# Youth Voice

Issue III: Quarter III

## Dignity

Characteristics of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) Series

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A MUNA Youth Publication

# Islam and Animals

a brief explanation by Mohammad Oiad

Every living thing on the face of this Earth, is a unique creation of Allah (Subhaana Wa' Taala). The plants, animals, and microbes that make up our environment are entitled to life by their Creator. We humans should never abuse or mistreat any living thing; we have set boundaries given to us by Allah to eat from that which He made lawful, and to protect ourselves from certain creatures that could harm us but not to transgress beyond that. People kill other animals for marketing purposes like elephants for ivory, and tigers for fur. This is an act of selfish injustice that man will be accountable for on Yawm Al Qiyamah. The animals Allah has made halal for us to kill are only for having as food and sustenance. One thing we fail to realize is that, although they might not have the mental capacity as us, animals do have feelings. All living things have a sense of community as mentioned in the Quran in Surah Al-An'am the sixth Surah in verse thirty-eight : *"There is not an animal that lives on the earth, nor a being that flies on its wings, but they form communities like you. Nothing have we omitted from the Book, and they all shall be gathered to their Lord in the end."* These living things that we humans mistreat are also our fellow Muslims in the sense that they live in the way that Allah created them to live, and obey Allah's laws in the natural world. Although animals do not have

**"All living things have a sense of community as mentioned in the Quran."**

free will, they follow their natural, God-given instincts and in that sense they "submit to God's will," - Islam. The proof for this is evident in Surah An-Nur the twenty-fourth Surah in verse forty-one: *"Do you not see that it is Allah Whose praise all beings in the heavens and on earth do celebrate, and the birds (of the air) with wings outspread? Each one knows its own (mode of) prayer and praise, and Allah knows well all that they do."* From these verses we can understand that all living things have a connection to the larger physical and spiritual world and that their lives are valuable as well. The conclusion we must draw from this as Muslims is that we are supposed to exist in communion and harmony with all the living things around us, as Allah reminds us in Surah Ar-Rahman the fifty-fifth Surah in verse ten: *"And the earth, He has assigned it to all living creatures."*

**Mohammad Ohid** is currently a student at the University of Michigan, studying Computer Engineering. His hobbies include football, basketball and soccer and he is an avid fitness guru. In addition, he is a captain in the MUNA Community Basketball League and loves getting involved in his local youth groups.

# A Prince Among Barbarians

Nazmul Hassan

When French troops under General Bourmont landed on the shores of Algeria in 1830, the Muslims of North Africa were in a state of disarray. The war on the French side served as a 'distraction' for its populace; the empire was going through its own phase of instability as Charles X (the current King), abdicated in favor of Louis-Philippe. Whatever was the weakness of the French, they were still the most powerful army in Europe, and the depleted Ottoman troops at Algiers stood little change against that grand killing machine. Soon, Algiers fell, and Oran followed, and the intentions of the French were made clear: this was a colonial project. As a result, the panicking Arab tribes of Algeria decided to unite under one man - a devout Marabout (religious leader) known as Muhi al-Din who, reluctantly became the leader of a great Jihad. Muhi al-Din soon saw the impracticality of his position - he was old and near death and the Jihad needed a strong, able man. Thus, he ceded his leadership to his stout son, a man with deep set eyes and a pensive air - himself a scholar of Islam and a master cavalier. The tribes fell in love. They named him Emir Al Mu'mineen - Prince of the Faithful.

Throughout the next 15 years, Emir Abd el-Kader would hold the French mission at bay through several stunning military victories (the Battle of Macta and others). He would unite the Muslim tribes, 'civilize' them in ways the French could have never done, do great deeds worthy of praise from Muslims and non-muslims alike, earn the love and reverence of his enemies, become the 19th century's most celebrated humanitarian, craft his own Islamic state - lose it, then see himself be betrayed by his brothers in faith, then see all his works disappear right in front of his eyes. Yet throughout it all the Emir's cool and collected character and the love of his dear mother kept him on his two feet.

