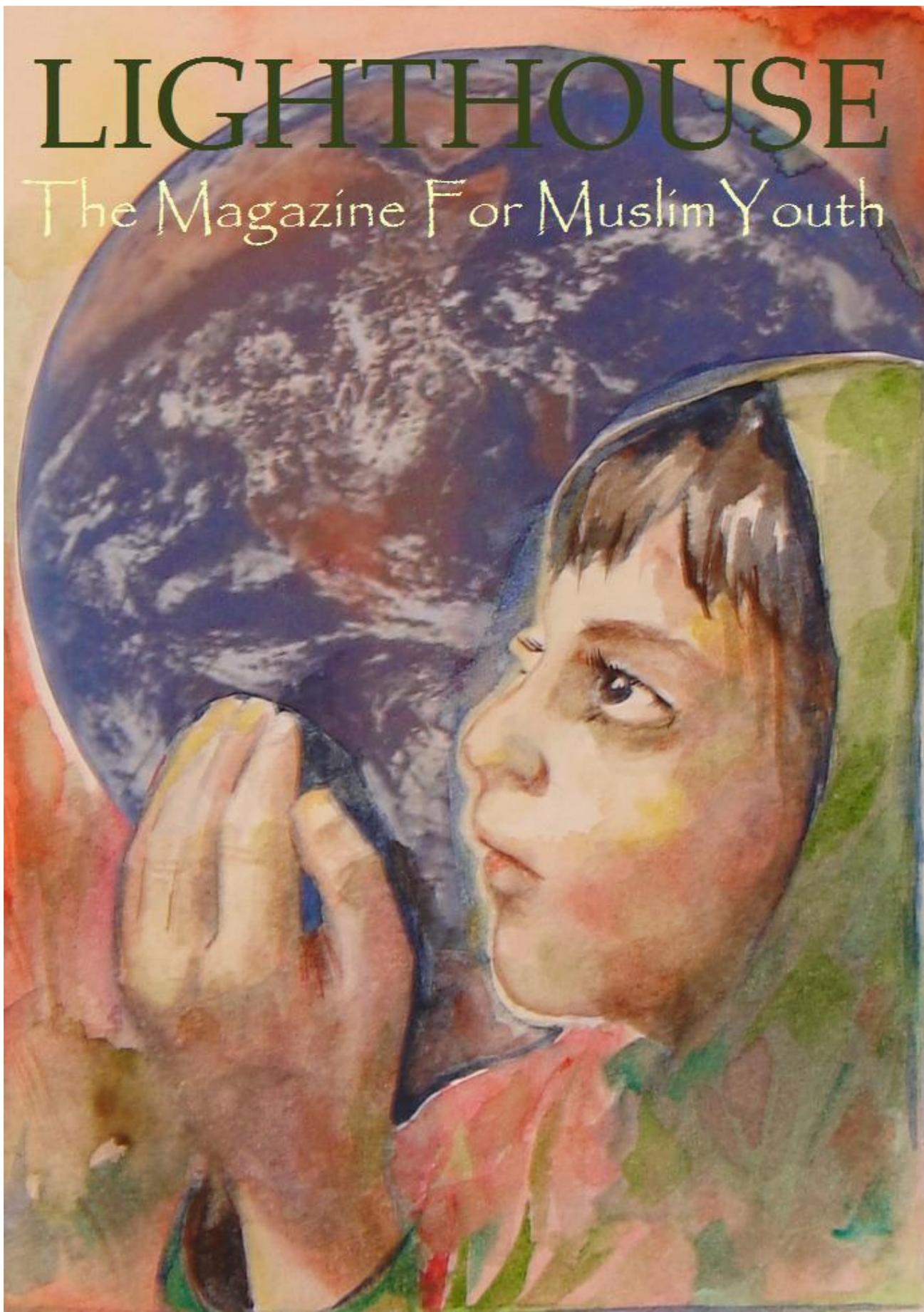


LIGHTHOUSE

The Magazine For Muslim Youth



Lighthouse Magazine: September/October Issue

Knowledge is Power

The Quran tells us how knowledge was given

“And He (Allah) taught Adam all the names, then presented them to the angels; He said: Tell Me the names of those if you are right. They said: Glory be to You! We have no knowledge but that which You have taught us. Surely You are the Knowing, the Wise.”

Surah Al-Baqarah verses 31 and 32.

