Immune fines

You might presently be planning a post-Christmas prezzie spree, and doesn't it? Rather spoils the taste of that halal turkey you went to get where you park!

The worst offender? Muslim embassies, of course. Top of the list is Turkey which has managed to double its 1991 figure to 141. Italy is following closely into second slot by the Saudis with 126. Last year’s top offender, the Russians, are third at 124. And who said the Commies were unassailable.

Outrage British Muslim educationalists. Veetarian Society to discourage meat eating. Another first of BBC2’s documentary glorifying the life of Radovan Karadzic, military commander of the Bosnian Serbs, and an acknowledged war criminal. Representative of Bosnian organisations ‘said the broadcasting Serbian Epics, a hagiographic account of Karadzic’s life and poetry, as part of BBC’s “书画本” series was “callous and an outrage”. While the programme was being shown innocent women and children were being bombed to death in Bosnia by Serbian troops ordered to kill civilians on Karadzic’s orders,” according to a relief worker who has just returned from the Balkans.

“Unthinkable, irresponsible, deeply offensive and scarcely credible,” was how Action for Bosnia, the newly-formed UK Citizens Committee for Bosnia, described the content and timing of the 50-minute film. “Just how the BBC could broadcast such one-sided nonsense about a man who promotes murder and genocide, is beyond comprehension,” according to Steve Blackaby, the group’s spokesperson. “Karadzic is nothing but a mass murderer,” he said indignantly. “To talk of him as some kind of closet vegetarian. He is like saying Hitler was a water-colour painter,” he pointed out.

“Karadzic is not a poet, he is a mass murderer,” was how Ibrahim Hewitt, Assistant Secretary of the multi-faith Action for Bosnia, described the content and timing of the 50-minute film. “Just how the BBC could broadcast such one-sided nonsense about a man who promotes murder and genocide, is beyond comprehension,” according to Steve Blackaby, the group’s spokesperson. “Karadzic is nothing but a mass murderer,” he said indignantly. “To talk of him as some kind of closet vegetarian. He is like saying Hitler was a water-colour painter,” he pointed out.

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But EC countries are not far behind. Denmark is third at 140, and Greece is fifth with 82. Of the 11 EC nations only Denmark and the Netherlands have no outstanding fines - bad show! Seychelles however seems to have overpaid itself, having notched up 165 outstanding fines last year, has none this time. The UAE has also improved with their number falling from 140 to just nine.

Acknowledging that mistakes could have been made the Society told Q news that material on Islam had been culled from a book written by S Rosen, entitled: Food for the spirit - vegetarianism and the world religions. Future editions of Vegetarian Issue, promised McElherron, would “correct any errors.”

A spokesman for the Vegetarian Society, however, pointed out that having invested so much time and effort, a new edition was "unlikely for some time to come".

"Vegetarian Issue" is dangerous and needs to be exposed, quickly," said Dr Darsh. "Whoever wrote it is either a crank or had other motives. The sections on Islam are really total nonsense and Muslims should campaign to have this chickieous pack stopped from being published as a religious text: What kind of Muslim are you?

FAQ

VEGETARIANISM - ANIMAL WELFARE, ETHICS AND RELIGION

Vegetarianism and the World's Religions

The revised Vegetarian Society theory on the causes of the Prophet's death received similar short shrift from Dr Darsh. "Yes the Prophet did eat poisoned meat once - but this happened four years later, due to reasons unknown. The two events are totally unrelated!" "Nobody says that animals should not be treated kindly," said Ibrahim Hewitt, Assistant Director of the Muslim Educational Trust. "And it is true that the practice in some halal slaughterhouses is less than what Islamic demands. But this resource pack contains falsehoods and untruths based on ignorance, which the writers are trying to justify," he said.

Moeen Yaseen, an adviser to the Islamia Schools' Trust, said that the Vegetarian Society had picked the wrong enemies.

"They shouldn't be going after Islam, its spiritual and political leaders," he said.

When contacted, Sean McElherron, one of Vegetarian Issue's authors emphasised that the Society did not spend £20,000 and 18 months "solid research" to "run down any faith". The material used for the Islamic section, he admitted, was published to inform and educate schoolchildren on how different faiths tackle issues regarding animal welfare.

"We had no other motives," he said.

Acknowledging that mistakes could have been made the Society told Q news that
A
ND who said being a housewife boggled you down? Nobody, says South African-born Nawal Hussein, the miracle behind a dinner to collect money for Bosnia. "After watching what was going on for so long I just felt I had to do something," says the mother of five. Hence began one of the more remarkable story of dedication and Islamic (sisterhood). Nawal's determination to do something ended up in a grand charity dinner at the Islamic Cultural Centre, Regent's Park Mosque. Over a hundred people attended the function which raised over £5,000 for Bosnia.

Highlight of the occasion (besides the delicious food on, yes, real plates) was speeches by various notables including an injured brother from Bosnia.

Master of ceremonies for the evening was a visibly shaken Abdul Wahid Hamid (standing in the picture), Director of the Muslim World League and, according to Nawal, the "man behind the dinner". The event was opened and closed by recitation of the Holy Qu'ran by Hashim Abdulrahmane (pictured next to Abdul Wahid Hamid).

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NEWS CURRENTS

Judges biased against blacks

Blacks have a significantly higher chance than whites of going to prison from crown courts, according to the first study of racial bias in sentencing published by the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE). A study of 3200 cases at five West Midlands courts in 1989 revealed that black males had a 17 per cent greater chance of going to jail that whites, while Asians were 18 per cent less likely.

Shaikh gambles no more

Dr Shaikh Karim, 51, of Blenheim Square, Leeds, a GP who was struck off the medical register in 1989 after misleading thousands of pounds from patients, has won the right to practise again after attending Gamblers Anonymous.

Sibling conflict

Sidney Taylor, 58, a businessman, successfully sued his daughter, Dawn, 28, over £60 rent she owed on a house she shared with her boyfriend. Yet the father insists it was "the tip of the iceberg" and claims she also owes him more than £2,000 for a debt settlement and if she doesn't pay up he'll be issuing a summons very soon.

Gang attacks Muslim

Six youths attacked a young Muslim student with iron bars at the Kingston College of Further Education during an evening of cultural dance and fashion. The 18-year-old student had been videoing the event when six men - not students - attacked him. As others came to his aid, he was hit in the head and later released from hospital. The attack occurred an incident last week when Kingston Hospital doctor Norman Tariqu found "hate" slogans and swastikas sprayed on his car after returning from the mosque.

Indian food more popular

Indian food has overtaken Chinese as the most popular ethnic cuisine in Britain according to Mintel market research data. Britons spend £1 million a day on Indian food and two-thirds of that is spent on home cooking - mostly by amateurs trying to home cook their favourite curries. Take-away sales of Indian food have increased by 19 per cent over the last five years. Around 7,500 Indian restaurants in Britain are estimated to increase to 10,000 by 1995.

Qur'an-inscribed shoes - man cleared

A man accused of an arson attack on a shop that sold shoes with words from the Qu'ran on them walked free from court. Nasirud Sheikh, 18, from Leicester, had denied taking any part in the attack on the shop. The trial at Leicester Crown Court collapsed when his alleged confession to police was ruled by the judge to be inadmissible. Shop owner Diana Lewis had refused demands to withdraw the Italian shoes by Muslims, but had agreed to sell the entire stock to a Muslim businessman, but the shop was still attacked.

Lock up your valuable gems

Police have warned the Indian and Pakistani communities in Slough to lock up expensive jewellery following a group of youths attacking a Muslim family in their home.

Officers say Asian family homes have become the target of thefts because they are known for keeping expensive gold jewellery. There were as many as five thefts a week aimed at Asian homes in the town, and in the most recent burglary, thieves made off with over £1,000 worth of earrings, bracelets and necklaces. Slough Police said: "We would advise anyone and in particular Asians, with expensive jewellery to keep it locked away in a safe place when they are out of the house.

Turkish links with Hackney

Whenever civil servants and officials want to go on holiday they just ask to have Hackney twinned with someplace exotic - it seems. A group of Hackney council representatives recently returned from a 5-day trip to Turkey, where they explored the possibility of twinning the borough with Kartal, a principality of Istanbul. The party included Labour council members, the borough's chief executive, a representative from the council's women's Unit and two trade union officials, and the trip was paid for by the Turkish principality. Hackney is already twinned with Suresnes in France, Haifa in Israel, Gottingen in Germany, Barbados in the West Indies and Krasnaya Presnya in Russia.

