy?' she scolded Aisha

I laughed. 'Marhaba, Yah Umm Aisha. As-salaam Alaykum'

'Walaykum salaam yourself Rofiqoh' she eyed me mockingly, 'you've taken the sand of my house abi, that's why you forgot us'

'Afwan, Finals is at the doors' I replied.

'Eeeiish, e dey your body. By the way, we need to talk'

'About' I feigned innocence

'When will you get married, you're not getting any younger, you know.....!'

'ehn, ehn, it's you abi' I cut her short 'You gave AbdLatif my details .

I should have known'

'What was I to do. He is a nice guy' she replied

'Sorry o, anti Mr nice guy, its none of you guys fault, if not because of what happened, I would have been

married by now' I hissed

'Unfortunately, you are not. He died, his wife died too and you have a life to live' she said, wrapping her hands into mine.

'I know.' I hugged her. I cried into her hijab. I cried so hard. They are right, I have a life to live. He would want the best for me too.

Aisha's whimper made me stop crying

'I want to hug too, mummy' she slides in between us

'Tell him I will think about it.' I whispered to Sumayyah

I prayed to Allah, fervently that night. To guide me, to show me the way. Only He can put me into the right path. After praying, my eyes caught the gift bag AbdLatif gave me. I opened it up. I found what amazed me. I had forgotten. A niqab and freakishly coloured socks. I smiled. Latif messaged me during the week. I asked him to come see me whenever he was free. He came the next day. We went to a restaurant to talk.

'Have you reconsidered me?' he asked

'You know, when you left that time' I started 'I kept asking wondering, 'what did I ever do wrong?' The first chance you got, you left. I came back to my senses when I saw your status that day.....'

'I'm sorry' he cuts in

'keep quiet and listen' I snapped 'it made me realize so many things I'd rather keep to myself. Ridwan's death

knocked me down again. He died in a road accident. When we finished our 3-month training, he asked if he could come see my father. I said yes, not knowing he was serious about it. When I realized he was, I didn't forbid him. At least he's not a coward like someone I used to know or thought I knew. The only regret I had was not meeting his parents before he passed. I couldn't even go to his janazah. But Allah knows' I finished.

'Would you love to meet his parents, I can take you to them'

'No, some stones are better left unturned' I replied
Silence descended upon us. Like a soft peace, it wrapped us both in. Each of us, wanting to say all and nothing. After some minutes like ages passed, my voice cut through the silence,

'I want to live again. Life has not being fair to me lately. And I'm sorry about your wife'

'May Allah forgive them' AbdLatif prayed

'When do I get to meet your daughter' I smiled at him

'Anytime, she's Rofiqoh' he said, proudly.

'Well, means you won't mind two people answering you at the same time in your house' I told him happily.

'Oh well, why not make that haste. Will see your father during the weekend'

'Not wasting waste, are you?'

'Do you want me to?' he winked
We both burst out laughing.

SEIZED

by Aisha Oredola

The likeness of this world's life is only as water which We send down from the cloud, then the herbage of the earth of which men and cattle eat grows luxuriantly thereby, until when the earth puts on its golden raiment and it becomes garnished, and its people think that they have power over it, Our command comes to it, by night or by day, so We render it as reaped seed; produce, as though it had not been in existence yesterday; thus do We make clear the communications for a people who reflect.
(Qur'an 10: 24).

SEIZED.

The 11th Century...

If the sun were anything, it'd be a pendant to the string of invisible stars caressing her neck. The half-moon could be cut into a tiara, placed carefully on her head. The earth roared beneath her raging feet, every time she walked. Her gait knew no pity for men with weak hearts, men who wanted her, men who despised her presence.

What do you do when the daughter of a prominent King could ask for your head for breakfast? Request for

your blood to quench her thirst? If power were a bracelet, Jemilah had it permanently locked around her wrist.

She had lived two decades and was about to select a suitor, but no sane man dare presented himself. The ones who exchanged mental fitness for insanity had tried but failed before their efforts did them any good.

'Do you like this one?' Her father had asked, crossed legged on his throne.

'Distasteful' Jemilah recoiled.

Nights after, she found herself in the surroundings of the servants' quarters. Her disguise was weak for it was but a black cloak, which covered not her jewelries properly. Her feet kissed the ground slowly until she reached his door. Jemilah tapped twice.

The young man who had difficulty sleeping with all of his mind had heard. Frightened, he opened the door a crack.

'Princess!' He gasped.

'Two more days. Lest your head shall be mine. I do get whatever I want.' Her retreating figure stung his heart. Khalid shut the door gently and looked over the body of his gorgeous wife, whose hands protected the frame of their two-year old son. He could not stop the tears from streaming down his face.

Why did she choose him for her object of lust? He, a married man stricken with poverty, drooling for crumbs yet the princess cursed with power wanted him to lay with her.

Khalid fell on his knees. 'I can't do this.' He sobbed. 'What is the life of this world but mere play and amusement? O Allah!' He whispered, raising his head to the ceiling. 'Save me from this woman's lechery. It is you who gives life to the earth but it is you who has the power to seize the same life. It is you who gives power to people and it is you who can seize it! Save me as you saved Yusuf. Save me as you saved Yunus. Save me from this pit of hell that calls my name, beckoning for me to lose.'

Khalid tiptoed to the raffia mat, before lying next to his unaware wife and son.

Two dawns passed and Jemilah had lost her patience and called for Khalid. 'You have unfinished work in my chambers' She cooed. 'Shall we?'

'I'm sorry but no.'

'Have you become one with madness?' Her long shimmering dress swept the stone floors as she circled him. 'You're a chaste man but that's exactly why I want you. I hate not getting whatever I desire and you have proven too stubborn. Many men seek my hand. They

pour into the palace like soldier ants desperate for sugar. Yet you deny me this one thing I need.' Jemilah giggled and placed her hands on his shoulders. 'Come, come with me.'

'I'd rather you have my head.'

'I shall enrich and elevate you if you comply.'
Desperate, Jemilah rushed.

'I'd rather you kill me.'

'Woe to me! What faith is this? Who do you serve?'

'I serve the One who created us both. I submit to the Almighty Allah.'

'Let him save you then, if He can, for I swear before dusk you shall taste dust.' Jemilah shrieked and guards raced towards her. 'Inform my father of this man's treachery. He has betrayed the whole kingdom. Prepare his death festival for him as soon as my father hears of this!'

Khalid was dragged by his wrists, across the floors all the way to the center of the palace, where traitors are hung or decapitated. He sobbed and sobbed but held his resolve stubbornly. His wife and child knew of the news in no time and pleaded with Jemilah and the King but both ordered they watch him die wastefully like fowls slaughtered for a feast.

