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Rocket Science

February 2015

Rabi al-Thani / Jumada al-Awwal 1436



In the name of Allah,
most Gracious, most Merciful



How you can help:

- ✓ Go to Jannah Road and pick up a bargain.
- ✓ Donate quality used items.
- ✓ Volunteer some of your time, to help man the shop.

Muslim op shop first of its kind

In a very significant boost to the Islamic infrastructure here, Auckland now has a Muslim op shop. "Jannah Road" is believed to be the first such shop in the city where most of New Zealand's Muslims live. Op (short for opportunity) shops have long been used very effectively by Christian charities and others such as the SPCA to raise funds for their causes. There are dozens of such shops in Auckland alone, staffed mainly by volunteers. Now Muslims can feel good about supporting Islamic causes while they are picking up bargains from their own op shop.

Jannah Road was started six months ago by Yusuf Moorad (who runs Proactiv Computer Solutions) and his family, who felt the need for such a place: "We wanted our own Muslim op shop so Muslims who are struggling can afford things."

Inside Jannah Road it's a veritable Aladdin's Cave of good-quality used items as well as some new things too. Prices have deliberately been kept low and affordable.

Like any op shop, Jannah Road relies on donations for its stock. Currently they would appreciate having more bedding, towels, household appliances and abayas, as well as Islamic books, DVD's, ornaments and prayer mats. **More than anything, they need customers** – like any retail

establishment they have rent and other expenses to cover. After these have been paid each month, any money left over is donated to worthwhile Islamic causes.

Jannah Road has made a donation to Voice of Islam, which has been on a fundraising drive in recent months. It has also donated hundreds of dollars to Working Together Group's orphanage/foster home project. Both are unique initiatives in the community and therefore very worthy candidates for support.

Jannah Road is staffed by volunteers, including sister Israa Alhussain (pictured) and sister Sahar. They would appreciate help, so if anyone wants to volunteer for a few hours a week, go in and speak with them.



The shop, which has its own parking, is open from 9am to 9pm seven days a week. It is located at 164E Stoddard Road, Mt Roskill, next door to Khyber Foods & Spices and opposite Masjid-E-Umar.

And who is better in speech than one who invites to Allah and does good deeds and says, "Indeed, I am a Muslim." Good deeds and bad deeds are not equal. Repel [evil] by that which is better; and thereafter, your enemy will become your devoted friend. But no one is granted this except those who are patient, and no one is granted it except one having a great portion [of good]. And if there comes to you from Satan an evil suggestion, then seek refuge in Allah. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Knowing.

(Quran 41: 33-35)

Are Muslims terrorists?

We see very often in the news Muslims being labelled as terrorists. The recent Paris shooting, the Sydney standoff and various other events around the world portray Muslims in a negative light. They are often called "extremists" or "radicals" or "fundamentalist" Muslims. The media point the finger at Muslims as if they were the root cause of the incident. And it seriously affects us Muslims, especially those living in the western world.

The media portrayed the Paris incident as two gunmen who shot 12 people at the Charlie Hebdo magazine office in what they called revenge for repeatedly producing cartoons depicting our beloved Prophet Muhammed (saw) in a bad light. Similarly, the Sydney event was portrayed with hostages being forced to hold a black flag with the Muslim declaration of faith (shahadah: "There is no God but Allah and Muhammed (saw) is his messenger") written in Arabic on it.

In the aftermath of the Paris incident, one recent report on Al Jazeera showed a Muslim woman being too afraid to confront the camera due to feared backlashes. When asked about it, she said that people now look at her as a suspect behind the shooting. She feels like she is being watched wherever she goes, especially as she wears the hijab, the Muslim headscarf.

This now raises a very important question: how should we handle insult and abuse? Do we lose our temper? Do we fight back: "an eye

for an eye, a tooth for a tooth", as the Bible says? How should we react? Sure, revenge is sweet; however what does Islam say about this? How did our beloved Prophet (saw) react to such insult and violence? What does the Quran say about this?

If we believe that humans are the best of creation, why then, when someone insults our religion, do we take it personally? We react with violence, thereby giving into our lower self (nafs). The prophetic way is to look beyond the lower inclinations within us. The prophetic way is to look to our hearts, and show others the good and hide the bad.

When the Prophet (saw) visited Taif (100km southeast of Makkah), he faced stiffed resistance from the people, who told their children to throw stones at him. He was abused verbally and physically to a point that blood started dripping from his body and stuck to his sandals. He even lost a tooth in that mission. So how did our beloved Prophet (saw) react to such bad treatment? Did he resort to violence in revenge for their actions? No. Rather, the opposite occurred. When the Angel of Mountains appeared and asked if he should destroy the people of Taif, our bruised and battered Prophet (saw), with blood dripping from his feet and his body suffering from utmost pain, replied, "No", in the hope that maybe one day the children of Taif would become Muslims. Subhanallah! How eloquent was his reply. And we know that the inhabitants of Taif are Muslim today.



The modern road to Taif



Taif Rose Festival

At the early stages of Islam, we remember how the Makkans tried to kill the Prophet (saw). Under the command of Allah (swt), he migrated to Medina. Our Prophet returned to Makkah, this time with a strong army and the upper hand. Did he kill all those who had opposed him in the beginning? No. Rather, he forgave them. As a result of his kindness, a lot of them embraced Islam. This is the way of Islam, the noble way.

Cast your minds back to yet another prophetic example. We all know the story of the woman who left rubbish on the doorstep of the Prophet's house. Without any complaint, remorse or ego, our Prophet (saw) cleared it every day. Then one day, he noted that there was no rubbish on his doorstep, and found out that she was ill. He visited her, comforted her, and provided food for her. Allah (swt) turned her heart towards Islam. The kindness that our Prophet (saw) showed won her heart and she became a Muslimah. This is the Islamic way.