Gay men can adopt

Gay men can adopt children in Britain for the first time following a change in law. A homosexual couple, in their thirties, were recommended unanimously by a council's family placement panel. Now the recommendation will go before Manchester city's adoption panel in the New Year. Then it has to be ratified by the directors of social services. The two men, from Cheshire, have openly admitted they are gay. Labour MP Anne Coffey backed the men's selection last week. She said: "The public will obviously be concerned. But we must balance what the public wants with what the children need." No wonder they never get elected.
Another first for Gloucester?

A grade II listed building will house the newest addition to Britain's growing list of Muslim schools if plans to convert a disused hospital site in Gloucester are approved by district health officials next week.

If given the go-ahead, the Gloucester Islamic Academy will become Britain's twenty-seventh September - virtually next door to the first Muslim school in Britain, also established in Gloucester, over 25 years ago.

Then, as now, it was Ebrahim Bawa, newly-arrived from Burma, who leased his house to the madrassah al Islamiyyah so that Muslim children could get "a pure Islamic education". "My mission was to build a proper school for the children of this town. It is one that has yet to be fully realised, but we are quietly confident that we will soon open our purpose-built school after 25 years," he says.

Success or failure for his mission rests with health managers due to a million pound bid to buy the 9-acre Horton Road hospital site. As sole bidders for the four-storey crescent-shaped building, the community's capacity to raise this money and a further half a million pounds needed for refurbishment so that the children of Gloucester can have a good education.

Six years ago, the Gloucester Islamic Trust, (a separate organisation), bought a building for a Muslim girls' school for £100,000. The community, according to critics, is unhappy with Ebrahim Bawa for continuing to promote his project when he knows that the girls' school will open in the autumn of 1994, say some Muslims in Gloucester, however, do not seem to share Ebrahim's enthusiasm with one critic describing the project as "unwise and ill-timed".

In addition they seriously question the 8,000-strong community's capacity to raise £500,000 in three years - particularly just after they barely managed to pay off the £100,000 needed for the girl's school. "It took six years of constant appeals in the city's mosques to collect the money," noted one businessman. Critics have also accused Ebrahim's project of duplicity. "I don't think that the people of Gloucester want two Muslim schools," according to Yakob Patel. "The idea is absurd," he added. Patel, who is a Trustee for the proposed girl's school was confident that "people will not foot the bill for a school they do not even want."

Despite the opposition Ebrahim Bawa is determined to go ahead with the project and is unwilling to listen to any talk of shelving his dream project. Buoyed by recent academic successes of Muslim students, Ebrahim nationwide he said that Gloucester's children needed a school "immediately and not in two or six years time".

"If the Gloucester Islamic Trust were interested in establishing their school, they would have done it a long time ago," he commented.

A man of memory

At the moment Ebrahim Bawa might not be a household name among British Muslims but one day he might be remembered in history books as the father of Muslim education and schools in Britain.

For the sixty-five year old hafizh al Qur'an is laying claim to being the founder of the first Muslim school in Britain. The site of his 26-year old school might just be a bedroom away from his lounge but has produced more people who have memorised the holy Qur'an than all the other institutions in the country put together.

"From the day I arrived in this country I was convinced that Islamic education was the most important thing," he said. "I knew that nothing but education would enable us to maintain and sustain our Islamic identity."

Fired by this conviction Ebrahim went about to set up a Muslim school from the moment he arrived in Britain from his native Burma. A few weeks after he had settled in his terraced house in Gloucester he opened its doors and effectively turned it into a full time Islamic school.

"If you wish to remain and die as a true Muslim (in the west), then you must establish Islamic schools and darul-ulooms to provide religious, moral and academic education," he said emphatically. "There is no alternative, no other choice. If you don't do this, your children will go astray."

Ebrahim's seven children - five daughters and two sons - are all graduates from the modest "three-bedroom" madrassah ("the first in the country") which he started more than two decades ago. According to Ebrahim his home-based madrassah has successfully schooled 250 pupils in the art of committing the Qur'an to memory since 1967.

"Hifzat (memorising the holy Qur'an) runs in our family," he pointed out before going on to explain the amazing extent of Qur'anic knowledge in his household. "Both my sons are alims and hafiz," he said amid much throat clearing noises. "I have five daughters, and all five of them are hafiz. Three of my daughters are married, alhamdulillah. Two of the three hafi daughters are married to alims/hafiz, while one is married to just a hafiz."

"Then I have two other daughters - both of whom are engaged. They are both engaged to hafiz training to be alims," he said, pausing to get his breath back: "My younger son has been honoured with the khilafat noted with unconcealed pride, justifiably."

Ebrahim, who has authored more than 200 books on Islam in Burmese and Urdu, says that the Bawa family is well known for having at least one hafiz-al-Qur'an in each generation. "This is a very important discipline which must be preserved as every Muslim family. That is why I want so much to establish a school-darul-uloom in Gloucester," he said. "And why not? The more, the merrier!"

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A pledge to Jihad

A 35-year-old Muslim woman professor of literature in the Bosnian town of Ilidza, recounted her experiences to Branimir Talajic, a Sarajevo-based reporter for Novi Vjesnik, a daily newspaper in Zagreb.

...and "forgiveness".

"If you ever forget, may this milk curry you; so help me God!"

The Muslims have taught me to hate. For the last two months, within me I have only hatred, no pain nor bitterness. Emptiness.

A 35-year-old Muslim woman professor of literature in the Bosnian town of Ilidza, recounted her experiences to

I remember my childhood, the garden near the house, and my mother hesitating beneath the trees. She would seek the blossoms where the fragrance was most intense; she would spread the bed linen.

Yes, she would bow to Allah and pray.

Wherever I turn now I smell my mother's fragrance. I wait for her footsteps and the rustling sounds from her Muslim robes...

No, my husband doesn't know about our second child's birth and I don't know where he and my other son are. They assure me they are somewhere in Macedonia.

What can I do? I have to believe it for the sake of Jihad. Believe me, it's very hard to concentrate.

They pulled me off my dead mother and dragged me by my hair.

They asked me: "Where is the gold?"

Instinctively I pointed at my pregnant stomach of eight months, but I suddenly remembered and showed them.

On the way to headquarters in Vosnose, they spit on me and kicked me. I recognised the Duke of Chetniks, Jovan Tintor, who was standing there.

Tintor said: "Bring Janko!" He cut my arm so it formed a cross. On my hand he carved "S" (the Serbian Chetnik sign) four times with a knife.

"The law is this: The next time you don't tell us where the rest of your relatives are," Tintor yelled. They poured drinks over me and tried to strangle me.

The nightmare was interrupted by the sound from the street. They took me outside, naked as I was. In the courtyard stood a girl. She was less than ten: naked and surrounded by a group of bearded beasts. There were many onlookers from the nearby neighbourhood. She stood silent, uncomprehending.

You asked what they have done. They raped me here, my eyes, my good - beyond beautiful - old mother.

I stood there leaning against a steel monster - it seemed to be a tank. I began to bang my head against a steel plate. When I opened my eyes it was very dark. Apparently I had lost an eye from the beatings.

Where I went, what I did, whether I walked or crawled, I do not know. Some villagers found me by a brook near Bihac two days later and informed the Territorial Defence (Bosnian Defence Forces).

They are the only ones who visit me now. They call me "little sister" because they think I am in pain all the time. I have no share, also because I am going towards Jihad. Muter makes visits to my brothers and sisters.

A

Off The Road

Radmila Stejanovic

A Muslim caravan has just arrived in our town. While Podgorica slept the sleep of the innocent, a group of people left the SRNA, Karadzic's news agency, which insist that "Serbs do not cut throats", "Serbs do not rape", "Serbs only respond to provocations", "two buses carrying Orthodox Christian professors who yelled like a maniac at me, began to had left Foca the day before, with the permission - or rather the insistence - of the Serbs, who had kindly supplied the buses. On their arrival at Danilovgrad there had been a puncture - and a five-hour wait. Old men, women, and forty-five children, among them seven girls, had been travelling for ten hours. "We ate only what we took with us," said a woman in her forties. "We brought along with us our children, paralysed her sister-in-law's two daughters. She was not told what happened to them. Sanela, aged thirteen, sobbed: "They took

mother two months ago, and my aunt as well. We never brought them back. They burnt our house down, and took my father away. They say he is alive but nobody believes that any longer.