In 1847, the Emir's Jihad would come to an end and a more relentless, spiritual Jihad would begin. Juggling with the fluctuating loyalties of the Arab tribes (many tribes abhorred his moralistic principles of war, such as not decapitating enemy soldiers after a battle), tired of the continual bloodshed, and eager to bring about stability in Algeria under French rule, he surrendered to General Lamorciere, under the condition that the French would allow him, and a small band of his followers a noble exile to Egypt - wherefrom he intended to perform the Hajj and pass the rest of his days in silent, religious contemplation. The French agreed, then proceeded to betray him. The French fleet took him and his entourage to Toulon, then moved him to Amboise castle. For nearly a decade, the French kept him more or less imprisoned. They stifled his free Arab spirit by forcing him to live in the sludge of Europe. Many of his family members became restless. Some died of heartbreak and depression, imprisoned in the cold, morose greenery of rural France.

**"[He] would become the 19th century's most celebrated humanitarian."**

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# The Prophet and Human Dignity

**Ismail Uddin**

Prophet Muhammad not only respected but also elevated the dignity of all those who were fortunate to meet him: Muslims and non-Muslim. I will illustrate three incidents when he had done so. First it was with his caretaker and slave Barakah, who he had inherited from his parents. She took care of him when he was a child and stayed with his household when he was an adult. He freed her on the day of his marriage with Khadijah, and later arranged her marriage with a man from Yathrib, the city soon to be named Medina. She lived happily and had a son named Ayman, after whom her nickname became Umm Ayman. Eventually she came back to Mecca and started living with Muhammad's (pbuh) household once again, either because she was widowed or divorced. Prophet Muhammad had treated her as a family member and did everything he could to take care of her, and this was before he had become a Prophet. He would call her "Ummi", my mother, and said of her to others: "She is all that is left, of my family." He elevated her status once again after the message of Islam was revealed. Along with Umm Ayman, another 'slave' lived in his household, Zayd ibn Harith from the Tribe of Kalb. He was given as a wedding gift to Muhammad (pbuh) by Khadijah at the age of fifteen. He was proud of his lineage but he was content with serving Muhammad (pbuh). After the message of Islam spread throughout Mecca, the Prophet said to his companions of Umm Ayman "Should one of you desire to marry a woman from the people of Paradise, let him marry Umm Ayman." This had a great effect on Zayd, who was much younger than Umm Ayman, and he asked to marry her. This is the prophet uplifting and honoring what we would consider today to be the lowest of society. Social status meant little to the prophet. Human dignity meant everything.

**[He] said of her to others "She is all that is left of my family."**

Another incident was with Abdullah ibn Masud, a man of short stature. He used to help out the Prophet (pbuh) in his day to day necessities. One day he was climbing a siwak tree and a gust of wind blew and exposed his thin and unimpressive legs. His friends laughed, but the Prophet asked, "Why do you laugh?". They replied, "Ya nabi, look at his legs. They're like twigs." The Prophet said, "These two legs will be the weight of Uhud on the scale of good deeds on the Day of Judgement." The Prophet had such a deep impact on this man that much later on in life, Abdullah Ibn Masud (rh) would refuse to part with a copy of his personal Quran that the Prophet had taught him, despite Uthman (rh) explaining why he was burning unofficial copies of the Quran (so the Ummah would have one standard copy). Furthermore, Abdullah Ibn Masud(rh) was so elevated by the Prophet that he became a pillar of knowledge, so much so that this young man - a pious predecessor reflected - and Ali (rh) were the springs from which all the learned companions took.

A third incident I'll mention is about Zahir (ra), who was repulsive in appearance and had a very low self-esteem. The Prophet always sought to uplift people and this incident illustrates this quality. Reported by Anas ibn Malik, "There was a man from the people of the desert whose name was Zahir bin Hizam (or Haram). And he was loved by the Prophet (pbuh) – He was also not of a pleasant (facial) appearance. The Prophet came to him one day, while he (Zahir) was selling his goods in the market and embraced him from behind, so that he (Zahir) could not see who it was.