The Quran tells us about the important event when Allah created human beings. To help understand the purpose for our creation and how we are different from



angels, Allah teaches us through an important conversation that He had with the angels. The angels are special beings who constantly worship and adore Allah. They were puzzled that Allah created human beings who had the choice of doing either good or bad deeds. Allah then

informed them of the gift of knowledge that He gave to humans which would help them lead good lives. Teaching Prophet Adam the “names” could mean humans have the ability to learn and to benefit from their knowledge. That makes them different from the Angels, who worship Him by their obedience, yet were not given the type of knowledge that humans were given. These verses are meant to inform us of the power and greatness of knowledge which would help humans learn all about their world and to rule over it with wisdom and intelligence. Making the right choices is a difficult task, one that places us on an even higher level than the angels.

What does knowledge mean to you?

Does it mean that you are forced to go to school every day to learn multiplication tables, identify nouns from verbs, and write book reports?

Do you feel powerful when you learn something new?

Have you ever learnt something just by watching and thinking about it?

What would our lives be like if we never had anything new to learn or experience? **We would be bored out of our minds.** Often when we complain about being bored, it means we need to search for ways to gain even more knowledge, whether by learning to cook something new, figuring out how to fix our own bikes, or discovering why the rain falls over lakes and oceans.

Knowledge is the greatest gift Allah has given us. We can show Him we appreciate it by not letting our learning go to waste. We should try every day to find a way to apply the things we have learned, using our knowledge to do good deeds. Helping a friend who was sick catch up on their school work, teaching a grandparent how to use the computer, figuring out how to grow organic vegetables and keep the rabbits away are all examples of putting your knowledge to practice. Sometimes it may seem that things we are learning are silly or useless, yet every piece of knowledge is part of a bigger reality. Learning about algorithms leads us to understand greater concepts of math and science. Mastering simple household chores like cleaning a bathroom is part of our hygiene and helps to keep us healthy.



Can you think of other ways in which simple bits of knowledge prove very useful, even lifesaving?

Make a list of all the things that tickle your curious buds so you would like to learn more about them. If you focus on one item a week, in a year you will be 52 things smarter. Think of a practical way to use the information.

May Allah help us all to appreciate the gift of knowledge, to make our lives a quest of learning about our religion and the world around us, and to help us use all our God-given abilities for the greater good. Aameen.

The world is my classroom, the sea is my pen
Quran tells me history and what'll happen again
I do math with the stars and the sun and the moon
The days are too short and the night comes too soon
Science is so enthralling, can't wait to learn things
How the grass grows, eggs hatch and this earth spins
There is so much to know and so many ways to seek
The mysteries, the miracles, Allah makes as we speak
My mind is a garden where different thoughts grow
Taking root, taking flight, leading me where I go
The world is my textbook, filling both soul and mind
Teaching me all the lessons, each one of a kind
I will never stop learning, school is just the start
For this mysterious cosmos is dear to my heart
I thank you dear Allah for this great universe
A Muslim's a student of the heavens and earth.



Knowledge is power, but do you have it? Are you knowledge oriented or living in a world of gossip and make believe? Do you try to find the truth, the facts and live by them or do you try to learn the bare minimum required by school.

Take this quiz and see how far you are swimming in the sea of knowledge:

1. The kids on the school bus are talking about the new people in the neighborhood who, they say, lived under the Great Wall of China. You
 - a. Believe all that they say and can't wait to tell your friends and family.
 - b. Think about what you heard without responding, and decide to find out more before you believe anything.
 - c. Decide to stay away from them just in case.
 - d. Add some more spicy details just to join in the fun.
2. It is time to read the Quran. You want to get done quickly so you can head outside to play with your friends. You
 - a. Know the Quran should not be rushed. You decide to just read a page but practice your recitation, plus read the meanings too.
 - b. Read one section but go really fast.
 - c. Try to read slowly but skip the translation.
 - d. Sneak out without reading Quran because the Quran will still be here but your friends might leave.
3. Your little sister is crying because her friend told her there are genies in the bathroom. You
 - a. Tell her genies are only found in lamps belonging to people called Aladdin.
 - b. Tell her the genie is sure to get her unless she gives you her sour gummy worms.



- c. Explain that there are no such things as genies. There are *germs* in the bathroom so she should wash up properly.
- d. Promise to stand outside the bathroom door if she pays you a dollar.