Khalid's head rested on a small rock. His hands, were tied behind him. His legs were bent forward and the one in charge of cutting heads off yelled that it was time for him to meet his end.

Khalid took a deep sigh and asked Allah to forgive him. 'Take me Lord if death is better for me but cause me to live if life is better for me.'

The slaughterer raised a sword so high and began dropping it towards Khalid's neck. Suddenly, the King held his chest as the paroxysm of pain was unbearable. His groans put everyone's actions to a halt. Jemilah held her father, and screamed for help but it was to no avail.

The rule of the Kingdom however was once a King passed away, whatever rules he laid down or orders he gave would be immediately stopped to be reviewed by the next King.

Khalid's Lord heard him. The princess was too distracted to crave his death anymore and a burial was arranged for the tyrant King. Jemilah's brother - who was exiled from the Kingdom due to his uncanny ways was summoned by Palace elders and elected as King. He reviewed Khalid's case and asked that he be freed from trial completely and promoted to King's adviser. Jemilah was severely punished and ended up poisoning herself as she couldn't deal with lack of power nor deal

with submission to her brother's so called strange ways. Power was indeed seized from her and her end was pitiful.

The era of the tyrant King and his maleficent daughter passed away with their bodies as if they had never even existed, just like green herbage drying out into dry stalk.

PRISON IS DEARER TO ME

by Hassan AbdulBaqi Babatunde

He (Yusuf) said: "O my Lord! Prison is dearer to me than that (fornication) which they invite me. Unless you turn away their plot from me, I will feel inclined towards them and be one of the ignorants." (Qur'an 12 : 33)

PRISON IS DEARER TO ME

"What are you saying?"

"You heard me right Aliya, I want us to end this relationship." I said, recognizing the pain in her voice and it was because of this pain and prolonged discussion that I sent her the letter through Halima, her younger sister.

Aliya had been a childhood friend and our love affair started from secondary school. She was the daughter of my mother's friend and their house was just a stone throw from ours. I kissed her when we were in JSS 1 as she smiled and we started sex in JSS3 the day I told her I wanted to show her something in my room.

Mummy would say whenever Aliya left: "You're becoming a man, but don't get her pregnant o." I couldn't have done that as I made my pieces of Gold

Circle condom, from Mummy's small pharmacy store, available at all times. That was whenever dad had already gone to his office. And now, I am ending everything. She could not have believed, for all the promises I made the night Daddy was away for a conference in Abuja. She slept over in my room that day and Mummy helped to tell her friend, Aliya's mother, that her daughter was 'safe' with us.

"Habdol...what happened to you?" She asked. It was the same question Mummy asked: "What happened to you?" when I packed all the hiphop albums in my rooms and dropped them in the dust bin. My brother rather asked, "Am I speaking to Harbdol?" when I told him it is Abdullah, not Harbdol and that it is Ahlul Sunnah, not Ali Suna. True, something really did happen to me, I met prophet Yusuf.

It was at the time I went to sit for my Post UME at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. I had to be at the institution a day before the exam due to the distance between Ile-Ife and Igbokoda. My elder brother, a student in the institution was absent. I had to squat with his colleague, Fuad. About him, my brother already said: "Anything Fuad says, don't mind him. He is this strict ali sunnah MSSN people." and I got the message. He had always been talking about them at home - the Ali Sunas. They recite the Qur'an with their

throats. They don't prostrate to elders. They give their mothers Peak Milk and ask them to replace it with the breast milk they were fed with when they were babies.

When Fuad came to meet me at the university gate, I was surprised at how such a handsome young man would waste his looks by covering it under the facade of unshaved beards and jumping trousers. He looked so much like Wizkid with his pink lips and when he smiled, the picture Davido had on his hit album "E Ma Dami Duro" came to mind.

"Are you Abdullah, Mas'ud's brother?"

"Yes, I'm Habdol", I preferred Habdol to Abdullah because it sounds more pleasant and brief, that was what people called me at home.

"No, your name is Abdullah. Abdul means slave, which is degrading. Abdullah, the slave of Allah is uplifting."

"Just as described." I thought to myself with irritation as we walked to his apartment amidst silence. We entered his room, he served me and told me he wanted to complete one of his madrasah assignments, who cares?

After my examination, I went to the central mosque to help Fuad submit his assignment to Ustadh Bawa as he implored the day before because he had a lecture. I arrived at the masjid earlier and had to wait for Ustadh Bawa. I unfolded the sheet of paper, it started with Arabic and then English underneath: The Comparative and Superlative Degrees of Adjective in Suuratul Yusuf. I already know the story of Yuusuf; Joseph in the Bible. I read part of the story in one of the publications of the awake series which the Jehovah Witness always dropped whenever they come to Mummy's shop. I watched part of the story in the projector some missionaries came to show in Igbokoda. From being the favourite of his father, then sold into slavery by his brothers, imprisoned after the plot of Al-Aziz's queen and later became the prime minister of Egypt. I kept on reading the English translation of the verses he wrote in the assignment anyway and left the Arabic as I waited for Ustadh Bawa. A certain line struck as I read: He (Yusuf) said: "O my Lord! Prison is dearer to me than that (fornication) which they invite me. Unless you turn away their plot from me, I will feel inclined towards them and be one of the ignorants."

I read it again and that arrested my attention. Prison was dearer to him than fornication, my daily bread? That kept repeating itself in my head as it sunk into my heart so deeply in a way I had never felt before. The

following day, my life did not only change, it turned another direction as I consequently read the explanation of the verse and listened to the Imaam as he discussed zina during Jumu'ah, the Friday I finally went home. Now, purpose driven.

"Let's end the relationship." I said to Aliya again.

She must have realized it was a firm resolution as she turned to leave. I wanted to watch her but I had to avert my gaze, like the believers have been commanded, like the Imaam said during that Jumu'ah, I forgot the reference but I remembered the verse "Verily, the hearing and the sight and the hearts of those shall be questioned."

POETRY



THREAT OF ENVY ON GOOD DEEDS.

by Adeleke Abdul-Lateef Adetunji

THE HADITH: The prophet said, "Beware of envy, for it consumes good deeds as fire devours faggot (wood) or grass".

Watch not only the watch on your wrist,
But also the stream of sounds humming
Deep in and within you,
Against the success of another man.

Guard not only your farmyard
From the peril of burning fire.
But also your deeds from the hazard of AL-Hasad.

instead,

Imbue charity on every man
As it may garner to favor you into Jannah
As rain sprouts bud into flowers.
Even if they throw dagger on you,
Pray for them with coolness
For all we hold in mind
Will one day stand for us like an Angel
Or frown against us like the devil.

