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Calendar

All Gregorian dates for the month of Muharram subject to the sighting of the new moon.

Special Occasions

- **Dhul Hijjah 1 / Dec 22:**
Aqd of Hazrat Fatima (SA) with Ameer-ul-Mo'mineen (AS), 2nd Hijrah
- **Dhul Hijjah 7 / Dec 28:**
Shahadat of Imam Baqir (AS)
- **Dhul Hijjah 9 / Dec 30:**
Day of Arafah
Shahadat of Hazrat Syed Muslim ibn Aqeel
- **Dhul Hijjah 10 / Dec 31:**
Eid-ul-Adha
- **Dhul Hijjah 15 / Jan 5:**
Wiladat of Imam an-Naqi (AS)
- **Dhul Hijjah 18 / Jan 8:**
Eid-e-Ghadeer
- **Dhul Hijjah 21 / Jan 11:**
Shahadat of Hujjatul Islam Shaheed Syed Arif Hussain al-Hussaini (RA)
- **Dhul Hijjah 22 / Jan 12:**
Shahadat of sons of Hazrat Syed Muslim ibn Aqeel
- **Dhul Hijjah 24 / Jan 14:**
Eid ul-Mubahilah

Editorial Note

Respected Brothers and Sisters in Islam: *Assalamu Alaikum.*

We come to you with the second issue of the bi-monthly newsletter with greetings and prayers on the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha, a celebration of acknowledgement of the divine order of our Creator. This joyous occasion coincides with the annual pilgrimage (the Hajj) which is one of the essential pillars on which our ideology rests. It is a conference of humankind that reminds us and highlights our goal in life; the *ibaadat* (obedience in its true spirit) of Allah (swt). It is said that this journey rejuvenates a Muslim as though he or she was re-born after the completion of the prescribed rituals.



Many of us who made the decision to undertake this inspiring and eye-opening journey to the House of Allah, have been through the internal cleansing process during the Holy month of Ramadhan. That mental and physical catharsis prepares us for the great task of 'walking our talk' and of putting theory into practice. Once the decision is solidified, an amazing transformation takes place in a Hajji. Immediately, his focus shifts from material to the spiritual aspects of life; from now onwards the Hajji is oriented to his Beloved (swt) - his Creator and Sustainer. He has been invited by the Almighty - Who is the host. He cannot but constantly, impatiently, and perhaps anxiously anticipate the ultimate meeting. Throughout his adult life, he had been prostrating towards His House and now the Hajji will get an opportunity to converse with his Beloved without the faculty of imagination. The Grand Ka'ba and the insightful rituals of Hajj will provide the Hajji a connection with the Ultimate Reality (swt) that will be strengthened and, hopefully, last a lifetime. A Hajji returning from this reunion will become a person with a new perspective on life and the challenges it presents.

However, for Muslims the Hajj season is not exclusive for the invitees to Makkah. For the majority of the Ummah that plays an observers role, it is also a time for deep reflection. One must take time-out to perform a thorough self-analysis. How was our commitment to our *deen* in the past year and how strong is our bond with Allah (swt). On the day of 'Arafah (9th Dhul Hijjah), we get an opportunity to do just that, when we reflect on the words of Imam Hussain (as) in his famous invocation (Dua 'Arafah). For both the Hajjis and the rest of the Ummah, the lessons learned will be displayed in practice by the Leader of the Martyrs, Aba 'Abdillah al-Hussain (as).

We ask Allah (swt) for His support and blessings for all *muslimeen* in these very challenging yet opportunistic times. As followers of the Holy Prophet (saw) and his Ahl ul-Bayt (as), we are blessed with role models, but the challenge of living up to the expectations is upon all of us.

If you would like to contribute your ideas and suggestions for this newsletter, please email us at newsletter@muslimcongress.org.