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Editors Pick

# Solidarity Amidst Terror

## The Australian response to terrorism

When I first heard about the events going on in Market Place in Australia, I prayed that not only would the situation end peacefully but also that the hostage taker was not Muslim. Sadly, my prayers were not answered as the hostage crisis in Lindt Chocolat Café ended with the deaths of two hostages and the hostage taker, Man Haron Moni. Details of hostages being forced to put up a flag that was reminiscent of the ones championed by ISIS with the declaration of faith of Muslims inscribed on it, was enough to label this a terrorist attack. My fear was that there would be retaliation by some to the many peaceful Muslims living in Australia because of the horrendous actions of a despicable madman. But what actually transpired following these events, surprised me in a profound way and rekindled my faith in humanity.

Soon after the end of the hostage crisis and even during it, questions arose of what kind of backlash would be directed against Muslims and other ethnically similar citizens. This is why the numerous stories of support towards Muslims caught me off-guard. A woman named Rachael Jacobs voiced on Twitter of how she saw a woman on a train taking here hijab off in what was probably silent fear of being potentially harassed, or worse. Jacobs then went on and described how, "I ran after her at the train station. I said 'put it back on. I'll walk with u'.

She started to cry and hugged me for about a minute – then walked off alone."

There was another story of a man reportedly verbally harassing a woman wearing tradition Muslim garb on a subway train and fellow passengers telling the man to leave her alone. Stories like this inspired the hashtag #Illridewithyou which soon took over Twitter. Messages outpouring support by many Australians towards the Muslim community drowned out the threats and criticisms of right-wing groups. The media coverage of the hostage crisis also made it a focal point to emphasize the deranged antics of the lone hostage taker, Monis. They relayed how Monis had a very sizeable criminal past with numerous charges of sexual assault, fraud, harassment, and even an accomplice to a murder, clearly expressing that these horrible actions were the work of a criminal who acted alone. You didn't hear about some conspiracy other than that he may have been emboldened by ISIS. Instead, you heard about how he was a lunatic that had nothing to do with real Islam that is practiced by the peaceful Muslims living in Australia and all around the world and how fellow caring Australians supported these people. I somewhat doubt that this would be the reaction by the United State if it happened here but maybe America could use a ride from the Australians and learn a thing or two.

**~Shaiful**

***Opinions from the editors:***

Each Issue, we will attempt to discuss an islamic concept from a different, non-traditional prespective. We hope you enjoy our musings. Also be sure to browse our reading suggestions - a list of books we believe to be interesting/beneficial.

# The Prophet and Human Dignity

Zahir asked: 'Tell me, who is this?', he turned and found it was the Prophet (pbuh), so he continued to rub his back (and cling) onto the chest of the Prophet (pbuh). Upon this, the Prophet (pbuh) held him and said, in jest to those around him: 'Who would like to buy a slave from me'? (Zahir) said: 'O Messenger of Allaah, by Allaah you will find me to be a poor sell (i.e. No one will buy me. I'll be of no value)'. The Prophet said: 'But in the sight of Allah, you are priceless.' [in another narration 'But with Allaah you are valuable']." Prophet Muhammad also mentioned about him, "He is our man in the desert (because he was a bedouin), and we are his attendees in the city. [He is for us and we're for him.]" The Prophet recognized Zahir's (ra) low self-esteem and made it a point to acknowledge him and make him feel better.

Our beloved Rasulullah (pbuh) saw people for what they were, and elevated their dignity despite their lack of status, wealth, and beauty by mentioning good things about them and their status with Allah. We need to learn more about the character of our beloved Prophet (pbuh), but we also have to imitate this kindness and treat people as he had treated others.

**Ismail Uddin** is partime dragon slayer, part time Knight and part time sorcerer. He disguises himself as a student and graduate of Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School and the founder of it's MSA. He is also the current President of the Cambridge Subchapter. He loves reading, friends and saving damsels in distress. But otherwise, you can find him blogging at halalgotok@wordpress.com and occasionally making delicious food all by himself.

# A Prince Among Barbarians

But whatever the ordeal, Abdul Kader's heart was dented greatest by the betrayal of the French promise, for the nobel General Lamorciere had given him his word and what was more heinous to a Muslim than to break a vow?