Mevla Barlov, aged 35, added: "A man from Foca gave me some money when we left, to buy some water." The women stuffed bits of bread into their pockets, the older children looked forward to the journey, while the babies screamed. "I cannot go, leave me without me," cried a woman of 101 years, stretched out on the mosque floor. They carried her into the bus wrapped in a blanket, together with the twenty-year-old son of Srbah Vakabovic, crippled by paralysis; and a blind woman, and a diabetic with a shrivelled leg. Where were they going? Perhaps to Skopje, perhaps to Goseja, perhaps to some new hell. The victims of "brave Serbs" and our own indifference.

An old man, in lieu of farewell, said: "This has not been done by the local Serbs. It has been done by outsiders, some of them released from prisons. There are Montenegrins among them. When they finish off what is left of the Muslims, they will start killing each other."
George Bush's decision to send 28,000 United States troops to Somalia could well be a massive policy blunder that Bill Clinton will live to regret. The idea that a brief military "peacekeeping" operation in a dynasty by the world's only superpower can be turned into a multilateral United Nations "peacekeeping" operation in a matter of weeks is verging on the ridiculous. Senior UN officials in New York are openly warning of the dangers of a "quick-fix" solution, as US Marines steam into the middle of a civil war which they can't begin to comprehend.

In a curious reworking of an age-old theme, Bush told his troops embarking on their new crusade: "You are doing god's work. We will not tolerate armed gangs ripping off their own people. The US alone cannot right all the world's wrongs but some crises in the world cannot be resolved without American involvement. Only the US has the global reach".

One reason for this intervention is that America wants to be seen to be acting decisively while Europe fumbles over Yugoslavia. There is now a real danger of a power struggle between Washington and the UN for custodianship of the new world order.

According to Alex de Waal, an aid expert who resigned from the international human rights organisation, Africa Watch, over the issue of intervention in Somalia: "The name 'Operation Restore Hope' is deeply ironic and offensive to the innumerable Somalis who are striving for reconciliation and reconstruction of their country... as negotiated agreements break down and warlords jockey for position to exploit the military occupation to their advantage".

The warlords, bandits and gunmen of Somalia's maze of clans, sub-clans and rival militias could well disperse, bury their guns and await the departure of America's far flung outpost of the new world order. They are almost certain to gain from any foreign adventureism. All north Africa is facing the challenge of Islam as the region's dispossessed embrace an ideology that offers something more than the empty promises of today's world.

Intervention in Somalia may well pit the West against the Islam. The Islamic activists in south west Somalia are almost certain to gain from any foreign adventurism. All north Africa is facing the challenge of Islam as the region's dispossessed embrace an ideology that offers something more than the empty promises of today's world. Egypt and Algeria are already on the brink. Sudan is slowly emerging at the Muslim world's ideological superpower. Increasingly mellowing Iran, Khartoum (and Iraq) are already heavily involved in backing Islamic activists in Somalia.

Observers have also pointed out that one main reason the US sent troops to Somalia is to contain and "keep an eye" on developments in Sudan. All over Africa the new world order promises little better than old certainties. Somalia's spiral of violence, vengeance and despair is not that unusual. The whole continent is becoming increasingly marginalised, but increasingly open to this uncomprehendingly simplistic "shoot to feed" mentality. Perhaps the intervention should be dubbed Operation Fools Rush In.

Peter Moszynski
What’s in a Name?

Shahid Ahmed Zaki Hamid

Imagining life without names, with people unable to distinguish between each other, between living beings and all species, between celestial bodies, between all that is in the heavens and earth.

I believe such a perceptive more of the divine wisdom of Allah, the exalted, when reflecting on the chapter: "The Name of Allah" to issue to the angels after creating Adam, in order to demonstrate the dignity and capability of humankind.

He commanded them to identify, to name, all things around them. Adam the first man, received such names, even as the Angels could not. Then Allah taught Adam the names, all of them (D:31).

The names of each of our carry stay with us forever, for as long as we breathe in this sphere. This is why Islam instructs parents to select the best names for their children. The right of the offspring upon his guardians. The pre-Islamic A s employed strange naming tradition. The family head would select best and tenderest names for his servants and attendants and assign odd, even, or even alternate names to his own children. Some would be named after unflattering animals, others even after big and small insects. They believed that such titles would strike fear in the hearts of their enemies. The Prophet changed this ignorant practice. “You will be called upon until the Day of Judgment by your name and the names of your forefathers,” he said (Abu Dawud).

“Select good names for yourselves,” Aisha, Allah be pleased with her, reported that the Prophet used to change ugly names (Tirmidhi). Umar b. al-Khattab named his baby girl A tiya (the Disobedient), but the Prophet renamed her family (the Beautiful). The Prophet changed many names, such as al-ki (the Mighty One), A tia (the Heartless), Masayin (the Devourer of Cloths, cross), and S haur (War). He suggested for the name al-Madin ij (the Sleeper) the name al-Mansu b (the Revived).

The Prophet was not only concerned with the names of persons, but with that of paths and land. When he came upon a strip of land called A fja (Barren), he dubbed it instead Kh dira (Green).

There was a path named S k al-Dul cla (the Path of Magicians), and he changed its name to S k al-Hidaya (the Path of Guidance). He even altered the names of whole tribes. The title Reni al- Zin yakh (the Children of Formation) became R a n R o d h (Children of Wisdom). The Prophet told his followers to name their children after the Prophets. He also said that the most beloved of names was Abd Allah (Servant of Allah) and Abd a l-R a k i a n (Servant of the Merciful).

Therefore, it is preferable for any Muslim to change his or her name if it is unbecoming or unbecoming in meaning or character, even if their parents chose it for them.

Moreover names should be selected based on the criteria the Prophet set forth, not whim. One day, I heard a Muslim called by one of his friends Sharr, which means Evil.

Why do they call you this, I asked. It is short for my full name, which is Sharr al-Bariyyo, he replied. This was worse still. It means the Most Evil of all People.

How did you come by such a name, I inquired. When he was born, he said, my father simply opened the Quran, and, as is the custom, randomly put his finger on a word and that became my name.

Needless to say, I advised him to change his name because it is exceedingly negative. A Muslim, by birth or conversion, must change his or her name if it has any meaning that is not constructive or virtuous or relates the person to other than Allah in a consequential way, as in the names ’Abd al-Masih (Worshipper of the Messiah), ’Abd al-Sh ah (Worshipper of the Cross), or ’Abd al-Nab i (Worshipper of the Prophet).

For those who come into Islam with names that evince negative concepts, images, or beings, it is preferable that they be changed. The Prophet Muhammad (whose name translates as P raised One), on him be peace. He was indeed involved with a better model.

Get Mr Boss

I wonder how many Q news’ readers watched Channel 3’s two-part programme, about the “bounty hunter”. There seems to have been little connection from the Muslim community considering how Channel 4 decided to tell Mr and Mrs Britain that they could even change their name by all means because only then will you live in comfort. Nor aggravate them about their attitudes towards Shudras, permanently classed as unouchables! Another Hindu scripture, Manu Smrti, describes quite vividly the Vedic communities relationship with these so called lower cases: “If any Shudra advises a Brahmin and asks him to do noble deeds, the ruler must pour boiling oil in his ears and mouth.”

And people describe the Muslims as barbaric! Abydaliya is only the beginning so we must take action now!

A Sharif Forest Gate London

Needless for Hindu bashing

While I applaud your excellent coverage of the recent sad events in Ayodhya (and peace 7) and its repercussions here and in other places, I question the wisdom of what appeared to be an overly anti-Hindu stance in that issue.

Understandingly feelings and passions were running high after the destruction of the Babri mosque which I understand was dear to Indian Muslims. The symbolism of it is also clear, the razing of one prominent mosque does threaten to paw the way to other mosques in the country. However Babri mosque as you reported has not been used for the last 40 years, and as far as can be seen does not have any important Islamic link or history. Yet the Hindus, rightly or wrongly feel quite certain that the site is the birthplace of their deity Ram. So if the mosque isn’t even used, why not let them have it? It would surely have saved the unnecessary deaths of over a thousand people from the resulting backlash in many other places.

I don’t think that Hindus are our enemies, a small minority may indeed be the enemy of all non-Hindus - just as a section of Muslims are the enemies of all “Kuffar”, but in general we should not be adding yet more names to the already long list of “enemies of Islam.”

And it would if anything been far more beneficial and Islamically correct for us to have exercised greater restraint in our world-wide reaction to the event. Indeed it may have served to open the world’s eyes to the atrocities - particularly in Kashmir - that are being committed against Muslims by the Hindu fundamentalists - a far more deadly species it seems than our own brand of rather short-sighted and foolish fundamentalism.