TO SETTLE IN REVERSE by Anifowoshe Ibrahim

"Until you visit the graveyards".
-Sura At-Takathur, verse 2

Perhaps, the idea of living
Is incomplete without
The ending of it.
We cast ourselves in
Prayers, that recites as parables,
As we ask God to understand
That we want to live.
That our souls are the
Blaze of a rose-tree.
That our bodies are the
Navigation of miniature villages.
That our loved ones are the tides
Slipping through our channels of blood.
We hold ourselves in silent prayers
With the hope of the next breath.
We forget we frail out as sands
Slipping from the fingers of a
Desert traveler.
And we settle as dust in a place
Where our prayers fail,
Where our bodies reverses
Into their origin.

HOW TO BEGIN A NEW POEM

by Ojo Taiye

"We will surely test you with something of fear & hunger, & the loss of wealth & lives & the fruits (of your toil), but give glad tidings to those who patiently preserve, who say-when afflicted with calamity- "To God we belong & to Him we shall return!" They are those who descend blessings from their Lord, and Mercy. Such are the rightly guided." (Quran 2:155-157).

Nothing is so beautiful than living
Nothing is truer than its hymns & cross
I am writing again with both hands full of laughter

Everyone has an inheritance; everyone wants to stay
a while & kneel to joy. there are bright cardinals on
the power lines calling forth the sun. the wind is alive,

so is the coco plums too; it swings & shakes with ants
that nest in its outer bark. no one should pause long
before grief. i've been wrong about many things but

not hope- with it i have dug happiness from the serifs
of my own pain. & still as the day heaves forward, i'm
reminded of the scar i came from & the future i once

wanted. my mother passed a year before my

sophomore
though i drank her absence like liquor- i always
endeavor
to replace the shape of loss with music & it tasted just
fine.

i think of gypsy children bubbling somewhere in the
distance. another home drawn to my body's desire-
a lace-like appetite that seeks to wear winter's last
coat.

AL-FATIHA (Qur'an 1 : 1-7)

by Bada Yusuf Amoo

Oh Fatiha, my pious chapter
The wisdom of Allah brought you forth
As the summary of faith, holiness and Qur'an
That so much you live on every tongue
Even the unfaithful knows you, reads you.
In you, all men make their oath to Allah daily
That "thee do we serve and thee do we beseech for
help"
And seek Allah's guidance to "keep us on the right
path",
But soon men forget and somewhere else they look
For new Lord, guidance, fortunes and path to take
And few that know are just privileged to remember.
Though to Allah are all Qur'an verses
But in you, there is extreme commitment to Allah
That I pray not to deviate from, Aameen.

Oh Fatiha, you have been there for me
When life turns abstruse like a bare storm;
Your verses become my only ladder
During tahajjud, and every of my sujud.
You become the magic wand in the cottage of my heart
That calms the bare storm rising on my paths
With all the numberless goings-on of life,
Inaudible like dreams, thin like glycerine flame at Fajr.

Some of the unquiet things of life
That we feel their motion in the hush of night
Give dim sympathies to my existence
But oh Fatiha, knowing you brings me closer to Allah
That I find the paths, despite grey cloud and bare
storm.
Keen I am to you, Alhamdullilah.

YOUR PETAL WOULD GLOW

by Adedimeji Quayyim Abdul-Hafeez

"Do the people think that they will be left to say, "We believe" and they will not be tried?

But We have certainly tried those before them, and Allah will surely make evident those who are truthful, and He will surely make evident the liars."(Qur'an 29:2-3)

Your body is a haven of petals and roses - quills flapping their gails in the curly hairs of your breath.

Tranquillity flows in your being - heaven squeezes its juices in the insides of your spirits. The petals flap your insides into nourishment.

You just melted an ice - portraying the 'Islamicity' of your pristine self in the tender waves of these spheres. Your body bears scars to reflect the molding of your spirit had underwent in the course of smoldering you into better shapes. You glint of serenity - your tongue rolling out the sacred voices in the tone of God.

Five pillars hold you strong when you falter - your being dividing in the leaps of the six articles. The roses in you glow - booked ticket of your sacred

dwelling lie in Jannah tinted in white lilies, your dream color. You still rest on swollen feet, bent knees and fallen shoulders - ever praying to secure

your haven in heaven and keep you away from the gnaws of hellfire which caves its tongues on your illusion in silent fears your bear.

You feel strewn in a cage with razed hopes, tilting your head in unbalanced proportions and the next thing you think of is suicide; haven't you read the Book? Tests knit your being into wild digits enabling you to flow with the waves of this phase unscathed. Have you not thought of the truism of accountability as the soul of our shifting lives?

You forget the petals and the roses beautifying the whims of your being. Don't you worry catching all these in gasping breaths; withering spirits looking at the nooze of your ropes in mock contentment, fearing that your castle in Jannah fizzle in tiny slits of the wind?

You're born beautiful. Your petal would glow.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BOLT-UP by Shehu Abdus-Salam Aladodo

"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity."
(Qur'an 2:286)

"...and who restrain anger and who pardon the people - and Allah loves the doers of good" (Qur'an 3:134)

When you bolt-up the rage in you
allowing the phlegm of unrefined words to stick in
your throat
without spewing it out,
you become a sun; bathing on the seashore on a mild
midday.

When you halt the rock of ages,
gathering on your mind
from rolling and crushing another to death
by keeping your tongue in place,
you become an activist;
fighting with words & silence.

When you look around & find nothing better
than to smile to the one who has wronged you,
whilst saying "You're forgiven",
you become a moon;

kowtowing to the sea on a silent night.

For swallowing up anger which has been sliced up your
throat,
& pardoning one you could have reprimand
makes you an Ali (RA) who forgave a broken ornament.

It makes you a companion,
heeding to the words of Rosullullah:
"La Taghdab!"

THE MASTER KEY

by Oyero Abdullahi Olaseni

"in the name of Allah, the entirely Merciful, the especially Merciful" (Qur'an 1 : 1)

Every secret secreted in a secrete vault has a master key to unveil the existence that exist behind the black & blue. The secret that discloses things is "Bismillah Rahmani Raheem.

let me tell you tales that draw the tails of these words into the realm of mightiness. A white garment dropped inside the assembly of blacks his destiny was written with lucky pen shedding its blessed ink on the success booklet. Which sprouts the fruit of hatred from the hearts of co-beings.