Hajj - A Walk Around

By Hujjatul Islam Moulana Abbas Aylea

Bismih Ta'ala

Importance of Hajj

The author of al-Jawahir, the largest book of Islamic jurisprudence, Sheikh Hasan Najafi says that "Hajj is a spiritual exercise, a financial obedience, and a physical, verbal, and practical worship comprising of things to do and things not to do." This comprehensiveness makes Hajj unique.



In his hadith, Imam as-Sadiq (as) said, "ja'alah lil-islami 'alaman" (Wasail ush-Shiah v8, p10), i.e., "Allah made it [Hajj] a banner/a symbol for Islam's recognition."

In another hadith, Imam as-Sadiq (as) said, "lau tarakan-naasu al-hajja, unzila 'alayhim al-azaab" (Wasail ush-Shiah v8, p13), i.e., "If people leave the Hajj, the punishment (of Allah) will arrive on them."

An annual international conference of the rich

Hajj is an international assembly of all the rich and influential, the upper class of different human societies from all over the world. All have been invited to be the guests of Allah, and asked to gather sincerely for His sake - wearing one form of dress, reciting one common message, performing one type of action, going to one place at the same time, learning to sacrifice in a common format, braving to protest against the *mushrikeen* of the time with one voice, and proclaiming and renewing the oath of allegiance (covenant (meethaq) and (bay'at)) towards the authority (walayat) of one Imam, the Imam al-Mahdi (AS), who is the Imam of our time.

A means of correcting (islah) the eeman (piety)

Imam as-Sadiq (AS) said, "wa haazaa baytun ist'abadallahu bihi khalqahoo leyakhtar taa'atahum fi ityaanihi"(ref), i.e., "Allah could have made Ka'ba in a place with a good climate. However, placing the Ka'ba in a hot, desert region was to test the people - who is a true believer (momin) and who is not?"

A matter of comfort of the soul

Imam as-Sadiq (AS) said, "Al-hajju taskeen ul-quloob" (Bihaar ul-Anwaar v75, p183)

A means of correcting (islah) the piety (imaan)

Imam as-Sadiq (AS) said, "Yuslihu lakum eemaanakum" (The Book of "Hajj", ustaad Qiraaty p16)

- ❑ **Dhul Hijjah 25 / Jan 15:**
Zefaf/Rukhsati of Hazrat Fatima (SA) with Ameer-ul-Mo'mineen (AS)
- ❑ **Muharram 1 / Jan 20:**
Dua of Prophet Zakariyah (AS) seeking a son (Prophet Yahya (AS)) is accepted
- ❑ **Muharram 2 / Jan 21:**
Arrival of caravan of Imam Hussain (AS) in Karbala
- ❑ **Muharram 10 / Jan 29:**
Day of Ashura
- ❑ **Muharram 24 / Feb 12:**
Shahadat of Imam Baqir-as-Sadr
- ❑ **Muharram 25 / Feb 13:**
Shahadat of Imam as-Sajjad Zainul Abideen (AS)
- ❑ **Muharram 29 / Feb 17:**
Battle of Siffeen, 37th Hijrah

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An assurance for becoming wealthy

Our beloved Holy Prophet (PBUH&HF) said, "Hajjoo tastaghnoo" (Bihaar ul-Anwaar v73, p221), i.e., "Do hajj and you will get rich".

An escape from all sins

Imam as-Sadiq (AS) said, "...wa firaraan ilayhi min zunoobika wa bihee qaboolu taubatika" (Bihaar ul-Anwaar v74, p4)

Ka'abah - a place of divine security

Prophet Ibrahim (AS) prayed to Allah, "rabbij'al haaza baladan aaminan" (al-Baqarah v126), i.e., "O my Lord, make it [Makkah] a secure town".

Hajj - a means of shafa'at

Imam as-Sadiq (AS) said, "Innal-haajja layashfa' fee wuldihee wa ahlihee wa jeeraanihee" (Mustadrak v2, p10), i.e., "A person who performed hajj will be doing shafa'at regarding his children and family and neighbours".