Attacking temples and mandirs in this country shows the extent of their imbecility. In the long run it will only affect our mosques as insurance premiums sky rocket on all mosques belonging to these “foreign loonies”. When will good sense and Islamic restraint prevail in our “Muslim” community? J aid Ahlan Bradford

First Class treatment

First, my congratulations for your publication which continues to grow from strength to strength. May Allah bless you all.

Second please receive my cheque for renewing my subscription for one year (plus a little for the Q kairy).

I am always late. How come I always get my copy almost a week late than the date the paper is supposed to have been published?

Is this because there is a conspiracy by the Royal Mail to sabotage a good Muslim publication?

If you don’t publish on the days you are supposed to?

3) you have decided to torment me and send me my mail late?

Whatever I would like my copy to arrive a bit earlier. Can I suggest sending you some extra money to help you out in sending it First Class.

Please, please, do something. I hate the long wait before I receive the Q news.

Shahida Nelson

Cardiff

Q news is published every Friday by Q news International Limited, Cumberland House, 80 Scrubs Lane, London NW10 6RF

Tel: 081 960 5667

Fax: 081 968 1935

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"I’ll have all three please, Cilla"
What you ought to know...

Giving the Qur'an to a non-Muslim Arab? Can one shave his beard to get married? Is an individual's fate predetermined? Why no references to Ja'afar's (Shi'i) point of view? Is a guide dog permissible for a blind Muslim? Should a Muslim woman stay at home for up to 40 days after the birth of her child? Can Muslim women use Jane Fonda videos to keep fit?

Dr Syed Matwalli ad-Darsh answers questions every fortnight.

Write to:
Dr Darsh
c/o Q Community
Cumberland House
8 Scrubs Lane
London NW10 8BF

Q: In a response to a question on giving the Qur'an to non-Muslims, you said that they now have access to numerous foreign language translations of the Holy Book. What if the non-Muslim is an Arab who only speaks Arabic? Considering the question of an Arab who only speaks Arabic? Would it be wrong to give him the Arabic Qur'an?

Fazal Rahman
Coventry

Considering the question of an Arab who is not a Muslim yet wishes to understand Islam, I would refer you to the Qur'an Chapter 9 Verse 6 which, paraphrased, says that if any one of the unbelievers wishes to listen to the words of the Qur'an, he should facilitate him or her to come and listen to the Qur'an. While a visitor the security precautions seem like the non-Muslim is incumbent upon the community. But while non-Muslims may listen to the Qur'an being recited and discuss it with knowledgeable people they are not allowed to take a copy of it from it. It is also not allowed to give them a copy of the Qur'an itself. Arabic tapes of the Book, however, can be given to non-Muslims.

A hadith in Sahih Muslim (Vol. III, pg 1040) clearly forbids the taking of a copy of the Holy Qur'an to a non-Muslim for fear of desecration. According to the hadith: “It is prohibited to take the Qur'an to the land of the infidels when it is feared that it might fall in their hands”. Umar said that the messenger of Allah (upon him be peace and blessings) forbade anyone travelling to the land of the enemy to take the Qur'an with him.

But as in the answer given to the original question there is no harm if non-Muslims are given translations of the Qur'an. A translation is not in itself the Qur'an. The basic definition of the Qur'an is that it is the Arabic word revealed to Muhammad (upon whom be peace and blessings). If it is in any other word, that is, language, it no longer qualifies as the Qur'an. Muslim scholars have, in addition, concluded that non-Muslims can be taught Qur'an by an imam in mosques and schools. The Shafi'i school allows Qur'an to be taught to non-Muslims without restriction. The Shafi'i school allows tuition in limited circumstances.

Q: I am a 28-year-old engineering student and I want don't want to get married. As I have heard that Muslim ladies do not like men with a moustache. What suggestions do you suggest I become clean shaven? Is there anything in the Qur'an or Hadith about this subject?
Zigfrith Butst

A: Don't even think of it! Do not shave off your beard. For keeping a beard is one of the things highly recommended in Islam. The Prophet used to say to the men: "Grow your beards and trim your moustachers". The Prophetic companions were in fact not clean-shaven. There is no such habit (a "natural inclination", or Sunan al Ulum). Don’t worry about "Muslim ladies" rejecting your marriage proposals because you choose to follow the Prophet. I am sure there are many decent decent, good Muslimahs who will gladly say "yes" for precisely the same reason.

Q: I've heard that when a child is in its mother's womb, his personality and character - his antecedent - is formed by Allah through an angel who is sent down to visit the child. My question is: If this takes place, then why does Allah choose for some individuals to follow a Sunnah and for a few to follow a path of righteousness? Does this mean that as the individual's fate is predetermined, there is little he can do to change Allah's (His) will?...Erina Sheik
London E1

Knowledge, power and free will are among God's attributes. Nothing escapes His knowledge. All has been willed by Him, and is executed by His power. At the same time the Qur'an and the Sunna has established that man too has knowledge, will and power, but that this is given to him to guide him and the dog is trained, she allowed to teach the animal in between performing works and going to pray...

F: I am thinking of starting up a keep fit class for Muslim women in my local area but I am a little unsure about the Islamic position on such matters. I wonder if it is right for Muslim women to take part in such modern activities as Keep Fit, aerobics. Also, most callanetics, circuit training and aerobics classes are conducted to rhythmic, beat-filled music, which I know is discouraged in Islam? What would you advise me to do?
Atiyah Sultan
address withheld

First, if the women need to have such classes, they should be conducted by a decent, respectable, Muslim woman in an environment that has no men around at all. There is no other objection from the Islamic point of view. Actually looking after one's body and health is something highly recommended in Islam and everybody should do it. But music which is decent, void of obscene lyrics and which does not arouse base emotions is permitted. For somebody who is interested such music is easy to come across. But all those who want to sweat it out should try to remember that it is the exercises not the music (which is just an aid) that could otherwise be a tidious act which is important.
On the origin of Christmas, the Encyclopaedia Britannica states: "initial Christian customs are an evolution from times that long antedate the Christian period - a descent from seasonal, pagan, religious and national practices, hedged about with legend and tradition" (15th Ed.)

Merrymaking at Christmas was once outlawed in Christianised Britain and in the Puritan colonies of North America in the early seventeenth century.

In 1642, all Christmas celebrations - both religious and secular - were forbidden by Parliament as the excesses in eating, drinking and other forms of "entertainment" were viewed as "dangerously non-Christian".

The custom of celebrating Christmas does not have its origins in the Church. None of the disciples or apostles of Jesus celebrated his birthday according to Biblical records.

The Catholic Encyclopedia Dictionary & The New Catholic Encyclopedia says: "In the earliest days of the Church there was no such feast. Inexplicable though it seems, the date of Christ's birth is not known. The Gospels indicate neither the day nor the month."

The first recorded occasion to celebrate the birth of Jesus (Christmas) took on 25 December in 354 AD - more than three and a half centuries after Jesus was born!

In the eastern part of the Byzantine Empire Jesus' birth and baptism were being observed previous to 354AD, but on 6 January. By the middle of the fifth century, however, most of the eastern Church had also adopted 25 December as the day Jesus was born and the commencement of his baptism - Epiphany.

In ancient times, many people realising their dependence on the sun, light, heat and crops, watched the sun's yearly course through the heavens, and held feasts and celebrations at different times of the year in its way. Special festivals of thanksgiving and encouragement to the sun were celebrated at the end of December as the days got shorter and the sun was at its lowest priority. The reason was that the sun - the light of the sun's Dwelling (the sanctuary) - had to be presented to the people. Such festivities, once meant to honour the sun and its god, were freely adopted by the Christian religion, even though the origin of these customs came to be centred around children.

8 Superstitions about "bearth spirits", fire and sun gods visiting homes during the winter season caused certain folk rituals to be kept as they believed varying degrees of rewards and punishments were dealt out to family members. Which is how we get the story of Santa using the chimney and shoes and stockings being hung by the fireplace. The fireplace served as the entrance and exit of the gods of fire and the sun when they visited homes. Each year, dressed in a pointed furry red cap and red jacket, a fire-god travelled from the distant heavens to visit homes and distribute favours or punishments.

10 Most Christmas practices go back to Nimrod, ruler of the ancient Babylonian empire and the first son of Cash, the grandson of Noah. Full of pride, ignorance and greed Nimrod, in order to himself to be the partner of the Creator, and eventually believed he was God. He went as far as to marry his mother, Semiramis, who after his death propagated the evil doctrine that Nimrod survived as a spiritual being. She claimed that a full grown evergreen tree sprang overnight from a dead tree stump, supposedly symbolising the springing forth into a new life of the dead Nimrod. On each anniversary of his birth she claimed Nimrod would visit the tree and leave gifts on it. Nimrod was born on 25 December.

