

LIGHTHOUSE MAGAZINE

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Light from the Quran

“He indeed is successful who purifies himself and remembers the name of his Lord, then prays.” (87:14, 15)

Spend a few minutes thinking about what you understood from this verse. We may call people successful when they have a good job, a nice house and lots of money but the Quran tells us that other things are needed in order to be successful. Why does the Quran tell us to pray to be successful? How can we purify ourselves? What do you think success means in this verse?

Light from the Hadith

Abdullah reports that the messenger of Allah said, ‘The successful person is one who has accepted Islam, has been provided with enough to live on and has been made content by Allah for what He has given him’. (Muslim)

This hadith tells us more about success. Is it enough to just say that we accept Islam and then do whatever we like? How can we try to be content when there are always many more things that we would like to have?

Hazrat Mirza Sahib, the reformer of the fourteenth century told us how to make our prayers more effective. He said:

‘Pray your *salat* with careful concentration and after the Arabic words of prayer, pray to Allah in your native language.’ (Vol 4: Roohani Khazain)
Salat is the Arabic word for the 5 daily prayers.

We need to offer most of our *salat* in Arabic, as that is the language of the Quran. It is very important to try to learn the meaning of the praise of Allah, and prayers we offer. But as Arabic is unfamiliar to us, we can add our own prayers in our own language. What language are you most comfortable speaking? Does it feel better to tell Allah your problems in your native language when you do not know Arabic very well? What other way can you think of to help us concentrate in our *salat*?

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Salat literally means a red-hot connection. When a person makes salat, he or she establishes a hot-link to God.

Sabr is the word in the Qur'an used for patience and perseverance. No matter what tragedy comes to us, big or small, if we trust in God and be patient, then we display a proof of our faith and feel better much quicker. Have you ever stubbed your toe? While one person may hop up and down yelling in pain, the other might just sit down quietly and calmly and rub the poor toe, not making a huge fuss about it. *It hurts for both but one is displaying sabr and one is not.*

A Hafiz is a person who has committed the entire Quran to memory. The name literally means a Guardian. The Holy Quran is the most memorized book in the world. How many surah's of the Quran have you memorized? Now is a good time to start to learn a new short surah. **Focusing on one verse a day is easy and voila! Within a week or so you will have a new surah in the supercomputer that is your brain.**

Many surah's in the Quran have interesting names. There are names of prophets, animals, insects, tribes, events etc. Look up some surah names and write to Lighthouse magazine with your favorite name and why you think it is special. You might see your replies in the next issue.

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Young Writers

Happy to be a Muslim

Aliza was one of the very few Muslims in her school. She was happy to be a Muslim, but she was not very happy to be one of the only Muslims in her school. It was almost Christmas time. Aliza reminded herself that Eid was coming up. When Aliza got home she decided that she would do a presentation to her class about Eid. The class liked the presentation. Aliza decided that she was happy to be one of the only Muslims in her school.

The end.

By Aafia Ahmad, age 8, Minnesota, USA.

About Allah

Allah is nice. I wish I was at Jannah. Allah can create us. Allah is One. Allah made the pond, the trees, the animals, the frogs and toads. Allah gave me presents from all the money my Dad and Mom and gave me.

By Aarif Ahmad, age 5, Minnesota, USA.

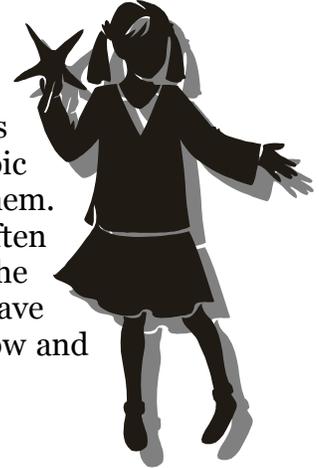
Foods that Muslims are allowed to eat and that we are not allowed to eat by Saliha Ahmad

How many of you know that you are supposed to say 'bismillah Allah-u-akbar' (it means, 'In the name of Allah, Allah is Greater) before you eat meat? Well if you didn't know, it is VERY important. It is important because you don't know if the meat that you are eating is halal or not. Or maybe the people who slaughtered the cow or the chicken or whatever the animal is, slaughtered it on somebody else's name that is not Allah's name. You don't know what happened to the meat that you buy from the store or even where the meat that you eat at restaurants came from! What if some farmer's cow dies and he still gives the meat to a slaughtering house? You don't know if that happened to the meat that you are eating. If you are eating meat while you are reading this article please to put it down and say 'bismillah Allah-u-akbar and then start eating it again.