With all means flying with the wind under the face of the sky, how to burn and dust the dust was the rhythm of their heart beat. but all efforts went into the river of vain. for the dust won't stamp an act without the might of the Master Key. yet the sleepy dogs ceased to sleep. and the sky get more brighter.

time flied, moment crawled actions
followed the path of the heart but
mission keep falling & the target keep
growing & the dust will continue
to escape enemy's trap for every
act of his starts with
BismiLahir Rahmanir Raheem.

REMEMBER THIS DAY LIKE YOU REMEMBER YOUR SINS by Kolade AbdulMalik Ademola

Qur'anic Verse: "O My slaves who have transgressed against themselves (by sinning)! Despair not of the mercy of Allah: verily, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful" (Quran 39: 53)

Remember this day; when the earth is shaken to its utmost conversion,
And it disgorges out its contents lying therein,
Then, turmoil would have been at its peak
And peace would have been jilted of its place
The sun will now be within arm's length,
Boiling the brain at a temperature beyond the thermometer's readability.

Remember this day; that everyone's engrossed in their predicaments
Running from the first man, Adam, to the last Prophet, Muhammad,
Seeking intercessor for the mercy of Allah upon them, His creations.
Thereafter, that you & I will stand naked, facing the Almighty
Hands behind our back as we await our trial
And if so He wishes to punish a creation for misdeeds
Then he would ask, and show him his lapses on earth.

Remember his day;
When the graves will be narrowing & crushing the
chest & bones of those who are in it;
When the trumpet will be blown to awake all sleepers;
Then the Kafirs will say - behold we are free from
punishment
The Angels reply, what not, this is just a tip of the
iceberg
& that you have only been waken up to greater torrents
- Al-Jahanam.
This day when creations will be ripped apart, burnt
And be made to drink that which is absolutely boiling.

Remember this day; when the fragrance of the Paradise
lulls the Muslims to slumber;
This day, like the unbelievers, the trumpet will be
blown to awake all sleepers
And so the believers will also ask - Who wake us from
our sound sleep?
& the good news of the paradise will be relayed to
them to calm their souls -
That this place is no enjoyment, the place they're
heading to, Al-Janah, is.

Remember this day of reckoning like & as you
remember your sins
So every word, walk, act of worship and intention...
Channels your Tawbah to Allah, the Oft-Forgiving, the
Most Merciful.

WHICH OF THY LORD'S FAVOUR SHALL THOU DENY?

by Musa Tayyiba

“which of thy lord's favour shall thou deny?”(Qur'an 55:13)

Nature's alternating surge of life
Is all I see amidst the dark night,
everything comes in pair
Sunrise replaced by sunset

Night by day, dawn by dusk
Moon by Sun
Sorrow by Joy
Wow! What a perfect ploy

These are all but signs and tests
For every believer, this quest must be met
So persevere in times of hardship
For relief follows every hardship.

If only thou are not but blind
Which of thy Lord's favour shall thou deny?

REMEMBER ME

by Kolade Olawale AbdulKabir

“Remember me, I will remember you”. (Quran 2:152)

Remember me oh Allah
not alone for the blessings I seek
but also for the forgiveness I asked,
for the sins I let out of the cart.
Remember me not alone as a Muslim
but also as a servant whose days are becoming
dehydrated of ease.
Remember me in the holy month of Ramadan
not alone for the hunger nor the thirst I went through
but for the lane you laid that I followed.

Remember me not alone for the pillars I uphold
but also for the articles of faith I let became a part of
me,
"remember me and I will remember you", you said
so my Iman grew far and wide like wildfire.
remember me not for the Zakat I did give
but for the Amanah I didn't break,
for the Usury I didn't take
and the fornication I didn't commit.

I know you are the door opener
so I recited surah Al-fatiah to seek your intervention,

making my impossibilities turn possibilities,
increasing my capability so I can increase my good
activities
so I pray that you always remember me.

HARBINGER OF HOPE by Oluokun Salman Abiodun

“For indeed, with hardship [will be] ease.

Indeed, with hardship [will be] ease.”(Qur'an 94:5-6)

Everything will soon be fine
With victory we'd wine and dine
Life will cease to be unfair
And success will visit us in pairs

This time will halt to be tough
Our days will no more be rough
Failure will later take a relay
Leaving our side without delay

The end of the journey will be dope
All we need is some cubes of hope
It only can take some whiles
Fortune surely owes us some smiles

Tough times will never last
They'd soon be dwellers of past
Days ahead are devoid of thorns
Nicer they are, than game of thrones

Our persistency will worth it
We'll thank God we didn't quit
The wait will finally sublime
It's just a matter of time.

PATIENCE

by Ibrahim Ajani Lawal

Oh' you, the grief!
That stalked to impel upon me, the unrighteousness.
Of the temptations you've fueled,
Escalates nothing but tempers nor calmness of
tempting scenarios.
You'd invade, eaten up my reputation,
Like how fire consumes the summer wood.
But now, with my siblings, relatives, and parents,
foremost,
Of being cruel to whosoever, I've curbed.

Those days that was my vogue, grief!
If appeared to me from retard, a slight anguish,
Prevailing vengeance only end-up the ambush,
When strike the arms on my arms to harm.

And of that dusk, that we pulled each other closer,
I recall how you clothed my cold chest with your hot-
temper and malice,
To commit unfair atrocity beyond the vicinity of this
city;
And now, the memories unveils,
Of how you never let me and let you go
In turning sheaf into grains.

Into ashes, those grievances as clothes, I've burnt !

Like armors to gladiator, I'd wear patience from head to
toes.

For I've come to stay with colleagues, orphans
And even, the sojourners and callous ones
With serenity of body, mind, and soul.

And now, I watch you flooding away by patience in
patient
To the abyss of vanity till eternity,
To quench the taste of my anxieties, in serenity.
I left! And let you go dives, drains, and drown,
Down far away from the downtown.?

EVERYTHING IS VAIN

by Isma'eel Ibn Daud Olakunle

“Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (RA) as saying:
The truest word spoken by an Arab (pre-Islamic) in
poetry is this verse of Labid: "Behold! Apart from Allah
everything is vain."

(Sahih Muslim 2256 a In-book : Book 41, Hadith 3)

For those moment that I had my tongue tied,
Tied tightly in my sinful mouth,
I dreamt of vulture visiting my heart for a carrion.
Was it me its prey or my soul?

I dodged inside my skin to escape its sneeze.
For once the death sneezes, my time decreases.
Of what will remain with me if my span runs ahead my
age?
Is it my integrity or my fame?
Those that would have yonder me before my date.