12 In many lands all over pagan Europe, mythical visitors - usually seven in number - would bring in their flocks from the fields to the fireplace served as the natural entrance and they visited homes. Each year, dressed in a pointy furry red cap and red jacket, a fire-god travelled from the distant heavens to visit homes and distribute favours or punishments. Today it is welcomed in the Western world each Christmas season by young and old alike.

14 The Christian Encyclopaedia says: "The modern Christmas tree originated in Germany where the tree was the major prop of a medieval play about Adam and Eve. A fir tree was used with apples hung on it which represented the Garden of Eden. The Germans called it "Paradise Tree", and set it up in their homes on 24 December. They hung wafers on it symbolising the redemption of Christ. They eventually hung cookies and candles which all represented Christ. A Christmas Pyramid (triangular structure containing wafers with shelves to hold Christmas) was decorated with evergreens, candles and a star. By the sixteenth century the German Pyramids the Christmas Pyramid and Paradise Tree had merged to become the "Christmas Tree". Even the Bible speaks against this pagan practice. (Jeremiah 10:2-6)"

16 Many people after reading this will still continue to celebrate Christmas with the same faith, devotion and meritment as if the day mattered.

20 Ancient druids among the Celts of Britain, Ireland and France used the mistletoe in their winter rituals each year. The Arch Druid would cut the mistletoe with a golden sickle around November, and as it fell it would be caught by virgins holding out a white cloth. Prayer and sacrifice of the white ox of the Fire God mistletoe was believed to have healing powers to protect against witchcraft and bring fertility to the land.

21 The Yule Log is the most important event of Christmas and is derived from pagan origins with the Scandinavians. The Norsemen burned logs of oak in honour of the god Thor (Thursday - Thor's day is named after him) and Odin. The Church gave its religious significance by saying it should be an "ash" log. This comes from the belief that the Jesus was supposed to have been washed for the first time near an ash log. The Druids also used a yule log.

23 The other Christmas Eve ceremonies are observed even in such places as the Queen's College, Oxford, where on the Saturday before Christmas, a chef bears a boat's head on a silver platter with an orange between its teeth. In Scandinavia, a boat's head was eaten during the Yuletide festivities in honour of the sun-boar. The Celts believed that the boar was an agent of evil. This could never have come from the Bible as it is forbids the eating of pork.

25 Christmas day, 25 December, is officially a public day in some countries. It is the day to mark the birthday of Jesus but of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan.

26 The word "yule" comes from the Anglo-Saxon word "heolw" meaning "wheel", a reference to the sun. The wheel was believed to have a magical effect in helping the sun shine more brightly.

28 The Yule log custom is still the traditional Christmas Eve feast, finishing in time for everyone to attend Church at midnight. Mums vary widely. In Russia and Ukraine, where in January they will celebrate only the second Christmas since 1917, there is not much festive fare to be had. Catholic country's traditional fasting means the main course is fish, carp and salted herring in Poland, sea bream, prawns and crayfish in Spain, and in Portugal the ubiquitous salt-cod, bacalhau coido.

30 Christmas Eve, 24 December, is still the traditional Christmas Eve feast, finishing in time for everyone to attend Church at midnight. Mums vary widely. In Russia and Ukraine, where in January they will celebrate only the second Christmas since 1917, there is not much festive fare to be had. Catholic country's traditional fasting means the main course is fish, carp and salted herring in Poland, sea bream, prawns and crayfish in Spain, and in Portugal the ubiquitous salt-cod, bacalhau coido.
Christmas Already!!

Huda Khattab

My assignment was to write a jolly little article about "How to avoid Christmas". Am I qualified to do so? Well, I use to be a Christian and I did rather enjoy the cards and mince pies... but then I realised that Santa Claus didn't exist after all, and Christmas was never quite as exciting after that.

Then I really grew up and learned that "God incarnate" is a myth too, and most of the Christmas traditions are of pagan origin anyway.

The ultimate way of avoiding Christmas is to become a Muslim! I keep recommending this course of action to non-Muslim friends and neighbours who are tearing their hair out at the thought of how much they still have to buy, cook, eat, drink etc. But none of them have taken me up on the offer yet! Maybe I just need to fix their TVs and cancel their daily papers too - but this isn't an article about that - or the lack of it - in the media.

But even when you're a Muslim, you can still enjoy the all-pervasive "festive spirit". My family are still Christian, and send us gifts at this time: to them it's an opportunity to show their love for us. Of course the gifts are only tokens, and we're fortunate enough to be able to show our love in other ways too, throughout the year.

But what is the spirit behind the giving? It would be churlish to refuse the gifts. We tell ourselves: "Well, they are doing it for 'New Year' gifts - but then, whose 'New Year'?

(One of the advantages of working from home is that you avoid social pressures.) If you're under pressure to join in the "fun", you can always take a sickie, or go on holiday to escape. Or be brave and say just why you don't want to attend the festive bash: tempe it with an offer to work over the holiday, thus freeing your colleagues to celebrate both festivals, and/or take the opportunity to negotiate for days off at Eid, instead of a part of your religion/culture: our time for celebration is Eid and can it time off then, please?

For many years I harboured a desire to flee to a Muslim country to escape the end-of-year overkill that Swamps the West at this time. I finally realised this ambition last year with a trip to Syria, but even then I was haunted by Santa Claus! There is a sizable Christian minority in Syria (who seem better off than Muslims here, but that's another story!), so their shops were decorated in appropriate style, and Christmas Day is a public holiday there as, of course, is Eid. I doubt that even in Saudi Arabia there would be a total escape: Christian friends and relatives who work there have been known to send Christmas cards of "Santa in the Souk".

Then there's television, and radio, and newspapers, and magazines. It's relentless, there's no escape! I think I'll turn the TV off until January how many "Christian Bond repeats can a person stand?" And if Auntie Beeb tries to feed us "Christmas in Bosnia/Somalia/Avodah?" stories, I shall scream!

New Year, halal resolutions

Shabzad Sheikh

One of the more agreeable traditions of Christmas, or more so the advent of the Gregorian New Year, is the idea of making resolutions for the year ahead. Whether or not this is a useful activity it is a bad idea to use the beginning of the new year as a pivotal point in your life.

Anyway the effort to try and take stock of your life is highly recommended any day. So why not take the new year an opportunity to sit back, re-evaluate things and then decide what you want to do with it.

Resolutions are decisions you make, which means that essentially you're making intentions. Ultimately everything is in the hands of Allah, but intention in Islam is a legally necessary step in the performance of everything: prayers, pilgrimages, ablutions, sacrifices, recitations, etc.

In fact, in Islamic law the basis of judging someone's actions is his intention. So even if you're unable to carry out what you set out to do you might still be rewarded for it. That's rather like in your A-Level Maths when you get the final answer to a problem wrong, but you're still given full marks for using the correct method to get there.

A Hadith says: "Actions are according to their intentions, and to each man there pertains that which he intended."

But there's a small problem about making new year's resolutions, they're like promises - you make them to break them. Which is not very civil of you is it?

(resolutions for others - our honourable brothers and sisters in Islam or our venerable leaders perhaps?)

1: Don't burn down or even attack any more Temples, Mosques, Churches or any other places of worship of any other religion. After all if you're going to behave like this then expect a reply in kind. Remember the Prophet (upon whose peace and blessings) warned us about this. And anyway, we all know how much begging, pleading and borrowing goes into building a mosque these days. Wouldn't you like to see all that effort go up smoke?

2: Talking of mosques, how about abolishing the well established - traditional even - concept of mosque squabbles. Once the mosque is built, the undignified scenes of bearded types arguing and fighting about who's in charge of the valuable property is really rather embarrassing, particularly when the police (dogs and horses too) have to be called in. If anything it acts as a steroid to the image of our community consisting of mainly mad-mullahs and effigy burners.

3: Stop arguing with each other and this applies as well, from street corner brawls to round/square table "debates". It's so disheartening to watch so-called religious leaders and pseudo intellectuals (cause they can talk fancy and have got a few letters after their names) bickering like well, like kids basically. Far from being led by example, they lose the trust of any Muslim who can still see clearly, and make them turn away in shame. And to all "activists and leaders" reading this and quietly nodding their heads in approval - I mean you!