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Amina's Salat

Amina had not been praying for a long time. She had just turned seven and that, her mother told her, is when she was supposed to begin her salat. At first Amina learned the Arabic words and then her father tried to teach her the meanings to them. She had always seen her mother and father doing salat. Often when she wanted her mom to play a game or braid her hair, she would tell her to wait till she finished salat. And Amina would have to wait. It seemed like forever that her mother would stand, bow and kneel down.



Amina could remember thinking, when she was smaller, that it was a kind of game. She remembers climbing on her mom's back and trying to catch a ride when she got up and down. She felt surprised when her mother did not look at her or give a response. Later she learnt that salat times are when parents are not to be disturbed at all. Unless it was an emergency she was supposed to mind herself during that time. However Amina found it very hard to do that. She found her mother most attractive when she prayed. Amina loved to watch her mom and see her move gracefully up and down. It was soothing to watch and made Amina feel somehow safe and secure. Sometimes she made it into a game to get her mom's attention when she prayed. At first she found that loud noises worked. Her mom would look up quickly, frown slightly and then resume her prayer. Once Amina made coughing and choking sounds and that worked too, but only for a couple of times. She thought her mother caught on to her devices and so they stopped working. And now, she Amina, was supposed to pray everyday herself.

She sighed softly as she heard her mother calling in the distance, 'Amina, Amina'. It seemed the voice came from far away, from a dream. But Amina forced herself to pay attention. She had forgotten what part of wudhu she was on, while lost in thought. Her mother kept telling her wudhu only took a minute but it felt longer to Amina. Once she got as far as her feet without being distracted but then it was so much fun washing her feet that it became a game. 'Amina', her father would say to her, sometimes laughing and sometimes seriously, 'pay attention to what you are doing'.

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Last month when her grandma came to visit, she gave Amina a beautiful prayer rug, with a picture of a mosque on it and glittery blue and pink tassels around the sides. Amina prayed right beside her grandma that day, listening to her knees creak when she went into sajda and noticing how slowly her grandma moved. She did not move as gracefully as Amina's mother, even so her postures were respectful and focused and it seemed as if her salat was extra special as it was harder for her to move. Grandma swayed and rocked when she was praying in the standing and sitting postures. Somehow it seemed to Amina that she took twice the time for the same salat. It was more fun to watch.

Amina found her prayer rug neatly folded on the pink chair in her room. Her mother must have put it there. She was always telling Amina to put her hijab and prayer rug together so she did not have to waste time looking for them every day. Amina spread out the rug in the direction of the Ka'abah and slipped her hijab on. She was really glad that now she knew her salat well. In the very beginning she would always forget a portion of her salat when praying alone and she would move on to the next part she remembered. But gradually the salat became easier to her. Her mother always reminded her to pray with someone, but Amina felt very grown-up when she prayed alone. However she had noticed her mind wandered even more when she was alone. Except for that one time she could still remember.

It was summer and it had been extremely hot and sticky. That day had been sizzling with a cloudless sky till after lunchtime, when all of a sudden it seemed the sky was so dark that Amina had to turn on the light in the family room to read. Then the thunder began and soon it was a full fledged storm with giant flashes of lightening and deafening booms of thunder. Amina had never liked thunderstorms and usually she stayed close to her mother or father for comfort.

That day she remembers her mother had to take her brother to the doctor, and her dad was not home from work yet. Amina had been with her neighbor, Lisa, who was in nursing school, and needed to study for an exam. Amina did not feel comfortable hugging Lisa, even though she was very kind. It seemed as if Lisa was not bothered much by the storm. She kept on studying. Meanwhile Amina was pacing in the living room and kitchen feeling very nervous and upset. There was a very strange feeling in her stomach. It was then that she remembered what her mother always said, 'Amina, whenever you are scared or upset, praying will help you feel better'. She ran to the bathroom and did a quick wudhu while trembling inside at the latest CRASH of thunder. Then she was on the prayer rug. 'Please please Allah, keep us all safe in this terrible storm. Please bring my Mom and Dad and brother safely home. *Please help me to be brave*'. Amina prayed with all her heart and when she finished she lay down on the prayer rug and curled herself into a ball. It seemed as if the storm was getting quieter, or was it