- 4. Your school assignment is to research rocks and gems. You want to learn more about them so you
 - a. Copy from your brother's book about gems.
 - b. Ask your mother to drive you to the library to do some research.
 - c. Decide to partner with the nerdy kid who will do most of the work.
 - d. Wash and polish your gem collection.
- 5. Someone at school asks you why your mother wears that "thing" on her head. You
 - a. Tell them that it is called a *hijab* and it is part of the modest dress code for Muslim women.
 - b. Tell them she dyed her hair the wrong color by mistake.
 - c. Change the topic so you don't have to answer.
 - d. Ask your mom to park farther away and stay in the car so your friends don't see her.
- 6. Your teacher says you are really good at science and asks you to join the science explorers club. You
[edit](#)
 - a. Decide to join, because you like to learn cool science stuff, plus you would meet more people with your interests.
 - b. Think of a good excuse to say no. None of the cool kids are in the nerdy science club.
 - c. Know your friends would not join, so you decide not to.



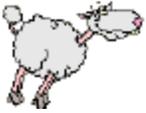
- d. Don't want to give up precious time playing video games for science.
7. You really want to get a new pet. Your parents keep saying no, so you
- a. Refuse to eat vegetables (except fries) till they agree.
 - b. Keep grumbling about how mean they are and how all your friends have the best parents.
 - c. Think of ways to hide the pet so your parents won't find out.
 - d. Do some research on how much it will cost, plus how you plan to take care of it, so your parents know you are well-informed and they may reconsider.
8. You get to stay with Aunt Petunia for the weekend while your parents are away. She is crazy about gardening so you
- a. Hope you can watch T.V. while she plants petunias.
 - b. Decide to ask her about her garden and hopefully learn some great tips on starting your own garden.
 - c. Decide you will speak only when she asks you if you are hungry.
 - d. Plan on eating all her cherry tomatoes.



The prayer for knowledge:

“O Allah increase me in knowledge”

is one of the prayers for knowledge in the Quran and it was how Prophet Muhammad prayed to Allah, for learning of all kind was very dear to him. In the first part of his life before Allah called him to become a prophet, he used to spend time in the deserts of Arabia, and as he took care of the sheep he thought about the wonders of nature and the creation of everything. He questioned the habits of those around him and knew them to be wrong, and he yearned to find the true path that would lead people to success in this world and the next.



This search of our dear Prophet Muhammad shows us that knowledge is not to be found simply in books or in a classroom. Knowledge is all around us. Observing, or looking carefully at our surroundings, and thinking about what we see teaches us many things. It also brings many questions into our minds and finding the answers to those questions helps us learn even more. It is important that we look for the answers to the questions we have and not forget about them when we are busy in other things.

If you have questions about something, think of all the ways to get answers. You could ask a teacher or a parent, find a book in the library, or search the internet to find answers. It is important to look for answers in the right places. If you wanted to learn more about Arabia, a comic would be the wrong place to consult. Comics may be funny, but they don't have the correct facts most of the time. Often it is better to know nothing than to have the wrong idea. Dictionaries and encyclopedias are much better sources to learn something new.

The Quran is the all time best book of knowledge. It contains lessons on history, geography, the rise and fall of nations, science, nature, astrology, health and medicine, manners, morals and much, much more. Today take some time to flip



through the index of the Quran to see how many topics are listed. When you yearn to find out about something, remember to consult the Quran as your first and most reliable source.

School is Cool

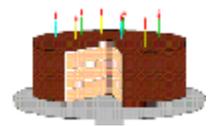
Salman hugged his backpack to his chest and hunched himself over to try to shield it from the torrential rain. The backpack was torn in three places so he was afraid water might get in and wet his books. Many of them were already falling apart; in fact half of chapter three from his science book had fallen out without his noticing and so he had missed five questions on his science test. He decided to duck under the shade of the General Store and wait for the rain to stop, so he could get home. His stomach grumbled and reminded him that his breakfast of leftover bread and tea was now history. He watched people run around seeking shelter from the rain. A big black car zoomed past him and he thought he saw someone wave at him from the window. He rubbed the water out of his eyes. It looked like Daniel's car. He waved back even though the car had turned a corner and he was sure no one could see him. He sighed and leaned back against the shutters. Then something white and fluttering caught his eye. Someone had tied a huge plastic bag to a bicycle stand. In a second he had untied the bag and stuffed his backpack inside it. *Most problems have a simple solution* was something his mother often said and it made him smile to think of it, as he ran swiftly home in the rain, happy that his books were safe.