And there are many other examples where people who fought against the Prophet (saw) later accepted Islam. For example, Khalid ibn Walid and Amr ibn As. Khalid fought against the Muslims in the battle of Badr. Later he became a Muslim, led many battles on the side of the Muslims and earned the title "Sword of Allah". Similarly, Amr fought with the Quraish against the Muslims in several battles. Then he saw Muslims praying, learnt about Islam, and converted.

We don't know. Someday our worst enemies might accept Islam and stand shoulder to shoulder with us. That is Allah's secret. We all remember Arnoud van Doorn, the Dutch politician and producer of a film insulting Prophet Muhammad (saw). What did he do? After reading and learning about Islam, he became a Muslim!

The Quran says in Surah Al Ma'ida verse 32 that *"whoever kills one innocent life, it's as if he has killed all of mankind; and whoever saves one life, it is as if he has saved all of mankind"*.

We see many youths heading to the Middle East to fight over there. More often than not, it is a battle with Muslims against Muslims. How do we know that we are right? How do we know that we are not going there to kill innocent life, or even someone who is beloved to Allah (swt)? As the famous saying goes "The road to Hell is paved with good intentions". Therefore we must be careful in what we do.

Our Prophet (saw) has said that this is a time of fitna (trial). People are being killed and they don't know why they are being killed. People are killing and they don't know who they are killing.

On the other hand, have we thought about the good we can do over here? There are many relief efforts taking place around the globe. Many people are donating clothes and other essentials, and are volunteering their time to help those who are affected. Why not join them?

As the idiom goes, "Don't add fuel to the fire." We as Muslims should be fire fighters, not arsonists!



Arnoud van Doorn
in Makkah

When an evil inclination comes to us, we are asked to say "A oothu bil-Laahi minash shaytaanir rajeem" which means "I take refuge in Allah from Shaitaan, the cursed one."



Jihad ≠ holy war, but = crusade?

Mistranslation

The subject of this article is the Arabic word *jihad*, which must be the most mistranslated word nowadays. "If you open a modern Oxford English dictionary, you would probably find the definition of jihad as 'a holy war undertaken by Muslims against non-believers'. This is a very poor definition"¹. That is, western media seem to take the word unambiguously to mean no more than "holy war". For instance, an Associated Press article, printed in the *New Zealand Herald* of 11 January 2015², reads, "For Islamic State group militants, it is a welcome 'success' in global jihad, or holy war, ..."

This is also the definitional equivalent used by the United States Department of Justice, which "has used its own *ad hoc* definitions of jihad in indictments of individuals involved in terrorist activities: 'As used in this First Superseding Indictment, 'Jihad' is the Arabic word meaning 'holy war'. In this context, jihad refers to the use of violence, including paramilitary action against persons, governments deemed to be enemies of the fundamentalist version of Islam"³.

It is clearly a term that is misused by people on all sides. "'Jihad' is a loaded term – and a concept that illustrates a deep gulf of miscommunication between Islam and the West. There are those in each community who see jihad as a clash of civilizations – and act on those beliefs"⁴.

This led the Egyptian-born American Muslim leader, Dr Maher Hathout, to write a book *Jihad vs. Terrorism*, to set the record straight for two reasons. "Number

one was the discovery that everyone is defining us except us, everyone is explaining jihad except for Muslims. Second, I noticed that some Muslims needed to brush up, to review the issue on their own for clarity and understanding of their own religion. This is why I made the book very textual. I tried to use verses from the Koran, from the Prophet ... It includes personal opinion of course, but the backbone is textual"⁴.

(Coincidentally, Dr Hathout, a cardiologist by profession, passed away on 3 January 2015⁵. May Allah, swt, grant him Jannah.)

Arabic meaning

The meaning of the Arabic noun *jihad*, which comes from the verb *juhud*, is "striving, struggling, a determined effort". In this literal sense, all Muslims are jihadists, because they are commanded to strive in the way of Allah (swt). In this sense, to "declare jihad" is meaningless; jihad is a struggle you perform, not something you declare.

While fighting may be included in this definition, it is clearly not a major part: "there are other words in Arabic that more unambiguously refer to the act of making war, such as *qital* or *harb*"⁶.

What jihad is not

A number of websites on the internet try to do what this article is trying to do, namely explain the concept of jihad, and in particular that it is not equivalent to holy war. Statements on these websites say:

- "Jihad is **NOT** Holy War"¹
- "Jihad is not a violent concept"⁷

Posters from a 2013 Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) campaign on US buses



- "Jihad is **NOT** blowing up one's self (Suicide is a sin in Islam). ... The Prophet (p.b.u.h) said, "... whoever commits suicide with a piece of iron will be punished with the same piece of iron in the Hell Fire." ... the Prophet said, "A man was inflicted with wounds and he committed suicide, and so Allah said: 'My slave has caused death on himself hurriedly, so I forbid Paradise for him.'"¹
- "Jihad is **NOT** killing innocent people"¹
- "Jihad is **NOT** flying a plane into a building packed with civilians"¹
- "Jihad is **NOT** fighting out of anger and hatred"¹
- "Jihad is **NOT** killing others just because they don't agree with you"¹
- "Jihad is **NOT** killing others just because they are not Muslims"¹. "Jihad is not a declaration of war against other religions. It is worth noting that the Koran specifically refers to Jews and Christians as 'people of the book' who should be protected and respected."⁷
- "Jihad cannot imply conversion by force, for the Quran (2:256) specifically states 'there is no compulsion in religion.'"⁶
- Military jihad is a last resort. "If military jihad is required to protect the faith against others, it can be performed using anything from legal, diplomatic and economic to political means. If there is no peaceful alternative, Islam also allows the use of force ..."⁷
- Jihad is not unbridled warfare. If military jihad is used as a last resort, there are strict

specific conditions laid down for the conduct of the fighting. "Innocents – such as women, children, or invalids – must never be harmed, and any peaceful overtures from the enemy must be accepted."⁷ "It is crucial to note here that what is condoned is defensive warfare; Islam cannot justify aggressive war. Muhammad and the Tradition are also against killing non-combatants, torturing of prisoners, the destruction of crops, animals and homes."⁸