Renewal of our covenant (meethaaq) with the Imam of our time

When we kiss the Black Stone, we recite the du'a, "...amanati addaytuha wa meethaaqi ta'ahadtuhu", i.e., "I am vowing to fulfill my covenant [towards the walayat of the Imam of my time] in front of you".

Finally, we all must remember what our beloved Prophet (PBUH&HF) has said, "Yahijju aghniyaaoo ummaty linnuzhati, wa yahijju ausaatuhaa littijaarati, wa yahijju fuqaraaohum lirriyaaai wassum'ati" (Tafseer ul-Meezaan v:5, p:434). This means, "[A time would arrive that] the rich people of my nation would do hajj for fun/vacationing, and the middle class of my nation would do hajj for the sake of business, and the (relatively) poor people of among them would do hajj to show off and tell people".

May Allah ,subhanahu wa ta'ala, bless all of us by allowing us to understand and practice the *ma'arif* of the Prophet (PBUH&HF) and Ahl ul-Bayt (AS)

Have Muslims misunderstood THE HAJJ?

By Br. Syed Mujahid Hussain

Over a billion Muslims around the world are in the process of preparing for Eid-ul-Adha, the event that marks the completion of The Hajj. The lucky ones and the divinely invited ones will make the trip to Ka'ba for The Hajj – The Pilgrimage.

What is the Hajj? Is Hajj- The manifestation of Muslim Unity? Is Hajj – the annual convention of the Islamic Movement as described by The Holy Qura'an? Is Hajj a gentle reminder of the continuous struggle, sacrifice and revolution required for universal peace? Is Hajj a forum of the economic, cultural, political and military status of the Ummah?

Hajj is all of these and much more.

The divinely invited guests need to reflect and act now, and the rest of the Ummah before they are divinely invited to reflect on:

1. Does one believe in the Holy Prophet (SA) as the leader of the Islamic Movement, in the Holy Qura'an as the Book of Guidance and the Ka'ba as the center of directions?
2. Has one freed himself from obeying and worshipping all kinds of polytheism - arrogance, colonialism, opportunism and then turned to Allah, the absolute power and held firmly onto the divine covenant of monotheism?
3. Has one left all personal involvements behind at home and come prepared to fulfill the devotional, political and social obligations that will be raised during the conventions?
4. Has one understood the implications of the Divine invitation and is willing to participate in the Islamic Conventions in a positive manner?
5. Is one prepared to make the visit to the House of Allah from an Islamic Perspective? And not as another ritual to be performed?

The Holy Qura'an and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet provide easy answers to these eternal questions.

700 million Muslims are living in 45 Islamic countries which are located strategically in the most sensitive regions of the world. Muslim countries are richly endowed with natural and human resources. (Examples: Oils reserves estimated in 1981 to be about 88 billion tons out of which 59.21 billion tons are in Muslim lands. Europe and Japan depend on Muslim oil for 60-80 percent of their oil. The Muslim world produces over a third of the world's rice and two thirds of the cotton). Surely with the guidance and the resources Muslims possess, one fails to understand the current crises in the Muslim World. It is clear that Muslims have misunderstood the Message and The HAJJ.

Youth Section: Q & A with an Aalim

Answers to the questions below received from a group of youth have been provided by Hujjatul Islam, Moulana Syed Abbas Aylea.

Question 1

According to Syed Sistani, it is haraam for anyone who works in the medical field to take someone off life support; it is considered killing someone. There are cases when a person is in a vegetative state with no brain function and no possibility of returning to a conscious state. If

the family asks the doctor to remove such a person from life support, the doctor must do what the family wants. What is a practical thing for a Muslim doctor to do in this situation?