My hair is dark and now coming to grey.
My teeth are strong but later weak and decay.
My bones are hard then they will tender.
Diminishing gradually will home my lifestyle;
The life will eventually returning me to grave.

Of what happiness, of what joy?

Of what wealth of mine I need to cry on?
The loss of my strength? Or my failure to please God?
Vanity, the name is synonymous to life.

At end, shroud me and my names in a stripe of cloth.
Squeeze my complete whole inside a dangerous hole.
For that is the life that
I choose and own.
"Apart from Allah everything is motes"

ON THE EDGES OF DEATH'S SWORD

by Ibrahim Olalekan Adedeji

"Every soul shall have a taste of death: and We test you by evil and by good by way of trial. To us you must return."

(Suratul Anbiya' verse 35)

(i)

There is a new world
on the edges of death's sword,
every man's blood shall drip from it.
There is a fatal ambrosia
brewed in nature's cup,
every soul shall taste from it.

(ii)

I have seen days swirls into nights,
as thousands of moments have passed,
many a season has bidden farewell,
yet green and withered leaves keep
dropping off from the mother trees,
and each etches its own epithet
on already-carved stones-
after all, their forerunners suffered
the same fate in the hands of the wind.

(iii)

So when the smoke clears,
and the embers die,
the seed of man planted below,
shall sprout his deeds
in the recordings of Munkaar and Nakir,
either as roses or thorns - or a breed of both.

(iv)

As man chases (hastens) life
to trail on a sloppy route to vanity -
where Nothing grows beds of petal along paths -
and the wind rustles gusts of emptiness,
he forgets his accomplishments will grinded to
dust,
as he waits eternally for Israfeel to raise his soul
with the sound of his horn.

LIP A PRAYER

by Aisha Oredola

Tags trail the hem of my dress, sweeping grounds that
bear land mines planted for my legs.

'Ki lo n gbe ninu e?' They ask with evil eyes
Their lips, split open like cracks birthed by an
earthquake

Their lips, expand into smiles, like rubber reaching for
elasticity

On autopilot, they operate, rushing towards me with
exposed teeth that hide daggers and grenades

Pretense never lasts so they seek refuge in name tags
and questions thrown to my retreating figure.

'Ki lo ki sa ya?' Their heavy breaths coo as they wait for
doom to grab me.

Isn't the world claimed by those who stamp it their
final abode?

'The people of the world' kiss me with poisoned lips -
Yet I live

They hug me with ticking bombs pressed to their
 chests - Yet I am whole

'Mo n le eku si won, won le ejo si mi' - Yet I smile
I am well armoured.

The people of the world have forgotten to remember
that none can forsake who the One has honoured
Before the sun raises its head every morning,

I don't forget to remember that He who honours can
forsake - and then, no soul can save the victim
So I lip a prayer - 'May I not be doomed.'
So I cloak my body - 'May I not be ruined'
So I kneel before him - 'May He not forsake me'
Lest doom will embrace me with warm hands.

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them, they're sending snakes to me. (Yoruba proverb)

WE WOULD WAKE UP TO FIND OUR CORPSE!
“...faman yaatiikum bi mahin mahin...” (Qur’an 67:30)
by Afolabi Khalidu Adewale

Rain!
Water!
Stream!
River!
Lake!
Sea!
They all become words
That hunt our memory
So we are bereaved
Of three/five of the universe
The heaven shall refuse to weep
As the conference of clouds
Shall betray our trust
The earth shall refuse to bleed
Regardless of how deep
We mutilate its temple
Plants would wither away
As water absconds from earth
Forcing sunlight into widowhood

Dehydration!
In company of starvation
Shall let loose its scourge
Oh Allah!

We would wake up to find our corpse!
If water is sunken away...

ESSAY



BENEFITS OF TAOHEED (BELIEVE IN ONENESS OF ALLAH) by Oke Idris Ayomo

"They who believe and do not mix their belief with injustice - those will have security, and they are (rightly) guided.

Source: al-qurcan (tafsir & by word) - android version(Qur'an 6:82)

in the name of Allah, the most beneficent, the most merciful

All thanks and adoration are Allah's, the uncreated creator and the unquestioned questioner. May His endless blessing be bestowed upon the noble prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.), his household, his companions and those who follow their legacies till the day of accountability.

It is an established fact and doubtless in the Islamic world that the fundamental purpose of the creation of man and jinn is to worship Allah alone. It is evident in the glorious Qur'an and the Hadith in myriads of very lucid ways where Allah and Prophet Muhammad respectively emphasise on the indispensability of worshipping Allah and not ascribing anything (in worship) with Him. In fact, as this essay discusses in due

course, Allah takes it to the extent of granting anyone that worship him alone and not ascribing any other thing (in worship) with Him Al-jannah (Paradise). Therefore, this essay seeks to succinctly hinge on the benefits of Taoheed with particular reference to (Qur'an 6:82) "They who believe and do not mix their belief with injustice - those will have security, and they are (rightly) guided.

As discussed earlier, Allah emphasizes on the benefits with which those who believe in His oneness and associate nothing with Him (in worship) will be granted. He says: "Alladhiina amanuu walam yalbisuu iimaanahum bizulm uulaika lahumul amnu wahum muhtaduun."

Following this Qur'anic verse, it is understood that Allah assures those who truly believe in Him and the messengership of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) that, there will be eternal tranquility for them as well as guidance from Him. This verse clearly argues on Taoheed and its reward (tranquility and guidance). The former, if it is done without any Zulm (Shirk or Kufr, as evident by the books of Tafseer such Tafseer Ibn Katheer and Tafseer Assa'ady) will surely bring about the latter. Therefore, it should be ringing at every Muslim's mind that the purpose of human and Jinn's existence is to worship Him alone without any disbelief. He says in (Qur'an 51:V56) "And I have not

created the Jinn and mankind but to worship me." This verse, while trying to explain the former verse, makes it clear that worshipping Him alone is the sole purpose of man and jinn's existence in their discrepant lives.

Furthermore, it is understood that, even if a Muslim have this believe (uninterrupted with Shirk), all other shortcomings (intentional and accidental) will be forgiven. Allah says in (Qur'an 4:V48) "Indeed, Allah will not forgive associating partner with Him but He forgives any other sins for whom He wishes." This verse seeks to explain the importance of believing in Allah's oneness and not ascribing anything with Him. It also extols the fact that Shirk (associating partner with Allah) is the biggest of all sins which anyone who dies on it shall not be forgiven. It also explains the fact that if a Muslim has a faithful believe, there is tendency that Allah will forgive him/her other sins aside Shirk.