Quran and hadith

As is always the case in Islam, true reliable meanings can only be found by consulting the two authoritative sources: the Quran and hadith. The following quotations show that *jihad* does not equate to war and, where fighting is involved, it is conducted within strict limits in order to fight oppression:

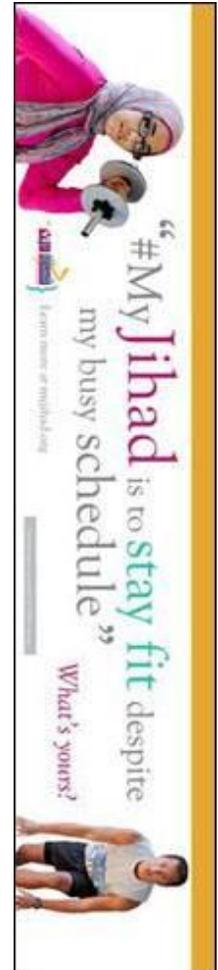
Quran

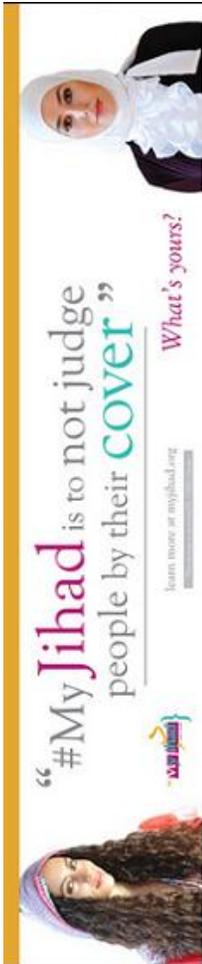
"Do not obey the *kafireen* (those who reject the truth) but wage jihad with it (the Quran) against them" (25:52).

"Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you, but transgress not the limits. Truly Allah likes not the transgressors" (2:190).

"Oppress them to the extent they oppress you, and fear Allah (against exceeding limit)" (2:194).

"So, if they withdraw from you and fight you not, and (instead) send you (guarantees of) peace, then Allah hath opened no way for you (to continue war)" (4:90).





"Permission (for fighting) is granted to the Believers who are forced to fight, because they have been oppressed ... those who have been turned out of homes simply because they say 'Our Lord is Allah'" (22:39).

Hadith

"The best jihad is the word of justice in front of the oppressive sultan."

[Aishah, ra] said, "O Messenger of Allah! We consider jihad as the best deed, should we not then go for jihad?" The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "The best jihad for you women is hajj mabrur (ie pilgrimage accepted by Allah)."

Kinds of jihad

There are clearly many facets to the concept of jihad, and fighting is only one of them. "In a religious sense, as described by the Quran and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (saw), 'jihad' has many meanings. It can refer to internal as well as external efforts to be a good Muslim or believer, as well as working to inform people about the faith of Islam."⁷

Many Muslims refer to the hadith in which Muhammad (saw), on returning from a battle, said, "We have returned from the lesser jihad (*al-jihad al-asghar*) to the greater jihad (*al-jihad al-akbar*)." When asked, "What is the greater jihad?", he replied, "It is the struggle against oneself." However, because of its chain of narration, some commentators consider this hadith weak, and thus the whole concept of greater vs lesser jihad.

A Gallup poll³ reports various interpretations of jihad by present-day Muslims, including:

- duty towards God
- a divine duty
- worship of God
- a commitment to hard work
- achieving one's goals in life
- struggling to achieve a noble cause
- promoting peace, harmony or cooperation, and assisting others
- living the principles of Islam
- sacrificing one's life for the sake of Islam/God/a just cause
- fighting against the opponents of Islam

Iraqi-born Majid Khadduri, professor at Indiana, Chicago and Johns Hopkins universities, lists four kinds of *jihad fi sabilillah* (struggle in the cause of God)⁹:

- Jihad of the heart (*jihad bil qalb/nafs*) is concerned with combatting the devil and in the attempt to escape his persuasion to evil. This type of jihad was regarded as the greater jihad (*al-jihad al-akbar*).
- Jihad by the tongue (*jihad bil lisan*) (also jihad by the word, *jihad al-qalam*) is concerned with speaking the truth and spreading the word of Islam with one's tongue.
- Jihad by the hand (*jihad bil yad*) refers to choosing to do what is right and to combat injustice and what is wrong with action.
- Jihad by the sword (*jihad bis saif*) refers to *qital fi sabilillah* (armed fighting in the way of God, or holy war).

This categorisation is reminiscent of the hadith in which Prophet Muhammad (saw) said, "If one of you sees something wrong, let him change it with his hand; if he cannot, then with his tongue; if he cannot, then with his heart and this is the weakest faith." Some versions add, "there is no part of faith behind that, not even so much as a mustard seed." Note that this hadith does not mention violence.

To the great Persian scholar Al-Ghazali, jihad did not mean fighting. He said¹⁰, "The real jihad is the warfare against (one's own) passions." A similar sentiment is voiced by Noha Aboulmagd-Forster, who teaches Arabic at the University of Chicago's Center for Middle Eastern Studies⁴.

"Something widely quoted by the Muslim 'man on the street' is that the most difficult jihad is the one of the soul. The biggest trouble is not with your enemy but with yourself."