Answer

It is not required (wajib) to put a loved one on such a life support system if their insurance won't cover it or there isn't money to afford the cost. However, it is not allowed according to Islamic law to take a person off of a life support system, as it is considered to be killing the person. Any person who takes another off of a life support system is liable for the responsibility in the eyes of the Islamic law (*shariah*). Yes, it may be classified as 'vegetative life' in the common medical vernacular, but one must keep in mind that the medical sciences have an extremely limited realm, limited to information about the human body only, without any knowledge of the soul. Thus, medical science is not entitled to determine a course of action for a human which also has a soul, even if that body is classified as 'vegetative'. Rather, according to the knowledge of *irfaan*, a person's soul may possibly be allowed by Allah, even in that state, to do even one remembrance (*dhikr*) of Allah, and have his destiny alter forever. We cannot hinder this opportunity in his 'vegetative' life.

Question 2

What are the rules on tattoos?

Answer

If tattoos block water from reaching the skin in the ghusl-Islamic way of bathing or in wudhu, then tattoos must be avoided. In addition,



tattoos are not something belonging to Quranic teachings or Islamic culture, which was defined by the Qura'an and the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HF). On this basis then they should be avoided. Finally, tattoos make one resemble a non-believer (kuffar), and a Muslim is not allowed to acquire any resemblance to kuffar. Every instance of imitation is problematic.

"MAN TASHABBAHA BEQAUMIN, FAHUWA MINHUM"

"LA TAKULOO MAAKILA A'ADAAIEE, WA LA TALBISOO MALABISA A'ADAAE, WA LA TASKUNOO MASAKINA A'ADAIEE, FATAKUNOO A'ADAIEE"

Question 3

Since we were created to know and worship Allah (SWA), why has He created the disabled?

Answer

Able-bodied or disabled, all people are put to the test by the Creator. In any event, it isn't such a big problem to have a physical shortcoming. The bigger problem is to have a shortcoming in our soul or our faith. A shortcoming in the body has hardships for that person in this world only. If he has faith and piety, he will live in the hereafter with eternal success. A fault in our soul may cause us to be doomed in hell forever. Keep in mind as well that those with no physical disabilities are not exempt from hardships and tests. Everyone is tested in this world, be it one type of test or another. We should be grateful and dutiful to our Lord in all cases, and that's the bottom line.

Question 4

Can a Muslim be an organ donor under any circumstances?

Answer

Yes, he can donate those organs that are not essential for his own survival. In other words, he is not permitted to donate an organ that may cause him to lose his own life. If he does donate with this condition, he is further restricted from donating to a 'harbi kafir'. However, after death, a Muslim's organs cannot be taken, as it will require his body to be subjected to surgery. The cutting open of the body of a Muslim is considered to be an insult towards him. Dissecting the body after death is only permitted in certain special cases, and organ donation is not one of those.

Question 5

Are jinn the same thing as what people in America think of as angels or ghosts? Especially at Christmas time, we hear a lot about angels. We also know that Angel Gabriel has played an important role in Islam. What is the Islamic concept of angels?

Answer

No. Angels are made of divine light (noor) and jinn are made of fire. Angels are thus *noorani* creatures assigned to do different tasks, and they always obey and never commit sins. Many angles are unknown to us; however, we know Jibraeel (Gabriel), who is the head of all angels, as he has the highest level of love and service towards Allah, the Prophet and the Ahl ul-Bayt (A.S). If we humans obey the Creator correctly, serve the walaayat of the Imam of our time (Imam al-Mahdi (AS)), and not compromise towards the *taghoots* and their supporters, then the angels will be our helpers and will serve us.

"INNAL-MALAAIKAH LA KHUDDAAMUNA, WA KHUDDAAMU SHI'ATINA MINAL-MOMINEEN".
(**IMAM AS-SADIQ (AS)**), i.e., "angels are our servants and the servants of our true momin followers".



Medical Article on Facts about the Flu

By Dr. Tanveer Syed (M.D.)

The onset of winter also marks the onset of the flu season. Here are some tips to follow to remain healthy during the winter months.

Influenza or Flu is a viral infection that causes high fevers, muscle aches, fatigue, headache, runny nose and cough and in some instances pneumonia.