4: Leading on to that, there let be less divisions, and less divisive people in charge. "You either belong to my group" is an anachronism of a bygone era. Let's all try to rather be united and out of date. Can we all not just be Muslims?

In past years we have managed to make the most of the time off work to go and visit Muslim friends: we can close the door on the world outside, ignore the frolicking going on around us, and pretend it's not happening. We spent a couple of days in Sothall one year - it was a bit like a Sunday: some, though not all, of the shops were open, and it was quite hard to imagine that it was Christmas Day.

You can't avoid Christmas completely, but there's no need to bring it home with you! We shan't be putting up a tree for the children, or providing "presents from Santa" just so they don't feel left out. If the neighbours send us Christmas cards, we will appreciate their kind wishes, but we won't be displaying the cards on the mantelpiece. Even if we get our hands on a Halal turkey, it will go in the freezer until late January.

There is no getting away from it, unless you disappear up a remote mountain or find yourself on the little desert island. Perhaps we should stop trying to "avoid" it, and just settle for "ignoring" it. Nobody is under obligation to "join in", after all we don't need to follow like sheep! The Prophet (peace be upon him) said that whoever imitates a people is one of them. Muslims are also supposed to be identifiable as Muslims. Look on this time of year as an opportunity to stand up and be counted as such!
That city is Granada, once known as Gharnata, the proud Muslim capital which was one of the beacons of Islamic civilization in Europe. Thanks to its rich Muslim heritage, Granada is fast becoming a favoured destination for Muslim tourists from Britain and around the world.

The famous Alhambra, of course, is the jewel in this city’s crown. Without doubt, this mountain palace is the most famous place in Europe, if not the world, it was mercifully spared destruction when, five hundred years ago precisely, the city fell to the armies of Ferdinand and Isabella, the ‘Catholic Monarchs’. 1992 has been “celebrated” as the “discovery” (read “invasion and ethnic cleansing”) of the Americas. But in Spain, it has also been commemorated as the fifth centenary of another harbinger of genocide: the conquest of Granada by Christian forces after almost seven hundred years of Muslim rule.

Walking around Granada, a city which has never fully recovered from the catastrophe of ethnic cleansing (the population is still lower today than it was in Muslim days), one is constantly reminded of its Islamic past and the traumas of annexation. Although under the Arab kings, Christians and Jews had worshipped in peace, retaining their own churches and synagogues, no such toleration was accorded the city’s minorities after the conquest. Every mosque is now a church - in fact, the tourist guides note that Granada is the only city in Europe where all the churches face Makka. Buried in the foundations of these churches lie the former Muslim and Jewish inhabitants, victims of a Holocaust that claimed perhaps thirteen million victims during the two centuries of the Spanish Inquisition.

The Mosque of Banu al-Ahmar, once rivalling that of Cordoba in splendour, was torn down and a vast Christian basilica built after the conquest. Every mosque is now a church - in fact, the tourist guides note that Granada is the only city in Europe where all the churches face Makka. Buried in the foundations of these churches lie the former Muslim and Jewish inhabitants, victims of a Holocaust that claimed perhaps thirteen million victims during the two centuries of the Spanish Inquisition.

The Alhambra, no-one can accuse of having no roots in the Islamic past. The new Muslims of Granada are not really converts at all. They sparkle with a faith that bespeaks a deep and authentic Islamic identity. Watching them pray in the shade of the Alhambra, one cannot accuse them of having no roots in the Islamic past.

Most of Granada’s revert Muslims live in the old Arab quarter, the Aloaicin. This is a splendid warren of old Andalusian houses, with patios, flowery balconies, and mysterious high walls. Entering the Albaicin, one first comes to the romantically-named Postigo de Alcaiceria, Mosque, located, as might be expected, in a former post office. This has a richly-minoritized portal with a line of Moorish inscriptions. One might be expected, in a former post office. This has a richly-minoritized portal with a line of Moorish inscriptions. One might be expected, in a former post office. This has a richly-minoritized portal with a line of Moorish inscriptions. One might be expected, in a former post office. This has a richly-minoritized portal with a line of Moorish inscriptions. One might be expected, in a former post office. This has a richly-minoritized portal with a line of Moorish inscriptions.
Almost Arab in its warmth. Or by the Andalusian generosity, based into the Spanish landscape and Spanish, maintains a presence here also. Maybe it is Arab? The borderline are many Jerrahis in Mexico (of very elegantly. It seems that there this four hundred year old community, accompanied by flamenco guitar and Turkish tabla, are becoming popular among the Andalusian revets. The Spanish Jerrahis are found in all corners of Spain, but their headquarters is in the Andalusian centre. There are other mosques, madrasas and zawiyas in this ancient city; and there will, inshallah, be many more. But what is printed on the page:

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**Reading**

*What is printed on the page:*

White from the White:

**They passed by...**

As evening was falling, they unexpectedly, passed close by me; inflaming the passions in my heart, and in such a manner!

I do not find it strange, that my desire increased with their pressing: the sight of water excites the anguish of the thirsty.

**Modesty**

When you offer those around you like a cup-bearer serving each glass in turn, the wine of your cheeks inflamed with bashfulness, I do not stay behind to drink of it. For the eyes of those who gaze upon you, make this wine more crimson by your blushes. While that other wine is made more red by the feet of the treaders of grapes.

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*By the celebrated B en Ammar of Silvis, Vizier to Mutamid of Seville (1086)*

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**Bosnian Children’s Sponsorship Scheme**

**FEED A BOSNIAN CHILD THIS WINTER**

Serbs, winter, hunger and world apathy are killing the children of Bosnia. Hundreds of thousands have lost their parents, families and homes. Tens of thousands are now living alone in camps and orphanages.

You can keep one of these children in food, warmth and accommodation for the winter by sponsoring them for just £25 a month. For more information, write to the address below. Alternatively, you can contribute by sending cheques/postal orders made payable to BOSNIAN CHILDREN’S FUND.

**THANK YOU - FROM THE CHILDREN OF BOSNIA**

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**Q news**

Friday 18 / 25 December 1992 **11**

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book choice

What’s on halal bookshelves?

Evel wondered what the leading beacons of our community get up to when they find themselves alone among the book selves? At the end of the day when the public speeches and brallows, the da’wa meetings and mosque-committee feuds finish, it is time to unfurl the turbans and scarves and relax. When it’s dark outside and warm inside there is nothing like a good read to reinvigorate the mind and stimulate the intellect.

Psychologists say what you read is what you are, that is, you can judge a person by the books he/she reads. If that is true our survey below should be a very interesting read indeed.

It must be said that it was agreed at the outset that the Holy Qur’an and hadith books are taken as essential reading for everyone. If after you read this and start wondering why Mr Liaquat Hussain was allowed to get away with choosing the Holy book as one of his choices, well, its a long story perhaps better told another day. Part of the challenge was to convince people to participate for it’s not everyday one is asked about the books you read. Alhamdulillah the response was tremendous. The exception, surprise, surprise, was an abrupt “no” answer from none other than the mediaphile Dr Kalim Siddiqui. The response of Ahmed Versi, Editor of Muslim News, was that “he has read so many books he can’t remember which are good and which are bad”. Tut, tut.

Report by Marjan Jalili, Additional Research by Ehsan Masood

ABOUT HAKIM MURAD
Publisher, Qilliam Press
Two books I would recommend:

Of the books I do like, one is called The Tao of Islam, by Fachiko Murata. It is the only other book in English on gender relationships in Islamic thought. Unveiling Islam by Roger du Pasquier, published by The Islamic Text Society, is my second choice. It is probably the best short introduction to Islam that has yet been done in English.

Book to avoid:

There isn’t a book I wouldn’t recommend. My job is to find something useful from whatever book there is. I don’t have to like the book. I don’t have that kind of bent of mind to tell people to avoid books.

HUDA KHATIB
Editor of Islam magazine
Two books I would recommend:

One of my favourite book was actually recommended in the late (sic) MuslimWise magazine ages ago. It’s The Tartar Khans’ English Man by Gabriel Ronen. He was a Baron orsomething, and was on the wrong side when King John was up to his tricks. So he got banished and he went off to the crusades to absolve himself and then he was kidnapped and taken further east. He could pick up languages very easily. He ended up with the Mongols and they sent him back as an interpreter to tell Christians in the Middle East about the Mongols or else! They said OK: you are a traitor, and executed him. It is a very exciting story. The author is an Hungarian and he has picked up all sorts of manuscripts to get this story but it reads like an adventure. The best bit is where King John nearly made England an Islamic country. Though a history book I couldn’t put it down! Fancett’s Pendulum by Umberto Eco is my second choice. Pendulum is a mind blowing novel. It has conspiracy theory and Knights and Templer, and all sorts in it. Its weird and wonderful. I can’t explain what it is about and you have to read it. Don’t worry about the first page being in Hebrew: I’m not quite sure why it is.