Various other non-violent interpretations of jihad are found:

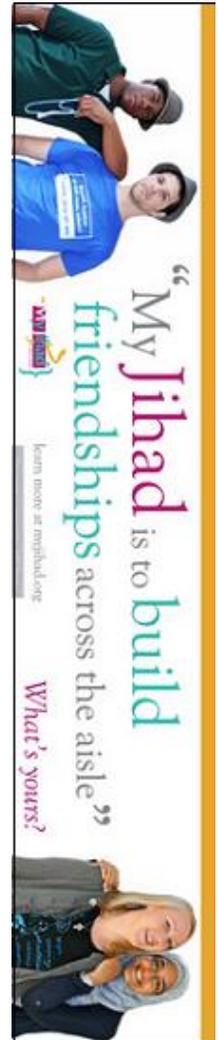
- Muslim scholar Mahmoud Ayoub states that "The goal of true *jihad* is to attain a harmony between *islam* (submission), *iman* (faith), and *ihsan* (righteous living)."³
- In modern times, Pakistani scholar and professor Fazlur Rahman Malik has used the term to describe the struggle to establish a "just moral-social order"³
- Habib Bourguiba, former president of Tunisia, used jihad to describe the struggle for economic development in the country, much as Lyndon Johnson spoke of a "War on Poverty."⁶

- On the basis of field work in Egypt, the Sudan, and Tunisia, anthropologist Fluehr-Lobban¹¹ mentioned jihad only in the context of the Ramadan fast: "Fasting for the whole month is a ... personal trial for Muslims ... a form of personal *jihad* ... part of the more difficult inner struggles with the flesh and worldly appetites."

In these senses, which are not specifically to do with Islam as a religion, the Arabic word *jihad* can reasonably be translated into English as *crusade*. Modern English dictionaries give sentences illustrative of the use of *crusade*, such as *a crusade against racism/child abuse/drunk driving/crime/vandalism/obesity/drugs* or *a crusade for literacy/racial equality*. (We are not talking here about the original meaning of the crusades, as military expeditions sanctioned by the Catholic church against Muslims in the Middle East; rather, we mean the modern everyday sense, as illustrated by the dictionary sentences.)

Conclusion

To conclude, we might quote *National Geographic Magazine* again⁴: "Jihad is a loaded term – and a concept that illustrates a deep gulf of miscommunication between Islam and the West. There are those in each community who see jihad as a clash of civilizations – and act on those beliefs." While most Muslims interpret the term overwhelmingly in a non-violent sense, "it is the jihad of the sword that has received the lion's share of global attention.





The concept began when early Muslims were driven from their land by enemies ... and were first given permission and later ordered by God to fight those enemies. They were not ... given permission to fight non-believers or those who rejected the faith – only those who transgressed against them. ... But even this kind of military jihad is not necessarily a clash of religions. It can also be waged against transgressors who are themselves Muslim.”

Noha Aboulmagd-Forster⁴ sees an interesting paradoxical correlation between how jihad is defined by extreme political Islamists and by some people who are not Muslims. “They agree on the (incorrect) use of the word, while in the middle you have the huge billion-person-strong Muslim community, people who certainly don’t believe that there is some duty to go and fight Christians or Jews.”

May Allah (swt) help us to convey the true meaning of Islam to non-Muslims and misguided Muslims. May we suggest that writing, compiling and reading (and hopefully passing on the message of) this newsletter article can even be considered a form of jihad.

Muslim scientists

This is the second, insha Allah, of a number of articles about early Muslim scientists.

Mathematics

At the same time as advances in medicine were being made by Muslim scientists (see the January issue), Muslims produced some of the most outstanding mathematicians. Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi (780-850), was the founder of modern algebra. He developed sine, cosine and trigonometrical tables, which were later translated in the West. His

- 1 www.justislam.co.uk/product.php?products_id=2
- 2 Paris attack rallies Islamic extremists, may boost support. *New Zealand Herald*, 11 January 2015. www.nzherald.co.nz/world/news/article.cfm?c_id=2&objectid=11384741
- 3 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jihad
- 4 Handwerk, B. What Does “Jihad” Really Mean to Muslims? *National Geographic News*, 24 October, 2003. news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/10/1023_031023_jihad.html
- 5 Roberts, S. Maher Hathout, a Powerful Voice for American Muslims, Dies at 79. *New York Times*, 10 January 2015. www.nytimes.com/2015/01/11/us/maher-hathout-a-powerful-voice-for-american-muslims-dies-at-79-.html?_r=0
- 6 Streusand, D. E. What Does Jihad Mean? *Middle East Quarterly*, September 1997, pp. 9-17. www.meforum.org/357/what-does-jihad-mean
- 7 Islamic Supreme Council of America. Jihad: A misunderstood concept from Islam. What jihad is, and is not. islamicsupremecouncil.org/understanding-islam/legal-rulings/5-jihad-a-misunderstood-concept-from-islam.html?start=9
- 8 Zepp, I. G. (1992) *A Muslim Primer*. Wakefield Editions.
- 9 Khadduri, M. *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*. The Lawbook Exchange (2010 Reprint edition).
- 10 <http://www.islamcan.com/common-questions-about-islam/what-does-jihad-mean.shtml#.VLBT0yuUdqU>
- 11 Fluehr-Lobban, C. (1994). *Islamic Society in Practice*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

book on algebra *Hisab al-Jabr waal-Muqabalah (The Calculation of Integration and Equation)* was used until the 16th century as the principal textbook of European universities. In it, he writes that given an equation, collecting the unknowns on one side of the equation is called al-Jabr and collecting the knowns on the other side of the equation is called al-Mukabalah.

Al-Khwarizmi also helped introduce Arabic numerals, the decimal position system, and the concept of zero. The English words *algebra* and *algorithm* are, in fact, corruptions of the name of his work (*al-Jabr*) and his own name (*Al-Khawarizmi*). Interestingly, every book published in early times on algebra included many examples from Islamic inheritance laws and how they could be solved using algebra.