It is not well tolerated by the young and old or people with decreased immunity.

Prevention of the Flu by taking the yearly vaccination is the best, if you are at high risk for complications.

It is hard to avoid getting the flu (if you choose not to get vaccinated) since it is transmitted by air droplets of respiratory secretions.

Avoid visiting people who have the flu and stay home if you think you have it, to avoid spread.

Take Tylenol and decongestants and drink plenty of fluids and rest at home.
See your doctor early since there is treatment for the Flu now, if diagnosed within the first 48 hours.

If the symptoms are worsening instead of improving after a week, see your doctor to make sure you don't have the complications of Flu.

The Flu vaccination only protects against the Influenza but not against Para influenza (a similar illness) or common colds.

People for who the vaccine is highly recommended are the following:

- o Health care and Day care workers.
- o Women who are pregnant during the Flu season (December to March).
- o Children 6 months to 5 years and all adults above 50 years.
- o Residents of Dormitories and Nursing Homes.
- o Any one with Chronic Medical problems like Asthma, Diabetes, and Blood disorders, Lung Kidney or Heart Disease.
- o People with decreased immunity or seizures and compromised level of consciousness or Neuromuscular disorders.
- o Children on long term Aspirin therapy.
- o Persons regularly involved in community service.
- o Anyone who wants to protect themselves against the flu.

People who had previous paralysis or severe allergic reaction to the vaccine or persons who are allergic to eggs should NOT take the Vaccine.

Two types of vaccines are available: Intramuscular (given commonly) and Intranasal.

For more Flu facts, visit CDC's Influenza webpage at www.cdc.gov/flu.

Muslim Congress Vision

Muslim Congress, a non-profit, religious and social organization was established in 2005 to promote and represent the Pure

Muhammadan Islam in North America. It is a platform to guide believers of the Islamic faith towards the divine duties according to Pure Mohammadan Islam, and to help them succeed in this world and the hereafter. Under the leadership of pious *Ulamaa* (scholars), Muslim Congress will work to guide the greater Muslim community by protecting our divine values as thought by the Holy Qur'an and the Ahl ul-Bayt (as), thus enabling us to become spiritually balanced, eternally successful, morally helpful and humanely beneficial citizens of the society. Going forward, projects and services undertaken by us will focus on the following areas and needs:

Islamic spiritual, moral and value-based education (*al-qiyum al-ilaaheyah*) so that the muslims can live with honor, dignity, mutual respect, peace and integrity with peoples of different faiths in North America.

Protect the rights of Muslims and the oppressed, which are being violated on a daily basis, and work towards creating unity among the ranks of the Ummah.

A proactive stance and involvement in the current affairs facing the Muslim Ummah.

Introduce qualified, beneficial, competent and pious Ulamaa to Islamic centres across North America, in order to provide the correct guidance and religious understanding.

Connect believers with one another, so that they can work toward a common goal and serve and help each other in the community work.

We invite you to visit our [website](#) to learn more and contribute towards the goals of our organization for the mutual benefit of many.

Haji Greeting

Muslim Congress, on behalf of its Board of Directors and volunteers, would like to congratulate all *Muslimmeen* who received the honor and blessings of performing the Hajj this year, and pray that their worship and supplications at the Sacred House are accepted by Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) grant us all the opportunity to perform Hajj and Umrah in the coming years.

Feedback Solicitation

If you would like to contribute towards future issues of **VOW**, the bi-monthly Muslim Congress newsletter, please send an email with your content, write-up or suggestions to newsletter@musimcongress.org. You can also email questions to be answered by an Aalim in our 'Ask-the-Aalim' section. Thank you.

"Islam is founded on five pillars: Salat, Zakat, Hajj, Sawm (fasting), and Walayah; People took the first four, and left this (Walayah). I swear to Allah, they cannot complete/perfect the four, unless they complete them through the fifth one (Walayah)"

Hadith of Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) narrated in al-Kaafi, by Zurarah ibn Aayan.