But it seemed Allah had other plans for the Emir, because it was in his imprisonment that he went from being France's greatest enemy, to its greatest super star. The Emir would receive hundreds of visitors daily in Amboise castle, and the visitors - ranging from aristocracy, to common folk, to priests - were spellbound by his character and simplicity. The Emir to them, was a man seemingly abnormal: patient in adversity, content with his lot, exceedingly tolerant, always cheerful, an exotic presence, a paragon of humility and an exemplar of good character. Soon, tales of his chivalry and his extraordinary deeds littered the French press and he found himself a sudden celebrity. His popularity (though he did not know it) was at such a level that he made it to the ballot for the French elections! The Emir's story does not stop there. Soon, a fierce campaign erupted in France for his freedom, championed - surprisingly - by his former prisoners! Such was the man. The Emir's strict adherance to Islamic principles in warfare, his utmost contempt for the taking of human life, and his otherworldly magnanimity towards his enemies captivated the French and the entire world. Here is a story of true Jihad.

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Finally, in 1852, the Emir was released, and after completing a much longed for Hajj, he retired with his small band and his family to Damascus, where he would spend the rest of his life as a respected Scholar of Islam, for he was a Scholar first - a follower of his Master and beloved Mustafa (pbuh).
But the Emir's story would continue. Egged on by the Turkish authorities, the Druz population of Damascus launched violent attacks against the Christian quarter of Damascus in 1860. The Emir, in a moment of gallant heroism, took to the streets with his men, rifle in hand, to protect his Christian brethren. It is reported that he alone was responsible for the saving of 10,000 lives. When a Muslim mob gathered outside of his villa to do violence to the Christians inside, the Emir and his men - hardened desert warriors - threatened to turn their rifles and swords on the mob.
"My brothers, your behavior violates the law of God. What makes you think you have a right to go around killing innocent people?" the Emir proclaimed to the mob.
When the Mob would not listen to reason, he turned to his beloved general Kara Mohammed and ordered preparations for battle.
"As long as one of my soldiers is still standing, you will not touch them. They are my guests!" he said.
The fury of the Emir silenced the crowd, and the prospect of fighting his battle hardened warriors made them melt away.
The tale spread like wildfire and honors came pouring in from around the world - The Legion D'Honor, The Grand Cross, A gift of silver plated pistols from President Lincoln (who was juggling the civil war) among others. The Emir's place in

history would be sealed forever as the founder of Kader, Ohio chose to name the city after this great man.

The Emir's life is pertinent to the topic of dignity particularly because his actions are driven by a ceaseless adherence to the Quran and the Sunnah. When we are disgusted by the violence perpetrated by certain groups under the name of Islam, we should do well to remember the father of Algeria, Emir Abd el-Kader - the scholar, the statesman, the warrior, the humanitarian and the true Muslim Mujahid. It is no surprise that such a man was an Islamic scholar; In him we find the fragrance of Islamic character, particularly the concept of contentment, tolerance and standing up for the oppressed. Fifteen long years he had spent, fighting Christian Frenchmen invading his homeland and imposing their ideals on his people. Yet he never became bitter and he did not stand complacent when Christians were being massacred in Damascus. His life is a story of unwavering patience, and an attachment to the spirit and the teachings of Islam.

Here is a follower of the teachings of Prophetic dignity.

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## Reading Suggestions

Muhammad (Lings)
The Early Hours (Pickthall)
40 Stories (Chekov)
Commander of the Faithful (Kiser)
Commentary on the 99 Names of Allah (Gazali)
An Approach to the Quranic Sciences (Mufti Usmani)
What Money Can't Buy (Sandel)
Al-Fawaid (Ibn Qayyim)

The Youth Leaders wind down a successful leadership camp with Usthad Mohammad Mathil.

The Michigan brothers battle it out on the beautiful shores of Lake Michigan during their Annual Leadership Camp.

MUNA Youth is a Muslim Youth group dedicated to the understanding and proper implementation of Islam as well as empowering youth to become active members of the

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Cover : *After The Storm - Holly Anderson*

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