Another outstanding mathematician was Ghiyath al-Din al-Kashani (1380-1429) of the late 14th century. He worked on the theory of numbers and techniques of computations. In 1424, he computed a value of 2π to 16 decimal places. One of his most important works was *Miftah el-Hussab (The Calculators' Key)*, where he described an algorithm for finding the fifth root of any number. The book was used in Persian schools until the 17th century. Later in his life, he moved to Samarkand at the request of the then ruler to help direct a new scientific school and observatory, and conduct research with other scholars of the time.

Umar Khayyam (1048-1131), known to the west as only a poet, actually was also an excellent mathematician. He criticised Euclid's theorems, evolved a methodology for the solution of third degree equations, and carried out research in the field of binomials and their coefficients.

Physics

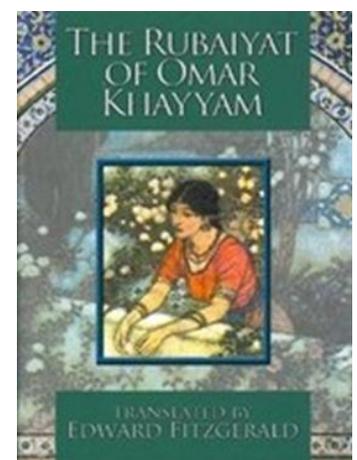
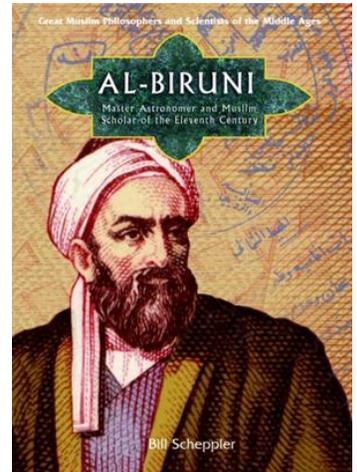
In the related field of physics, Abu al-Fath Abd al-Rahman al-Khazini (died 1121) studied mechanics and hydrostats (devices for detecting the presence of water), and wrote

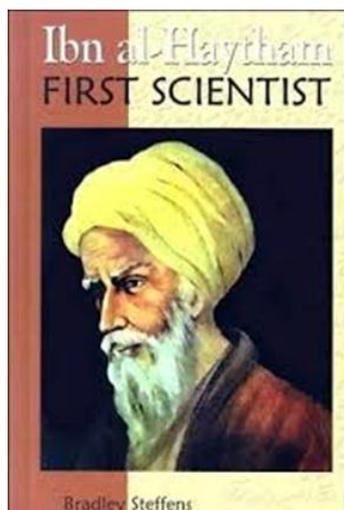
books on physics and astronomy.

Abu al-Rayhan Muhammad ibn Ahmad Al-Biruni (973-1048), a geographer, chronologist, mathematician, astronomer, was also a physicist. His *Elements of Astrology* remained a textbook for centuries, and he also wrote on specific gravity, and developed formulae to determine the absolute and specific weights of objects.

Abu al-Hassan al-Haitham (965-1039) was one of the most eminent physicists, whose contribution to optics and the scientific method were great. Originally from Basra, he went to Egypt where he was asked to find ways of controlling the flood of the Nile. Being unsuccessful in this, he feigned madness until the death of Caliph al-Hakim. He also travelled to Spain and during this time had time for his scientific pursuits. He wrote treatises such as *Kital al-Manzir* on light, worked with mirrors and lenses, reflection, refraction, and magnifying and burning glasses. He discussed the propagation of light, and colours and optical illusions. He contradicted Ptolemy's and Euclid's theory of vision that objects are seen by rays of light emanating from the eyes. According to al-Haitham, the rays originated in the object of vision and not in the eye.

Through this kind of extensive research on optics, he has been considered the father of modern optics. From studying motion, he also discovered the principle of inertia. Roger Bacon and all medieval Western writers on optics based their work largely on his *Opticae Thesaurus* and it even influenced Leonardo da Vinci, Johann Kepler and Newton. Al-





Haitham also studied the phenomena of sunrise and sunset, and explained rainbows through the principle of reflection. He was known for the earliest use of the camera obscura as well.

Al-Kindi (died 873), considered the first philosopher of the Arabs, also contributed to physics, optics, reflection of light, specific weights, tides and metallurgy.

Chemistry

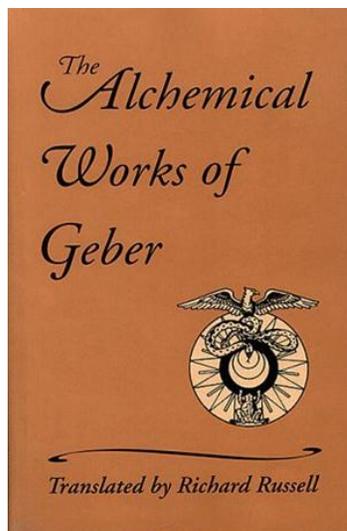
Muslims also contributed to chemistry by discovering many new substances such as potash, nitrate of silver, corrosive sublimate and nitrate and sulphuric acid as well as improving methods for evaporation, filtration, sublimation, calcination, melting, distillation, and crystallisation.

Jabir ibn Hayyan (Latinised as Geber)(721-815), modified the Aristotelian doctrine of the four elements, and presented the so-called sulphur-mercury theory of metals. According to this theory, metals differ essentially because of different proportions of sulphur and mercury in them. He also formulated the theory of the geologic formation of metals. Unlike his Greek predecessors, he did not merely speculate, but performed experiments to reach certain conclusions. He recognised and stated the importance of experimentation in chemistry. He combined the theoretical knowledge of the Greeks and practical knowledge of craftsmen, and himself made noteworthy advances in both the theory and practice of chemistry.

Jabir's contribution to chemistry is very great. He gave a scientific description of two principal

operations of chemistry. One of them is calcination, which is employed in the extraction of metals from their ores. The other is reduction, which is employed in numerous chemical treatments. He improved upon the methods of evaporation, melting, distillation, sublimation and crystallisation. These are the fundamental methods employed for the purification of chemical substances, enabling the chemist to study their properties and uses, and to prepare them. The process of distillation is particularly useful in the taking of extracts of plant material.

