

StuyMSA 2010-2011
Meeting No.2, 10/14/11

Adaptation to Western Society

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Tags: diversity, obligations, Muslim cities/ countries, Muslims in America, balancing life as Muslim

Sources: hadith, USA today, Qur'an

Start

'Auzubillah himinash shaitwanirajeem, Bismillahirrahmanirraheem.

Alhamdulillahirabil 'alameen. Wasalaatu was salaamu 'ala ashrafil anbiya i wal mursaleen, wa la 'alihi wa sahbihii ajmaeen. Amma' baad.

Announcements

- Thank you Open House volunteers
- Attendance sheet
- Breast Cancer Walk (pass out sign up sheet and ask for donations)
- Dog tags
- Going to pray Asr at Park 51 after meeting

Icebreakers

Fear in a Hat: (variations: worries, complaints, wishes) (give out papers in the beginning; do activity at end)

Group members write personal fears/ worries/ complaints/ wishes as a Muslim living in America (anonymously) on pieces of paper which are collected. Then a person randomly selects and reads someone else's fear aloud at the end of the meeting and asks the group how one might overcome the fear/ worry/ or resolve the complaint/ wish based on what we discussed.

I. General Scope

A. Situation of Muslim Ummah in the World

- **Prominent Muslim populations over time**

Cordoba, Spain; Al Andalus

- This month is Hispanic Heritage month

- Islamic Spain (began 711) was a multi-cultural mix of the people of three great monotheistic religions: Muslims, Christians, and Jews. Although Christians and Jews lived under restrictions, for much of the time the three groups managed to get along together, and to some extent, to benefit from the presence of each other. It brought a degree of civilisation to Europe that matched the heights of the Roman Empire and the Italian Renaissance. In the midst of political events, arts and sciences flourished, leading to advancements in medicine, astronomy, mathematics, and philosophy.

Fun fact: Contrary to popular belief, Columbus did not actually discover the Americas. Not only were there native people living there, but there is also evidence of African sailors, Vikings, and Muslims who traded and settled in the Americas.

Saudi Arabia - Makkah, Madinah

- Makkah and Madinah weren't always Islam-dominated regions as they are today. During Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) time - before Islam was perfected as a religion - the people would worship idols, and idols would be kept inside the Ka'bah. Muhammad (pbuh) had to flee to Yathrib (name of Madinah at the time) to escape persecution from people who didn't approve of his beliefs. Today, we all know that Makkah is one of, if not the holiest city in the world, and Madinah is also of immense significance.

Indonesia - largest Muslim population than any other country in the world

B. Situation of Muslim Ummah in the U.S. (particularly NY)

- **Diversity**
 - NY is much more diverse than many places and has more access to Islamic facilities than a lot of other states, such as more local masjids and general tolerance where people don't have to be afraid to express their faith--anecdote: praying in the streets of New York City safer than praying in the streets anywhere in Mississippi
 - Alaska on the other hand doesn't have a single mosque. The construction of its first mosque began on October 16, 2010, almost a year ago.
 - **USA Today:** Muslims will be more than ¼ of the population by 2030, number of US Muslims likely to double

C. Situation of Muslim Ummah in the Schools (particularly Stuyvesant)

- **Religious Accommodations**
 - Not all schools readily offer the freedom of practicing religion. We are lucky to have so many accommodations given to us by the school (prayer area, MSA, etc).
 - Depending on the school, you may or may not also have options for kosher and/or halal lunch.

Prompt: Is it better to attend an Islamic school? What would you say are the pros and cons, if any?

II. Personal Scope: How do we avoid compromising our faith? **Importance of Intentions

A. Balancing Our Life As a Muslim

Your deen comes before every other part of yourself - your ethnicity, your cultural values, etc.

Prompt: What are we required to do as Muslims?