Over and above, the verse in question (Qur'an 6:82) also examines the priority given to Taoheed over other acts of worship. Taoheed is the basis of Ibadah (worship) in Islam, which if anyone worshiping Allah is not found of it, will be said to have no reward for the act(s) of worships. Taoheed, according to the verse, is very much crucial to Allah to the extent of having two special rewards - peacefulness and divine guidance to the right path. In fact, Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.)

attests to this fact in one of his narrations. "From 'Ubadah bn Saamit (R.A.), he said: the Apostle of Allah said: 'Who ever bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah and ascribes nothing (in worship) with Him, and that Muhammad is His servant and messenger, and that Prophet 'Isa is Allah's servant and His messenger, and that he ('Isa) is a statement from Allah to Maryam and a soul from Him, and that the Jannah (paradise) is true, and that Hell is also true: Allah will make him enter Jannah (paradise) irrespective of the deeds he dies upon.'" (Bukhari and Muslim).

This narration firmly argues the importance of Taoheed in relation to the verse under discussion. In fact, in another narration by Bukhari and Muslim also: "From 'Itbaan, the Prophet (S.A.W.) said: 'and indeed, Allah has made the Hell forbidden for whoever says: Lailalaha illah llahu (there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah), standing firm on that for seeking Allah's face." This narration, too, discusses the benefit of Taoheed which is in the world rewardable by tranquility and guidance and in the hereafter with Jannah (paradise).

Conclusively, it has been shown above that the purpose of creating the whole cosmos (Man and Jinn) is for Taoheed. Allah created Man and Jinn for the primary

aim of worshipping Him alone. He promises, in the Qur'an and in the Hadith (through His prophet), that anyone who worships Him alone and associates nothing (in worship) with Him shall be blessed with peace and divine guidance in the world as well as Jannah in the hereafter. It is, therefore, on this note that this essay, following the verse under discussion, (Qur'an 6:82) affirms the huge benefits of Taoheed (believe in oneness of Allah).

DUTIFULNESS TO PARENTS (A COMMANDMENT BY ALLAH) by Bidmus Adam Olasunkanmi

“Suhila Nabiyyu sollallahu alayhi wa salam aani -l-kabaair Qoola ; Al-Ishraku billahi, wa huquuqu-l-waalisayni, waqotlu Nafsi, wa shahaadatu zuhri”.

Meaning: The Prophet (SAW) was asked about the great sins. And he (The Prophet) Said: Associating partner with Allah, not dutiful to the parents, killing a soul (person) and a hypocrite testification. (In Hadith 28th of An-Nabawiyy which goes thus)

From the aforementioned Hadith, the Prophet (SAW) accentuated that not dutiful to one's parents is among the great sins. Dutifulness to parents is one of the roles of children towards the parents. Though, the children have different roles towards the parents which include: being dutiful to parents and obeying them, showing humility and gratitude to parents, caring for parents in their old age, understanding and forgiving parents where there've been failure and breaches, listening to the counsel of parents, honouring and respecting the parents etc. From the above Hadith, the gravity of disobedience to parents had been made more prominent by the prophet. There are many Hadith that go against not being dutiful to parents while some

show the reward or importance of being dutiful and obedient to parents. Since it has been confirmed from the horse mouth (The Prophet(SAW) that disobeying or undutifulness to parents is among the great sins in the sight of Allah, Muslims are therefore endowed to respect, honor, care, obey and listen to their parents. Listening to the parents also has limit. Nonetheless, if the child(ren) are told to associate partner with Allah by the parents, they shouldn't concur. They should not because of the roles they have towards the parents associate any partner with Allah.

Associating partner with Allah is also among the great sin mentioned by the Prophet from the above Hadith. Now to clear the child(ren) on what to do, an evidence is in the Holy Qur'an. In (Qu'ran 31:15), Allah Says: But if they (the parents) press you to associate something with Me about which you have no knowledge, do not obey them. Yet be kind to them in this world and follow the path of those who turn to me. You will all return to me in the end and I will tell you everything that you have done. This verse buttresses the fact that we should not because of the parents' associate partner with Allah. And from the above verse, Allah still tells us to be kind to them no matter what to show how important dutifulness to one's parent is. There are various Hadiths of the Prophet and verse of the Qu'ran

that show and discuss dutifulness to one's parents. Below are some Ahadith of the Prophet to back up the topic: Abdullahi ibn Amr said: "A man came to the Prophet (PBUH) & asked his permission to take part in Jihad. The prophet asked him, Are your parents alive? Yes, they are, he replied. The prophet told him, then exert yourself in their service (Bukhari). This Hadith shows that dutifulness to parents takes precedence over Jihad for the sake of Allah.

Talha ibn Muaweya narrated that he asked the Prophet (PBUH): "O messenger of Allah! I wish to make Jihad in Allah's cause: He asked me, Is your mother alive? I said Yes! He then said " Then stay by her feet, for there you will find paradise. This goes with the Hadith of the Prophet that says:

Jannatukum tahta Aqdamu Ummhatukum

Your paradise lies beneath the feet of your mothers

A man approached the prophet (PBUH) and asked him who is the most worthy of his companionship, the prophet answered that it is the mother. The man asked the question three times and everytime the Prophet gave the same answer. When the man asked the question for the fourth time, the Prophet replied, "Your Father" (Al-Bukhari reported the Hadith). The above

Ahadith showed how important dutifulness to parents in Islam is, Kindness to parents and the reward of being dutiful to parents (i.e. Al-Jannah).

Allah (S.W.T) says: "Your Lord has commanded that you should worship none but Him, and show kindness to your parents. Whether one or both of them reach old age while with you, say not to them (so much as), "uff" and don't rebuke them, but always speak gently to them" (Qur'an 17:23)

Allah says: "And treat them with humility and tenderness and say; Lord, be merciful to them both, as they raised me up when I was little" (Qur'an 17:24)

Allah says: "We have enjoined man to show kindness to his parents. For his mother bears him in hardship upon hardship, and his weaning takes two years. Give thanks to Me and to your parents; all will return to Me" (Qur'an 31:14).

Allah says: "We have enjoined on man kindness to his parents; his mother bore him, in pain and in pain she gave birth to him and his bearing and weaning takes thirty months.....(Qur'an 46:15).