Book to avoid:

I only read books I like, if I think. I’m not going to enjoy them after a couple of pages I put them away and forget about them. However, I do get upset when I see a Muslim reading a horror story or a Mills and Boon. That’s two genres to avoid actually. If people are impressionable, which they are, they get all these stupid ideas about marriage that are totally impractical. They think it’s all sweetness and light. They conjure a really unrealistic expectation of life and I think that’s dangerous.

M H FAROUQI
Editor, Impact International
Two books I would recommend: Kissing: a biography by Walter Isaacson will be my first choice. The book is about King John and it indicates that the Christian era is dead: gone corrupt, and the coming era will involve what Lawrence calls the “green dragon of Islam”. That’s not why I chose it. I chose it because it is a heart and an intellect and thrills with vitality and an understanding of the age in which we live - the people, surroundings, the environment and nature.

How the nature of man, in its generic sense as well as the kind of the being, is being simultaneously destroyed and how it effects every level of one’s self, from the erotic to the intellectual and psychological, with nothing being left.

I would say in passing that I would like to be asked about two authors rather that two books because a work is not simply a product but an extension of someone’s being. When we read them we are with them and that is especially true of writers like Lawrence.

You come out bewildered when you read his work. I think it is important to read works like this; like Faulkner’s As I Lay on the Green which has been translated by Aisha Becker. Seven hundred years ago Mongolia was the centre of the largest land empire the world has ever seen, and yet we know very little about the country. This travel book examines how a nation which had once flourished to the extent that Mongolia had could have disappeared from the view of every body in the western world.

Book to avoid:

Not one book but a whole genre. Don’t waste any of your time with books that have any dialectical material. Avoid a book when it starts on racism, sexism this ism and that ism, posing one phony alternative against another which never confronts the deep underlying issues. If you must read it then you should be well illuminated and look through it. You don’t just read in sequence from beginning to end. The work sings - it is alive. I would recommend Lawrence as a humanbeing and a Writer. My second book is Muhammad, Messenger of Allah by Madawi al-Rasheed. It is a book by an Alim (scholar) from the twelfth century AD (fifth century Hijra) in Morocco and southern Spain. What he is doing in this work is showing everything pertaining to the person of the Prophet. It is an approach to the Raud; it instructs Muslims how to be like him and how to defend him. It is a way of meeting the Prophet because the love of the Prophet is the way of meeting. The beauty of the book is not just the spiritual love for the Prophet (upon whom be peace and blessings) but the extraordinary rigour of scholarship. Nothing we have in the works of scholars to the match it. There’s no sloppy journalistic guessing game. It is totally true to the facts drawn from primary sources.

SARA KHALID
Writer and active housewife
Two books I would recommend:

Fantasia of the Unconscious, and Essays in Psychoanalysis by D H Lawrence. The book is very relevant to Muslims and even mentions Islam in the narrative, indicating that the Christian era is dead: gone corrupt, and the coming era will involve what Lawrence calls the “green dragon of Islam”. That’s not why I chose it. I chose it because it is a heart and an intellect and thrills with vitality and an understanding of the age in which we live - the people, surroundings, the environment and nature.

Avoid a book when it starts on racism, sexism this ism and that ism, posing one phony alternative against another which never confronts the deep underlying issues. If you must read it then you should be well illuminated and look through it. You don’t just read in sequence from beginning to end. The work sings - it is alive. I would recommend Lawrence as a humanbeing and a Writer. My second book is Muhammad, Messenger of Allah by Madawi al-Rasheed. It is a book by an Alim (scholar) from the twelfth century AD (fifth century Hijra) in Morocco and southern Spain. What he is doing in this work is showing everything pertaining to the person of the Prophet. It is an approach to the Raud; it instructs Muslims how to be like him and how to defend him. It is a way of meeting the Prophet because the love of the Prophet is the way of meeting. The beauty of the book is not just the spiritual love for the Prophet (upon whom be peace and blessings) but the extraordinary rigour of scholarship. Nothing we have in the works of scholars to the match it. There’s no sloppy journalistic guessing game. It is totally true to the facts drawn from primary sources.

MARTIN DAVIS
Writer and farmer
Two books I would recommend:

Politics in an Arabien Oasis by Madawi al-Rasheed. It has nothing to do with the way we think as Muslims and it is destroying the Muslim intellect.

FELIPE FERNANDEZ-ARMETO’s Columbus. I would avoid it simply because we all know that Columbus was bad news for both Muslims in Spain and the people he “discovered” living happily in the Americas. This biography promotes the idea that his aims were commercial rather than imperialistic, and that this is a true picture of the man. I
The book is a good analysis of the Qur'an, and to reflect on the consensus of our Ummah just now. It is a story set in Medina in 85 Hijra. So Sirat Rasul Allah by A. Guillaume. That is one of the earliest books written on the Prophet (upon whom be peace and blessings), this book is written by someone who has given his background. It is a very inspiring novel and a brave attempt for a man like Tariq Ali given the radical cards he carries with him.

Book to avoid

Postmodernism and Islam, predicament and promise by Akhtar Ahmad. Avoid all books with Islam and postmodernism in them because you need to understand two things to write a book like that: you have to have a reasonably good depth of understanding of Islam and an equally appreciation of the complexity of Postmodernism. The other one that is common these days, it is called The End of Nature by Bill McKibben. This is a must for all Muslim readers. It is about an analysis of the current state of the environment. It shows that man has lost control of what we in Islam call the firmaouth. It is a good analysis of how nature because of our own creation. I would ask Muslim readers to read the first thirteen essays of Sarah Rahman in this book to reflect on for half an hour, and then read McKibben's book. Then after they have read it, read those same thirteen verses again.

Book to avoid

Don't waste your time reading books of the kind Salman Rushdie and others of his ilk, trying to be clever. Writers who try to be clever and who try to carry away the Muslim establishment by knocking their own people are the lowest breed of people.

FAZLUN KHALED

Author: Postmodernism and Islam, predicament and promise

Two books I would recommend

The book I most enjoyed this year is The Kindness of Strangers, which is the sequel to The Empire of the Sun by J. G. Ballard. It was about real of his ilk, trying to be clever. Writers who try to be clever and who try to carry away the Muslim establishment by knocking their own people are the lowest breed of people.

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The other one is Islam between East and West by Alija Ali Izetbegovic, the current president of what's remained of Bosnia. I think it is relevant to show some solidarity with the guy's vision of Islam.

Back to avoid
I would say the one on Sex by Madonna. Why? Because she is propagating satanic values as a new sex goddess by Madonna. Why? Because she is propagating satanic values as a new sex goddess. Why? Because she is propagating satanic values as a new sex goddess.

The remaining of Bosnia. I think of the twenty first century. She's a lure to a lot of young innocent people as a role model. I've not read it myself.

De Manazir Alisan
Director, The Islamic Foundation
Two books I would recommend
Islamic Da'wah In The West, Muslim Shariah Activity and the Dynamics of Conversion to Islam by Larry Poston. This is a Christian perspective about the Muslims in the west, especially in America. It questions their future in the west and seems to come to the conclusion that it has to be a peaceful one. The author has analysed their situation objectively and the result is a very thorough researched book. The author has read most of the books published by Muslims. Islamic and the Economic challenge by Dr. M. Umer Chapra. It talks about what is Islamic economics and how Islamic economics fills the gap if there is need of an alternative model of economics. How Islamic economics fits in and how it resolves the complexities of the economic problems of the world.

Back to avoid
I haven't really thought about that issue because I have been editing most of the books we receive for review by the Foundation, and I can't recall anything I should ask people not to read. Nothing comes to mind right now.

Rashed Mohamed
journalist
The books I would recommend
Islamic Awakening between Rejection and Extremism by Yusuf al Qaradawi. The book breaks down the psychology of these two positions. It discusses what is extremism using hadiths as source material and comes to the conclusion that the best way is the middle path. It also discusses how to deal with the Qur'an and Sunnah in a balanced manner.

The other books I would recommend are Edward Said's Orientalism and Covering Islam. The first book is a break down of all that makes up orientalism, it is very interesting for the Muslim reader to know about these things. The second book deals with the coverage of Islam by the western press.

Back to avoid
There aren't any books I would categorically tell people not to read.