- 5 pillars of Islam
- 7 articles of faith

B. Balancing Our Life As a Family Member

- After Allah and Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), your mother is listed as the next being of most importance - so important, that she's listed thrice: Bahz ibn Hakim's grandfather said, "I asked, 'Messenger of Allah, to whom should I be dutiful?' 'Your mother,' he replied. I asked, 'Then whom?' 'Your mother,' he replied. I asked, 'Then whom?' 'Your mother,' he replied. I asked, 'Then to whom should I be dutiful?' 'Your father,' he replied, 'and then the next closest relative and then the next.'" [Bukhari]
- "We have instructed man to honour his parents." [29:8]
 - Your parents brought you up, the least you can do is return the favor.
- Avoid isolating yourselves from your family

C. Balancing Our Life As a Student/Our Personal Activities

- **Staying on top of your schoolwork**
 - To be successful in this world, society requires us to have a good education (and so do most, if not all your parents). This doesn't mean that you should study so much that you forget what you are mandated to do - anything accomplished besides for the purpose of Islam may or may not help you in the Akhirah (life after death).
 - The opposite is also true - be realistic when it comes to following your religion. Islam keeps us on the right path but in moderation. **Fun fact:** A lot of us find it hard to stay on top of our 5 daily prayers. When Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) made Mi'raj (ascension to Jannah), Allah mandated 50 daily prayers for Muslims. Prophet Musa (aka Moses, pbuh) told Muhammad (S) to ask Allah to lower the amount and make it easier on the people, but after a certain point, Muhammad (S) felt ashamed to ask any more. Each prayer however is worth 10 prayers, so 5 * 10 means you're getting the same amount of reward as 50 prayers. [Muslim]
 - Choose wisely when it comes to participating in events/activities. Avoid compromising your faith i.e. MSA may promote community service/awareness events but we can't promote *everything*.
- **Making the "right" group of friends**

"You are who your friends are." This modern saying is also expressed in hadith:
Narrated Abu Hurayrah:
The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: A man follows the religion of his friend; so each one

should consider whom he makes his friend. [Book 41, Number 4815 : Sunan Abu Dawud]

We've all heard our parents repeatedly tell us the benefit of keeping good company. As annoyed as we may be by this sometimes, most of us know that our character is inevitably shaped by our friends and the people we associate with. We often take such advice to heart when it offers us some worldly benefit: we stick by the smart kids when its exam season and talk of "networking" when discussing our career ambitions. In the midst of all of that, we too often forget what friendship means to our religious goals. In the same way a friend can remind you about a test, they can remind you about an opportunity to seek reward from Allah (S).

This does not mean that we should act hostile to those of other religions. We are required to treat everyone in a gracious manner. The purpose of the hadith is to warn us, that your friends can have influence over you, both good and bad, and caution should always be taken. If we inherit any wrong behaviors/religions, we distance ourselves from our own religion.

- **Attending MSA (not a fardh)**

Believe it or not, there's a verse in the Qur'an that says "There is no compulsion in religion" [2:256]. No one can be forced to turn to Islam; its a personal choice and must be followed through with good intentions (because your parents are Muslim and raised you that way is not a good enough reason, rather because Allah ordained it to be the true religion). Attending MSA is not a fardh (not required) and just because someone doesn't come to MSA doesn't mean they aren't a good Muslim or that they don't care. Only Allah is aware of and can judge their true intentions; not attending MSA may or may not limit your pursuit of Islam.

So why do we have MSA? Mission statement, convenience, etc.

- **What is our fardh?** (recap from previous two sections)

D. Balancing Our Life As An American

- Use your rights here to your advantage (but ofc, with moderation and faith) i.e. education, freedom of religion, women are given more rights than in some other countries, etc.

Continue Game

End

Subhanakallahumma wa bihamdik. Ash hadu Allah ilaha illa annt. Astaghfiruka wa atubu ilaik Rabbana atina fid dunya hasanatan- wa fil akhirati hasantan- wa qina 'adhabannar.Rabbana zalamna anfusuna wa illan taghfirlana wa tarhamna lana kunanna minal khasireen.Rabbana la tuzigh kulubana wa idh hadaytana wa habblana milla dunka rahmatan innaka antal wahhab. Ameen