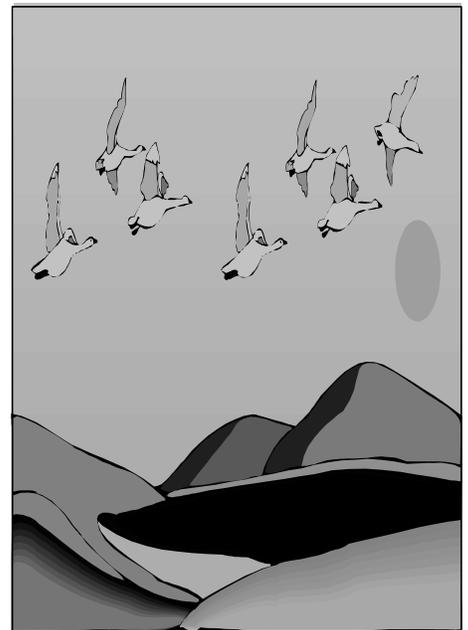
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Amina's heart that felt braver, reassured. She heard Lisa call her, asking her if she wanted a snack. Amina smiled and headed down. Suddenly she felt very hungry and Lisa made great bagel pizzas. 'Thank you Allah', she whispered softly.

Have you ever had a similar experience, when you prayed when you were scared, or were in danger and felt comforted by Allah? Please write about it and send it to Lighthouse magazine. You may see your story in our next issue!

It is time for salat

*It is time to pray,
It really is, Mom has called three times,
Dad has told me twice,
'It's time for Maghrib, come right now',
It is time to pray,
But I want to finish this chapter of my book,
And see the ending of the TV show,
And get to the next level of my computer
game,
And it is time to pray,
Surely Maghrib salat can wait a while for
me,
Then I look outside and see the birds gathered in the sky,
Twirling and whirling around, chirping and crying praise to
Allah,*



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And I see the darkness begin to spread and realize Maghrib cannot wait.

*Allah has set a time for salat to test us, to see if we care enough,
To see if we can break away from our routines,
And hear the call of Allah hu Akbar.*

Allah is Greater, Allah is Greater.

*I run for wudhu. TV and computers can wait,
I need to pray right now. It is time to pray. Allah hu Akbar!*

Our report card

Most of us get a report card this time of year telling us what we did all year long. If we were paying attention in class when everyone else was goofing off, we will see the good results of it. And if we were the class trickster, focusing more on how to stick our classmates to their chairs with bubble gum, we will find out that we missed a lot in class. However, sometimes report cards do not tell the whole truth. You may have worked hard for math or science, but your grade was not as good as it should have been even though you tried very hard. Or you may have not worked for something but still with good luck, you got through just fine.

This is not the only report card we are going to get. Allah is preparing one for us too, and that report card will be very accurate. It will not miss out on the small stuff or the big stuff and the good thing is that, **it counts all your efforts**. Yes, each and every one. The time you remembered to pray even when you had friends over and were having such a good time. Allah sees it all and misses nothing. When you played patiently and kindly with your little cousin even though it was boring, and you let her mess up your stuff, Allah was watching and probably smiling at you, in a way only Allah can smile. We cannot see that smile but we can feel it in our hearts. *It is that warm fuzzy feeling we get when we do something good.*

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Muslims, Muslims everywhere..... (MashaAllah)

Among every 4 humans in the world, 1 of them is Muslim! **Muslims have increased over 235% in the last 50 years to nearly 1.6 billion.** By contrast Christians have increased by only 47%, Hinduism 117% and Buddhism 63%. Islam is the second largest religious group in France, Great Britain and America%. There are 10 million Muslims in America and 6 million Jews.

DEAR YOUNG MUSLIMS, this magazine is for you and needs your contributions! Please send in your stories, poems, riddles, news and views and become an active part of Lighthouse magazine. The world needs young people **like you** who know about their faith and can spread the word to others. *This is a great platform to come together and learn more about Islam and share our thoughts and ideas with our brothers and sisters.* So please unleash those creative juices and write away. A special thank you to this month's young writers, Saliha Ahmad, Aafia Ahmad and Aarif Ahmad!

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