These are evidences from the Holy Qur'an to back up the Hadith of the Prophet (S.A.W). these verses of the Qur'an were revealed to show the importance of

dutifulness to parents. To show what the mother went through while giving birth. To show the responsibilities of parents toward the child(ren) and to show the roles of the children toward the parent. Dutifulness to parents is what should be done by all and sundry. Neglecting the parents, not catering for them, not caring for them is not what Islam preaches. Islam preaches kindness to parents, humility to them, taking care of parents till old age, catering for them and listening to them without going against the commandment of Allah (S.W.T). Even in family life education, in order to keep a peaceful home and the rope of family tie tight, one must be dutiful to one's parent. Going against one's parents may pose a different problem in the family. In order to have a healthy family, one must be dutiful to one's parents.

I want to round up this topic with the poem that goes thus:

I start with the name of my Lord the most Gracious,
Who is only one and He is the most sagacious,
He is the controller of the world which is spacious,
The uncreated creator that is capricious,
I say Alhamdulillah to my Lord who created my mother,
And who at the same time gave life to my father,
From these parents came to earth my brother,
And with their help I've been moving further,

I pray by Allah may they take us farther,
My father and my mother are also my mentor,
Who are always as sweet as a menthol,
I pray may they never be a conductor,
To Allah who is our life co-ordinator,

All they've done for me I can't put it in explanation,
Just because everytime they always give me attention,
And they're used to correcting me from a false
rotation,
By Allah, parents like you are scarce in this nation,
The love I got for my parents can't be put in word(s),
And I thank Allah, the Lord of the world,
May He (Allah) always be my parents' ward,
So that they will live long in this world,
Preventing me from bad things they are my deterrent,
Alhamdulillah.....Thank you Allah for giving me my
parent(s).

BREAST-FEEDING IN ISLAM (Qur'an 2:233)

by Abdulraheem M'jamiu Isona

Introduction

In spite of the havoc wreaked by the homo ferus syndrome in the pattern of abandoned children over the centuries, man still allows history to repeat itself. Today, Victor the wild boy of Aveyron, Peter of Hanover and Marie Angeliqne who belonged to the eighteenth century class of children raised by wild beasts are adequately represented. Thus, we have children like Robert; the wild boy of Uganda who was raised by monkeys and found in 1985. Bello the wild boy of Nigeria who was raised by Chimpanzees and found in 1996 and Andrei Tolstyk of Russia who was raised by dogs and found in 2004.

This essay examines a fundamental issue in child rearing: breastfeeding in Islam. More so, realizing the danger posed by mechanized animal milk, pediatricians now recommend the use of breast milk for infants for at least two years. But how new is the recent admonition? What are the gains from this extended period of breastfeeding? What are the risks faced by those who ignore this rule? Whose responsibility is the feeding, clothing, housing and training of the Muslim child? These and other

questions are addressed in this writing.

This essay is divided into three sections. The first section is the introduction. Section two discusses the stand of Islam on breastfeeding. Section three is the concluding part.

Breastfeeding in Islam

The Qur'an had made breastfeeding mandatory even before modern science discovered its advantages. In a landmark legislative exercise, the Qur'an decrees *inter alia*:

The mothers shall give suck to their off-springs for two whole years.... There is no blame on you if you decide on getting a foster-mother provided you pay (to the foster-mother) what you offered on fair terms. But fear Allah and know that Allah sees well what you do. (Qur'an 2:233)

Breastfeeding is therefore part of Islamic law. For women who are unable to suckle children, the above verse shows elasticity. Arrangement may be made by the couple to employ the services of a wet-nurse so long as the couple can fulfill their pledge to pay her. This shows that what is important is that the child should suck human milk. It may be amazing that the Qur'an which was revealed to an unlettered prophet as

far back as the seventh century was able to realize and emphasize the scientific fact which became popular just at the close of the twentieth century. It is our submission that the ability of the teachings of the Qur'an to still conform to temporary scientific findings after fourteen centuries may further concretize the contention of Muslims that Islam is the true religion of the Almighty God.

Advantages of Breastfeeding

Rogers Makanjuola, former Chief Medical Director of the Obafemi Awolowo Teaching Hospital (OAUTH), in Ile-Ife, Osun State, opines that prolonged breastfeeding reduces the likelihood of breast cancer in women. He adds that breast milk contains the exact amounts of the various nutrients that babies need. It also protects babies against infections such as diarrhea and pneumonia. Cow milk, from which artificial formulae are produced, according to him, contains excessive caseinogens which babies' young stomachs cannot digest. Cow milk also introduces into babies' bodies foreign animal protein which cause allergies. Makanjuola concludes:

Cow milk is for cows, not for natural human babies. Only human breast milk provides natural nutrition for

our babies.... Other benefit of breastfeeding is that it costs nothing, it is always ready, no preparation, no sterilization, no warning and no washing up of utensils. Psychologically, it is more emotionally satisfying and promotes love between the mother and her baby.

Also, it was said to the mother of Shaykh Ansari, one of the honourable Islamic Scholars: "what a good child you have given to society!" The mother replied: "I had higher expectations of my son because I gave him milk for two years and I was never without Wudu (ablution). When my child cried in the middle of the night and wanted milk, I got up, did wudu and then gave my child milk.

In order to let us understand how human breast milk is important as stated in the Qur'an, let's take Bello as a case study. Bello, a Nigerian child, was found in 1996 in the Falgore forest 150 kilometers north of Kano in northern Nigeria. He was raised by chimpanzees whose breasts he had sucked. He was found at the age of two, made chimpanzee-like noises. He could not talk like a human being, he walked like a chimpanzee, using his legs but dragging his arms on the ground. When put in a dormitory along with other children, he leaped about night a la chimpanzee, disturbing other children, throwing and smashing things. Even six years

later, at the age of eight, he still leaped around and repeatedly clapped his cupped hands over his head in chimpanzee fashion.

Before concluding the conclusion, it is pertinent to note that Allah would not just say something without reasonable reasons attached. As clearly stated in the (Quran 2:233), we would know that it is important to breastfeed our children but what are the modalities? I thereby, bring out the modalities and recommendations from the words of Almighty Allah.

The mother should have Taqwa (piety), and should be careful that the milk should not be contaminated due to lack of piety and virtue. Especially during the period of breastfeeding, one should stay away from all types of sin and closeness to Allah (SWT) have positive effects on the child.

Say "Bismillah" before starting to breastfeed. It is narrated from the Prophet (s): Any important and valuable act that is carried out without the dhikr "Bissmillah Rahmani Rahim" will be imperfect and without a good conclusion.

At the time of breastfeeding, look at the child and talk to him/her. In particular, talking about the martyrdom

and of the birth of Ma'sumin as recommended; don not be worried about whether the child understands or not.

Patience and relaxation, anger, and hot-temperedness, healthy and un-healthy thoughts, generous disposition and kindness and stubbornness and revengefulness all have an effect on the child. It is important to remember that the future of the child is in the hands of your actions.