In the opinion of Jabir, the cultivation of gold was not the only object of a chemist. The preparation of new chemical substances was also regarded by him as the chief object of chemistry. We are indebted to him for the first preparation of such substances as arsenic and antimony from their sulphides, and basic lead carbonate. He also carried out important work in the preparation of steel, and the refinement of metals. Jabir also dealt with such applications as the use of manganese dioxide in glass-making, varnishes to waterproof cloth and protect iron, the use of iron pyrites for writing in gold, and the distillation of vinegar to concentrate acetic acid. The most important discovery made by Jabir was the preparation of sulphuric acid. The importance of this discovery can be seen in the fact that, in this modern age, the extent of the industrial progress of a country is mostly judged by the amount of sulphuric acid consumed in that country.



Band Aid fixes?

Those of you who are “of an age” will remember the original Band Aid in 1984. It was a supergroup featuring mainly British and Irish musicians and recording artists, brought together by Bob Geldof of The Boomtown Rats and Midge Ure of Ultravox, to raise money for charitable projects to combat poverty in Ethiopia in East Africa. The project was given a clever name: (i) they were a band (pop group), (ii) their intention was to provide aid for Ethiopia, and (iii) Band Aid is America’s #1 brand of adhesive bandages.

The group produced a single that became the best-selling song over Christmas 1984. It sold over two million copies worldwide and raised more than US\$24m. This inspired similar celebrity fund-raisers in countries such as Canada, France, Spain and the United States. Two live concerts were organised in 1985: USA for Africa, and Live Aid held at the same time in London and Philadelphia, which were broadcast in over 165 countries. Band Aid and Live Aid together raised about US\$150m for famine relief in Ethiopia.

Two subsequent re-recordings of the song, in 1989 and 2004, to raise further money for charity, also topped the charts. It has been re-released this year with slightly rewritten lyrics to reflect the current Ebola virus epidemic in West Africa. All proceeds go towards battling what Geldof described as a “particularly pernicious illness because it renders humans untouchable and that is sickening”¹.

So far, so good, and we should commend the various Band Aid participants for raising money for charity. However, Band Aid has also received various criticisms.

Rapper Fuse ODG, who was born in London but raised in Ghana, turned down a request to sing with the group for the 2014 Ebola version. He explained that the lyrics of the song do not reflect what Africa truly is, citing lyrics such as “There is no peace and joy in west Africa this Christmas”. According to him, he goes to Ghana every year for the sole purpose of peace and joy, so singing such lyrics would be a blatant lie.

At the time of the 2004 re-release, the World Development Movement said many of the song lyrics were “patronising, false and out of date”². The organisation condemned the “negative stereotypes” depicted in the song and regretted it did not “provide a more accurate reflection of Africa and its problems.” Director of WDM, Mark Curtis, said, “The song perpetuates the myth that Africa’s problems can somehow be blamed on lack of rainfall and failed harvests. It conjures up an image of a continent inhabited entirely by starving children with flies on their faces sitting in the sunbaked bed of a dried up stream.” However, the organisation added that it did not want to discourage people from buying the record and contributing to the charity effort.

Similar criticisms have been voiced about the 2014 version of the song³. Chitra Nagarajan, a human rights activist from Nigeria, said she objected to “celebrities swooping in to ‘save’ the people of Africa. It perpetuates stereotypes of conflict, poverty and disease as the single story of the continent.”

Liberian academic Robtel Pailey said the lyrics are “incredibly patronising and problematic. It paints the continent as unchanging and frozen in time. If you look at the revised lyrics, there are references to ‘them’ versus ‘us’.”





This is echoed in comments made by U2 singer Bono, who sang on the 1984, 2004 and 2014 versions. He admitted he “loathed” another line in the song which said, “Well tonight thank God it’s them instead of you.” This year, it was replaced with the words “Well tonight we’re reaching out and touching you”, while the line “Where the only water flowing is the bitter sting of tears” was replaced with “Where a kiss of love can kill you and there’s death in every tear.”

From the Muslim point of view, we ought to look more closely at the lyrics of the song. The most repeated line is “Do they know it’s Christmastime? Feed the world. Let them know it’s Christmastime.”

Back in 1984, that was possibly acceptable, if we bear in mind the population of Ethiopia. Ethiopia has a current population of 88m, 63% of whom (55m) are Christians. However, 34% are Muslim, that is, 30m who probably know but frankly do not care that it is Christmas.

Incidentally, most Ethiopian Christians celebrate Christmas on 7 January, that is, according to the Julian calendar. Dawit Gebreselassie, a financial analyst from Ethiopia said³, “I would ask, ‘Does Geldof know when it’s Christmas time in Ethiopia?’ as perhaps the fact that we celebrate Christmas a few weeks later on the 7th of January could have misled him into thinking we don’t know when it is. Reassure him from us that, after his last three reminders, we are well aware and don’t need any more prompting.”

The inappropriateness of the song is even worse with the 2014 version. The Ebola outbreak has mostly affected Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia in West Africa. Robtel Pailey has pointed out, “And the fact of the matter is, if you look at countries that have been most affected by Ebola, the vast majority of the population in Sierra Leone is Muslim, the vast majority of the population in Guinea is Muslim. Yes, we know it is Christmas, but not all of us celebrate Christmas.”

To be precise, Guinea and Sierra Leone are both Muslim-majority countries, with 85% and 71% Muslim populations respectively. Liberia is the opposite, with 86% Christians. None of these countries has a similar population to Ethiopia’s 88m: Guinea 10m, Sierra Leone 6m, and Liberia 4m. Nevertheless, as a whole, these three countries are overwhelmingly Muslim (13.25m out of a total population of 20m, or 66%). The disease has also spread to other Muslim-majority countries including Nigeria, Mali and Senegal.