His mother was hunched over the sewing machine as usual but she stopped her work to kiss him and bring him a towel.

"Guess what I have for you today", she asked. His mother loved guessing games.

"An umbrella", guessed Salman, as he sneezed three times.

"Something better", said his mother, as she gave him a big chunk of cake with some warm milk.



“Cake” yelled Salman! He hadn’t had cake since... since the last time someone had had a birthday at The Lodge. He was wolfing it down when his mother told him it was Ameera’s birthday today and she had sent a slice for him. He hoped he could see Ameera as he helped his father wash the cars, and wish her a happy birthday. His mother was back at her sewing and Salman decided to start his homework before his father needed help with something. Sometimes if there were guests at The Lodge he had to run a lot of errands and had no time to study.

Salman and his parents lived in the servant quarters in the back of a huge, fancy house called The Lodge. His father worked as a guard for the family and his mother sewed for them. He went to the nearby school and felt he was very lucky because most of his friends who lived nearby had to work doing odd jobs for the rich families their parents worked for. Salman’s parents really wanted him to study as they both had not had the chance to go to school. He loved to learn and



knew he was lucky to get the chance. So many poor kids were made to work to help support their families and ended up not knowing how to read and write, or understand the Quran. Salman just wished his parents did not have to work so hard. He wished he could be the one to teach them how to read so they could be more aware of the world around them. But by the time his parents were done with their daily jobs they were all too exhausted. His mother always sighed as she read the Arabic of the Quran for she did not know how to read more than the basic Arabic and could not understand the meaning. Daniel wished they had more family time so he could teach his parents how to read and write.

Daniel lived in The Lodge with his parents. He was the same age as Salman, but he was never friendly like Ameera. Salman didn’t mind too much. He had enough to do and he had his own friends he went to fly kites and play soccer with, in the big park by the supermarket. He just wished he could see what kind of things Daniel had in his school for rich kids. Salman had heard how they had computers and a library and beautiful textbooks with glossy pages and colored photographs. He was sure those books did not fall apart after a few months like his tattered books

did. Ameera always tried to share her books with Salman and that had helped him improve in many ways.

Life would have continued on as usual if something bad had not happened. At first Salman thought it was the worst thing to happen to him since he got the chicken pox. Daniel fell off the playground in school and broke his leg in two places. The doctor said he had to stay in bed for a week and even after that he would be unable to go to school for a while. Salman was not too concerned, till his father told him that he was supposed to be Daniel's special helper till he got better!

"No way. I'm not missing school just because that spoilt brat was silly enough to break his leg", said Salman and he looked at his father, waited for him to reassure him, but that didn't happen. His father kept looking at him with a sad expression and then left the room with his head hung down.

Salman watched his mother hunched over the sewing machine, her hands moving swiftly, not stopping for a minute and he realized that being poor meant he did not have much of a choice. If he refused they might lose their jobs and their home. That would mean Salman would have to leave school anyway. He shuffled outside to tell his father that he was ready to be Daniel's helper.

The next week went by in a blur. Daniel was not used to doing anything for himself so he just made Salman run around all day fetching this and that. The good thing was that when Daniel slept, Salman got a chance to look at all the books in his room, and that made up for everything. It was in one of those quiet times when he was reading, that he heard Daniel's parents talking worriedly,

"But we have to get him a private tutor or he will be held back in the fifth grade", said his father

"Remember what happened to his last three tutors? They left after Daniel was rude to them and refused to do what they said. Who's going to get him to study when he's not even feeling well"? asked his mother.

Salman had an idea and before he could stop himself he went toward the voices.

“Excuse me, I would be happy to tutor Daniel. We are in the same grade, you know, and I have been looking at his books. I can do it.”

Daniel's parents stared at each other.

“You” said Daniel's mother, “but you have been going to a different school and Daniel must have different books to study from.”

“It doesn't matter what books a kid has if they love to learn. I read whatever I can find and that helped me pass two grades in one year. Even though I started school late, now I am better than most boys my age. Please give me a chance.”

“Agreed” said Daniel's Dad, after thinking for a while. “And if you can help Daniel to pass his final examination next month, I will pay you twice as much as I would pay any other tutor.”