Thank and praise Allah after breastfeeding. Ultimately, carry out all your actions, especially breastfeeding, with the intention of seeking Allah's pleasure and closeness.

With attention to the fact that breastfeeding is not only a source of food but a source of food but a source of closeness and comfort for the child as well, it is important that along with adequate food replacements, adequate love and quality time with the child are provided as well.

Conclusion

This essay has revealed that the Qur'an had made breastfeeding mandatory even before modern science discovered its advantage. These advantages are too fundamental and too numerous to be ignored. On the

contrary, scholars and experts have warned that cow milk from which artificial formulae are produced constitute a potent danger to positive child development. The high rate of infant mortality has also been attributed to the alarming decline in breastfeeding practice and early use of feeding bottles and infant formula. More importantly, Qur'an has identified a robust association between the duration of breastfeeding and adult intelligence. Qur'an made it known that breast-milk contains nutrients which stimulate brain development.

Therefore, constrained to conclude that the failure to take the full dosage of human breast milk and their consumption of cow milk instead may have played a role in reducing the essence of humanity in today's youth.

The best source of man's guidance in the world has been the religious scriptures, and obviously the greatest among them is the Qur'an. The teachings of the Holy Qur'an are praised by great personalities (scholars, scientist, psychologist etc)all over the world.

The Glorious Qur'an was revealed to prophet Muhammad which entails not only moral and spiritual aspect of life but also encompasses the social and cultural aspect of man. However, all verses in the Qur'an are all extraordinary and passess one or two

messages to us but the verse that I loved most and always love working on it is the verse when Almighty says:

“And from [part of] the night, pray with it as additional [worship] for you; it is expected that your Lord will resurrect you to a praised station.” (Qur’an 17:79)

Consider yourself among pool of people standing in the realm of supreme deity for the accountability of committed deeds, pleading for mercy and forgiveness. All standing on the same scale but few get distinction upon their innumerable extra deeds that they have done for merely Allah's pleasure. That contrition time would be too late to ask your Rab to grant extra time for supplication and to offer His appraised rituals. Surmising, Allah has entitled few prayers with unique peculiarity that will increase the status and stature of a Muslim at the day of Resurrection. The deeds of distinction entail Tahajud prayers.

Linguistically "Tahajud" is derived from "Hajjada" meaning "to awake at night," which alternately has epithet of "Qayam al-Layl." Tahajud is not an obligatory prayer but many devout Muslims have made it part of their life as sign of their devotion and as an opportunity to earn redemption from the Lord of the universe. Allah has declared it one of the qualities of the pious people who abandon their sleep in order to

observe vigil at night for beseeching mercy at the final Day of Judgment as narrated:

"And those who spend [part of] the night to their Lord prostrating and standing [in prayer]." (Quran 25:64)

Number of Hadith and verses reinforces the significance of invoking Allah Almighty by supplication and prayers in the darkest nights when Allah descends on the lower earth, is close than jugular vein and listens to the unspeakable desires of His worshippers.

"The Lord descends every night to the lowest heaven when one-third of the night remains and says: 'Who will call upon Me, that I may answer Him? Who will ask of Me, that I may give him? Who will seek My forgiveness, that I may forgive him?'" (Bukhari, Muslim)

Conclusively, it is an undisputed fact the Glorious Qur'an entails so many verses in the upliftment and purification of our souls. However this verse as so much helped me as well as all other fellow Muslims in getting closer to the Almighty Allah and the purification of our souls

FORSAKE ALLAH AND BE FORSAKEN

by Afolabi Khalidu Adewale

“Lord,' he will say, 'why have you raised me up blind, while I was endowed with sight?’”

“He will reply: 'Just as you received our revelations but forsook them so today you (your eyes) are forsaken.’”

Source: (Qur'an 20:125-126)

Amidst billions of people, with rays of sun as hot as fire, immersed in a pool of liquid produced from his body, unsure if in heaven, on earth or in between, totally hunted by the fright of where he is, a supposed Abdullah rises from his grave blind, to face the Magnificent. Was it moments, days, weeks, months, years, decades, centuries or millennia his bones had stayed crushed, and his skin was eaten by worms?..he cannot tell. So much had gone in him but yet eluded his memory. An invasion of himself has evaded his mind. A life he had mocked in his previous life now seems so real that his just awakening knowledge of it is robbing him of his previous denial. The fact that he lived before has deserted him.

But then his brain is provoked; 'You were once a matter and this you cannot doubt. You lived many years'. In between helplessness and reality, he retraced his

existence back to his memory. He got hold of it; yes! he really lived before. But then, just as he remembered, his blindness dawned on him. So he challenged the Magnificent; 'why raise me blind when I was endowed with sight (in the life before)?'

Those words he shouldn't have said. That question he shouldn't have asked. But the Magnificent replied, subtly, but yet with deserved hostility; 'Abdullah! Just as I showed you My dictates but you faked your knowledge of them, forgetting them, We forgot you (i.e. that you could see) today.'

The Magnificent didn't speak much. He doesn't need to say much to a supposed slave. But still, He had spoken quite much; a much in the little He had said. Abdullah refused to observe Solat despite his knowledge of its obligation. Abdullah refused to fast despite his consciousness of its mandate. Abdullah resisted going for hajj despite his opulence and being told he should. Abdullah declined to pay zakat despite his affluence and knowing the decree that it is a must. Abdullah furrowed at the Islamic dress codes, sagging his lower garment and dragging his upper wears despite knowing there was a dressing code. Abdullaah backbit so much that he drooled blood of his fellow Muslims, and in many khutbah he was told it was haraam.

Abdullaah had protested his Master's decree. Abdullah has condemned himself to blindness. So on this very day, Abdullah must be blind.

Now bother! Or Sister? You can be Abdullah. Which part of Allah's dictates do you compromise? You say it is a modern world? You say it is an evolving life? You say if the Prophet were alive, he would have changed some things? Like seriously! Just imagine where you are, that you are blind. Imagine it!

Your ability becomes limited. You are sentenced to eternal darkness. You would only hear the brightness of the day; you stop seeing it. Sunrise would be a nightmare for you; you can't even dream it. The moon becomes history. All you have is obscurity.

You can never read this again; yeah, your read-and write education becomes pointless. But then, this is even in life. Not in the hereafter, when you are amidst all humans. You are blind on a day like Day of Judgment? It is unimaginable. So which part of Allah's dictates do you feign ignorance? Hope for it Allah would not forsake your sight, on a day that you need it most?