Country	Population	Muslim population	Christian population
Guinea	10m	8.5m, 85%	0.8m, 8%
Sierra Leone	6m	4.25m, 71%	1.6m, 27%
Liberia	4m	0.5m, 12%	3.5m, 86%
Total	20m	13.25m, 66%	5.9m, 30%

1 Wikipedia (n.d.). Band Aid 30. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Band_Aid_30

2 BBC News (16 November 2004) World premiere of Band Aid song. news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/music/4015231.stm

3 Glennie, A. (18 November 2014). Backlash over 'patronising' Band Aid. Daily Mail. www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2840093

YMWA camp

Jamah: Holding on to the rope of Allah

The smiles and laughter as the girls jumped off the very comfortably air-conditioned double-decker bus were in stark contrast to the gloomy grey clouds and drizzle surrounding them. The 63 participants arriving at Kokako Lodge, Hunua Falls, 58 km southeast of Auckland, were excited and looking forward to a good time. It was clear that the weather wasn't going to stand in their way. They were here for one reason – the YMWA (Young Muslim Women's Association)'s 2014 summer camp.

This year's theme was "Jamah: Holding on to the rope of Allah". In the lodge surrounded by the tall, proud trees of the Hunua Ranges, the participants of mixed ethnicities prepared to strengthen the ties of sisterhood and to learn what it means to hold on to the rope of Allah. The three-day camp (12 – 14 December) was to be stamped in the memories of the participants, with newly formed friendships and experiences.

Upon arrival early on the Friday, the group enjoyed a generous breakfast pack at registration, and the participants teamed up in the main hall and were reminded of the necessary ground rules and safety instructions. A total of five teams (one per cabin) were formed, each having two supervisors for the duration of the camp.

Fun ice-breakers set the scene for some initial bonding. The girls were challenged to not only tighten any loose bonds of sisterhood between the newly formed teams, but also earn team points which could

result in some serious prizes at Sunday's final ceremony. Volunteers quickly proceeded to lay out the home-baked, mouthwatering food in preparation for some mind food to come.

A quick goal-achievement workshop took place. Each team was tasked with committing to a couple of goals in line with the theme of the camp, which they would then present and be assessed on the next day.

The theme was introduced officially by Aunty Waseema as the first speaker for the camp. She spoke of the delicate nature of jamah, and how every sister was a thread entwined around each other to form the rope of Allah. She spoke of the love that resonated in each heart, and of the link we have to our greatest treasure, the Quran. Then, YMWA members ran the "Young Leaders" workshop. The teams put their minds together to come up with great answers the questions, "What's lacking in the community for Muslimah youth?" and "What exists that can be improved for Muslimah youth?" Many productive outcomes were discussed, such as the need for workshops around social media usage in a positive manner in this modern age where expectations to be constantly "connected" are high. Each team nominated leaders to lead the team after camp, and a full action plan to carry forward the next steps was developed by the end of the workshops.



Hunua Falls



Archery

After some serious discussion, it was time for a little bit of fun with the "Impromptu creativity" session. The games were all created in-house by the YMWA team, relating to Islamic stories and characters. This tested the drawing, acting and guessing skills of the participants in timed sections. There were clear winners at the end with well-earned points for each team.

The games were followed by a discussion with Sheik Rafaat. He addressed the important issue of bullying and speaking up for oneself. He also addressed the importance of giving.

Sheik Rafaat's inspiring talk was followed by dinner and quiz night. The teams were determined to add more to their bank of team points with a fight contested to the end. At the end of the quiz, the girls were tired and very much ready to call it a night.

Saturday morning started bright and early with fajr prayer, the spiritual bulletin and a hearty breakfast. Each team split off for a lineup of much awaited activities. A range of six activities was on rotation: self-defense, bush craft, kayaking, horse-riding, archery and tramping.

Self-defense and bush craft were amongst the many new activities offered this year and they proved to add to participants' survival skills. Experienced black and brown belt instructors from the YMWA Karate Club taught key life skills and tricks that were relatively easy to use, with a warning, "Do not try this at home!" Survival tips, including how to make a fire and create a shelter, were demonstrated by the bush craft instructors.



Kayaking



Bush craft

Kayaking introduced its own challenges including strength-building, lifting kayaks up and down the river banks. All was worth it when the kayaks bobbed gently on the calm, murky waters next to the roaring Hunua Falls.

Horse-riding was another activity being offered for the first time at the YMWA camp. The activity was for a limited lucky number who made the shortlist and received a unique experience with one-to-one lessons. The experience amidst the breathtaking scenery was enough to take away the nerves for first-timers, which were quickly replaced with feelings of serenity and happiness.

Archery focused on fine tuning some key skills; good stance is the core to succeeding in this sport.

Tramping was an adventure activity through the immaculate Hunua Ranges, focused on team-bonding and admiring the beautiful gift of nature that Allah (swt) has provided.

The in-house goal-achievement presentations from participants were presented in the form of skits, raps, and discussions demonstrating what they had learnt and achieved throughout this camp. The second day came to an end, showcasing talents and skills beyond expectations.

The final day arrived much too quickly for some. However, the much-anticipated workshop by Dr Sven Hansen on "Leadership as love" certainly delivered. Aspects of our daily life that can help reduce stress, such as controlling and taking charge of our breathing and improving sleeping patterns, were at the forefront of discussion and demonstrations. Participants appreciated this application to draw closer to Allah (swt) in order

to improve our sleeping cycle and wake up for fajr prayer each morning well rested. The inspirational talk reminded us of the teaching of Umar Al-Khattab (ra): "He who does not live in the way of his beliefs, starts to believe in the way he lives."

The last activity of our camp, the prize-giving ceremony, was attended by parents and families. Prizes were awarded to individual participants as well as for group achievements. Winners walked away with the "Best Achievers Award" for having earned the most points and achieving the best overall. Individual awards were presented for "The happy camper", "The caring mediator", "The helping hand" and many more. Special "YMWA School Representative Awards" were also presented.