Salman's eyes shined with delight. He knew he could do this if he tried his best and Ameera would help him.



The next few weeks were not easy. Daniel thought school was the most boring thing in the world and he had never tried to work hard and do well. He barely passed at school. Ameera was a better reader than him. It took Salman a while to show him how lucky he was to have so many facilities and chances to learn whatever he wanted to learn. Salman was so kind and encouraging that Daniel started having fun studying with him. As they did math and science and history, they found that they had much in common and became friends. The best however was yet to come.

Allah rewarded their hard work and when Daniel passed his exam with good grades no one was happier than Salman, who had been able to take the exam at his own school and move on to the next grade as well. Daniel's leg was better and so Salman's job was over, but their friendship was not. Daniel's father rewarded Salman by promising to sponsor his education for as long as Salman wanted to learn. And when Daniel learned that Salman would be joining him at his school, it was hard to say who was happier. He had learned a valuable lesson from Salman that changed his careless attitude. He knew that all children do not have the

chance to go to school. So many have to work for a living and a good education is only a dream for them. They end up doing odd jobs all their lives just like their parents did. Daniel realized how lucky and blessed he was and how it was his duty to work hard and succeed. He hoped that one day he would be able to help other kids like Salman, who have to work as they study, so that all kids, rich or poor, could go to good schools and follow their dreams.



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Read all about it

EXTRA CREDIT by Andrew Clements

Have you ever wanted to have a pen pal from a different country? Have you ever *had* to have a pen pal? Abby Carson needs to do an extra credit project to pull up her grades and make sure she moves up to second grade. Her project is to write to a kid in Afghanistan, a country she chooses simply because of its mountains, for she dreams of climbing mountains and is eager to learn more about them.

On the other side of the world in a village in Afghanistan, Sadeed Bayat is forced



to reply to a letter from an American girl. He is chosen to write because he is the best student in English and his teacher wants to make sure their letter makes a good impression. He is told to help his sister, Ameera, write the letter, because it would not be proper in his culture for a boy to

write directly to a girl. Both Abby and Sadeed start out writing letters as a chore, but slowly their friendship grows and they learn about each other's countries. A simple project turns into something more meaningful until they realize that friendship between people of different cultures and religions may become complicated.

Will the exchange of letters bring trouble to them both?

Are pen pals a good way to learn about different people?



Read this fascinating book to find out.

Ask Ayesha and she will answer your weird, wise and wacky questions:

Dear Ayesha, if girls and women always supposed to cover themselves while praying, are boys and men supposed to wear caps too? I don't see many men wearing caps when they pray.

Dear Concerned about Caps,

Modest dress is supposed to be for both men and women. For men, this means covering up from their belly button to their knees. That is the part of their body that has to be covered at all times, including in prayer. In terms of them wearing a cap, well, the best that I understand this, this was the *sunnah* of the Prophet—or his own practice. In all things, it is best if we follow the example of the Prophet but the things he did are not necessarily *fardz*, meaning it is best if we do them but we don't HAVE to do them.

Allah put all the most important and necessary parts of our religion in the Quran. The Quran is a complete guide for us. However, Allah also gave us the beautiful life of the Prophet to show us how to put His rules into practice. That is why a lot of people really pay close attention to the *Hadith* (the written sayings of what the Prophet did) and the *Sunnah* (the examples of his life that are passed down). Many people try to live just exactly as the Prophet did, which of course is a good thing. *However, you have to remember that the Prophet was a human being and while his character, or the things he did, were exactly from the Quran, there are things he did that were just part of the way he lived life. Therefore, we should not give them the same level of importance as the Quran itself.* They come second to the Quran in level of importance. Also, we should remember that the Quran is the direct word of God and God has promised us that He will protect it always and preserve it. The Prophet's example and sayings, on the other hand, were passed down by his wife and companions after his death. As in all things human beings do, there is room for error—even if we try our best to be perfect, we may make mistakes.

So a general rule of thumb to follow is: **always follow the Quran and give it the most importance in our life.** After that, we should *try* to look to the example of the Prophet to guide us in implementing Muslim principles into practice. So if you are a boy or a man and you can wear a kufi while praying, it is best to do that. If you can't though, remember the actual prayer is what is most important. Furthermore, if you ever come across a *hadith* or *sunnah* that seems to contradict what you've read in the Quran, it's the Quran that wins out. Always!