It was soon time to pack bags and head back to cloudy Auckland. The bus ride back consisted of a mixture of feelings: physical exhaustion, the sadness of separation and excitement.

The camp fulfilled its many objectives. However, the one thing that stood out the most was the importance of sisterhood and how it helps us hold firmly on to the rope of Allah. As Allah (swt) says in the Quran, "And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided. And remember the favour of Allah upon you, when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became, by His favour, brothers" (Surah Ali-Imran, 3:103).



Shelter-building



Award ceremony



Voice of Islam

VOI delivers the message of Islam based on the teachings of the Noble Quran and the Sunnah (practices) of the Prophet Muhammad (saw).

VOI television is broadcast on:

- SKYTV CH 83 (Face TV) in New Zealand (11.30 am Sat & 10.00 am Sun)
- CTV in Christchurch (see TV guide for times)
- Channel 9 in Dunedin (see TV guide for times)
- METRO TV in Ghana, West Africa (see TV guide for times)

7 February

Quran 43: 81-84 God is 1 and has no son.

FEATURE: The Fog is lifting: Islamic beliefs parts 1, 2, 3.

My path to Islam: by Abdul Lateef Smith

DOCUMENTARY: Architects in nature part 1.

Tid Bits: Shahadah (testimony of faith) by Sheikh Yusuf Estes.

14 February

Quran 43: 81-84 God is one and has no son.

FEATURE: The Fog is lifting: Islamic beliefs parts 4, 5, 6.

DOCUMENTARY: Architects in nature part 2.

My path to Islam: by Abdul Leilah Ahmed

21 February

Quran 43: 81-84 God is 1 and has no son.

FEATURE: The Fog is lifting: Islamic beliefs parts 7, 8, 9, 10.

DOCUMENTARY: Architects in nature part 3.

No stone unturned: Allah by Sheikh Bilal Dannoun.

28 February

Quran 43: 81-84 God is 1 and has no son.

LECTURE: Journey to Allah by Yasmin Mogahed

DOCUMENTARY: Architects in nature: Conclusion.



Yasmin Mogahed

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Auckland prayer timetable for February 2015

(from www.islamicFinder.org. For other cities in New Zealand, see www.fianz.co.nz).

Date	Fajr	Sunrise	Dhuhr	Asr 1	Asr 2	Maghrib	Isha
1	4:57	6:35	1:35	5:23	6:30	8:33	10:06
2	4:59	6:36	1:35	5:23	6:29	8:32	10:05
3	5:00	6:37	1:35	5:23	6:29	8:31	10:04
4	5:02	6:39	1:35	5:23	6:29	8:30	10:02
5	5:03	6:40	1:35	5:22	6:28	8:29	10:01
6	5:03	6:40	1:35	5:22	6:28	8:29	10:01
7	5:05	6:41	1:35	5:22	6:28	8:28	10:00
8	5:08	6:43	1:35	5:22	6:27	8:26	9:57
9	5:09	6:44	1:36	5:22	6:26	8:25	9:56
10	5:11	6:45	1:36	5:21	6:25	8:24	9:54
11	5:12	6:46	1:36	5:21	6:25	8:23	9:53
12	5:14	6:47	1:36	5:21	6:24	8:22	9:52
13	5:15	6:48	1:36	5:20	6:23	8:21	9:50
14	5:17	6:49	1:36	5:20	6:23	8:20	9:49
15	5:18	6:51	1:36	5:20	6:22	8:19	9:47
16	5:19	6:52	1:35	5:19	6:21	8:18	9:46
17	5:21	6:53	1:35	5:19	6:20	8:17	9:44
18	5:22	6:54	1:35	5:18	6:20	8:15	9:43
19	5:24	6:55	1:35	5:18	6:19	8:14	9:41
20	5:25	6:56	1:35	5:17	6:18	8:13	9:40
21	5:25	6:56	1:35	5:17	6:18	8:13	9:40
22	5:26	6:57	1:35	5:17	6:17	8:12	9:38
23	5:29	6:59	1:35	5:16	6:15	8:09	9:35
24	5:30	7:00	1:35	5:15	6:15	8:08	9:34
25	5:32	7:01	1:35	5:15	6:14	8:07	9:32
26	5:33	7:02	1:34	5:14	6:13	8:05	9:30
27	5:34	7:03	1:34	5:13	6:12	8:04	9:29
28	5:35	7:04	1:34	5:13	6:11	8:03	9:27

Asr 1: Maliki, Shafii and Hanbali schools (single shadow length)

Asr 2: Hanafi school (double shadow length)

“No prayer is more burdensome to the hypocrites than the fajr prayer and the isha prayer, but if they knew what (blessings) lie in them, they would certainly come for them, even if they had to crawl.”
(hadith)

Credits

Rocket Science is a monthly newsletter produced by the Mount Albert Islamic Trust.

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- ✓ Central location
- ✓ Plenty of free parking
- ✓ Facilities for ladies
- ✓ Bayaan (religious talk) before jumuah prayers
- ✓ All bayaan and khutbah in English

NB We are only open for Friday prayers – not for the five daily prayers.

In December 2010, the **Senior Citizens' Association building, Rocket Park, New North Road, Mount Albert**, was closed for renovation by the Auckland City Council. Following these renovations, we believe we are the only jumuah in New Zealand with air-conditioning and heating.

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SwT, saw, as, ra

SwT: subhanahu wa ta'ala "Glory to Him, the Exalted" (when mentioning Allah)

saw: salallahu alaihi wassalam "May the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him" (when mentioning Muhammad)

as: alaihis salam "Peace be on him" (when mentioning other prophets)

ra: radi allahu anhu/ha/hum "May Allah be pleased with him/her/them" (when mentioning members of Muhammad's family, companions, etc)