A New I.I.T. Edition
AL TAWHID:
Its Implications for Thought and Life
by Dr. Ismail Raji al Farsiqi

The work of al Shahid Dr. Ismail Raji al Farsiqi on the subject of al sawhid affords the reader not only a look at the axial doctrine of Islam, but also allows the reader to understand that doctrine from a number of different perspectives. Al Farsiqi's concept of al sawhid is rich in the depth of its erudition, abundant in its perceptions. Indeed, it is perhaps this work more than any other that reflects the profound and original thought of al Farsiqi.

Place your orders with I.I.T. distributors.

Muslim Information Services
233 Seven Sisters Road
London N4 2AD UK
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Fax: 071 272-3214

The Islamic Foundation
Markfield Dawah centre
Ratby Lane, Markfield
Leicester LE6 ORN UK
Tel: 0530 244-944/45
Fax: 0530 244-946

Books recommended (first choice):
- The Tao of Islam, by Fachiko Murata
- The Tarir Khams' English Mem, by Gabriel Ronay
- Fantasies of the Unconscious, and Essays in Psychoanalysis, by D.H. Lawrence
- Politics in an Arabia Oasis, by Madawi al-Rasheed
- On the Duties of Brotherhood, by Mukhtar Holland
- Uncivil Islam, by Roger Du Paquier
- Women and Islam, by Fatima Mernissi
- The Life of Muhammad, a translation of Ibn Ishaq's Sirat Rasul, by A. Guillaume
- The Kindness of Women, by J. B. Gallard
- Who needs an Islamic State? by Abdulwahhab Effendi
- The Holy Qur'an
- Music and singing in the light of Qur'an and Sunnah and the consensus of our pious predecessors, by Abu Jalal Mustapha Al Kanadi
- Jihad and Shahadat: Struggle and Martyrdom in Islam., by Ayatullah Takhtehzadeh, Ayatullah Mutamir Mushtafari and Dr Ali Shari'at
- Islamic Da'wah in the West, Muslim Shariah Activity and the Dynamics of Conversion, by Larry Poston
- Islamic Awakening between Rejection and Extremism, by Yusuf Qaradawi
PERSONALITY CHALLENGE

Are you a Muslim or just another 'Moslem' with an identity crisis and a chip on the shoulder large enough to come with its own frying pan and feed a family of six for two weeks? Are you truly in-tune with how you as a Muslim should be behaving in everyday situations that call for less than outright jihad?

For example, if you saw a Muslimah fall over in the snow, would you rush to her rescue or completely ignore her - because talking to Muslim women who wear hijab is totally out of order in your book? Does this make you sensitive, stupid or simply Islamically Correct?

Our specially designed "personality challenge" compiled by our very own psychoanalyst (if she gets the grant to do the course) will, if answered correctly and honestly, enable you to pinpoint and understand the real inner halal you!

All you have to do is say Bismillah and start answering the questions below. Choose the answer you think best suits your position. Add up the points you get for each answer to find out what you scored then proceed to the relevant section which will reveal to you, and anyone you may wish to share such information with, your inner personality. It may unlock the secrets of the soul you keep hidden even from yourself.

1. Picture this, you are in a Mosque when a new brother/sister comes along and begins to make wudu in an highly unusual manner. Do you:
   (a) Ignore them and forget about it.
   (b) Tell them to stop and ask them to do it correctly.

2. You're in your local halal butcher cleaning the grease from the change you've just got back when you notice that your halal butcher is not as halal as you expected. You realise that he also stocks cheap wine and a small quantity of pork sausages. Do you:
   (a) Find another "more halal" butcher to do business with, even if it means travelling for three days?
   (b) Have a quiet word with the butcher to let him know to withdraw your custom unless those offensive items are removed?
   (c) Ignore what you've just seen and carry on buying your meat there. After all it is ultimately the shop-owner's problem?

3. You are in your favourite kebab joint when some shabbily looking individual comes to your table begging for money. He says he is a Muslim and says he has a family of four to feed but doesn't have the money. Do you:
   (a) Give him the tip you were saving for the water?
   (b) Expect him and his family to join you for the meal?
   (c) Call the waiter and have him removed as he is ruining your evening?

4. You're driving Merrily along with your family when someone 'nasty' drives up behind you and makes you swerve dangerously. Do you:
   (a) Take a deep breath, smile gently and wave to them in a gentle pleasant manner - remembering what the doctors told you about your blood pressure?
   (b) Follow the car as far as you can and when you get the chance cut them up in revenge?
   (c) Calmly whisper "time for prayer" and casually leave your soul mate to it?

5. You're in a restaurant with your marriage partner. The bill arrives and to your horror your partner makes a terrible "scene" arguing about your blood pressure?
   (a) Calmly whisper "time for happiness" to your partner and calm down the situation?
   (b) Ignore everyone, throw down your prayer mat in the middle of the room and hit the floor in salaat?
   (c) Smile and exchange pleasantries for a short while and then mention you are going for your magrib prayer and invite anyone who may wish to join you?

6. You are late for a "trolley" dinner at a family friend's house where you expect to meet a prospective marriage partner. You come correct, friend out shopping in the high street with their two year old. The child spits a Ribena filled cartoon all over your new shalwar kameez, the one you had been saving for the occasion. Your clothes are stained all over. Do you:
   (a) Rush all the way home to change - even though it is two bus rides away?
   (b) Matter quietly "it is Allah's will" and continue your journey regardless?
   (c) Curse the brat and contemplate revenge?

7. Your parents, not being Muslim, have sent you off to college. You are out of the house for the first time you realise that the Friday 18th December 1992
   (a) Storm out in a furious rage and lock yourself in your bedroom, after making your parents say "bismillah" and enjoy the meal?
   (b) Publicly burn "The party goer's guide to having a good time" in your back garden to show that you mean business?
   (c) Play Yusuf Islaam's "Alphabet Song" very loudly after fajr prayers until the neighbours come begging for a truce?

8. A school boy stops you in the street and asks you for spare change saying he has lost his bus fare home. Do you:
   (a) Ignore them and forget about it.
   (b) Leave a note under the other car's wiper with your name, address and telephone number?
   (c) Give him the money without hesitation?

9. A school boy stops you in the street and asks you for spare change saying he has lost his bus fare home. Do you:
   (a) Ignore him and quickly walk into the nearest newsagents to bay your word a Mars bar?
   (b) Leave a note which says: "You are quite obviously out of order in your book. Does this make you sensitive, stupid or simply Islamically Correct?"
   (c) Give him the money without hesitation?

10. While strolling down the High Road looking for a halal dinner kebab place you spot somebody you know who is quite obviously out of order in your book. Does this make you sensitive, stupid or simply Islamically Correct?
   (a) Think this is a really stupid quiz for a brilliant quality Muslim weekly, and go and read the diary?
   (b) Ignore everyone, throw down your prayer mat in the middle of the room and hit the floor in salaat?
   (c) Ignore them and forget about it?

11. You pick up the phone extension to call a friend but accidentally eavesdrop on a conversation between your mother and her friend. They are obviously having a bad gossip about a third party. Do you:
   (a) Listen in, then go and tell your friends?
   (b) Put down the phone and tell your father?
   (c) Leave a copy of your favourite hadith book on the kitchen table open at the section on backbiting?

12. While backing your car into a tight parking space you hit the car behind and smash the lights. Do you:
   (a) Think that it is a really stupid quiz for a brilliant quality Muslim weekly, and go and read the diary?
   (b) Leave a note that says: "Hello there, that's not my car. I've lost my bus fare home. Could you please put your details here so I can phone you and get it fixed?"
   (c) Leave a note which says: "I'm really sorry about that - I'm not sure who's car it was but I'll definitely pay for the damage and get it fixed?"

13. A non-Muslim friend has extended an invitation to you to a Christmas party at work. Do you:
   (a) Accept gratefully and wish everyone a "Merry Christmas", and spend the rest of the day humming "Jingle Bells"?
   (b) Refuse to accept the extra money unless your boss agrees to remove the word "Christmas" from the wage packet?
   (c) Think this is a really stupid quiz for a brilliant quality Muslim weekly, and go and read the diary?

14. Your parents, not being Muslim, have sent you off to college. You are out of the house for the first time you realise that the Friday 18th December 1992
Shahzad Sheikh

Christmas is all about goodwill. It's about snowmen and Father Christmas. Decked out pine trees and jolly carols. It's about presents and gifts to one another.

Bah humbug! As far as I am concerned just wish your neighbour a Merry Christmas and forget the rest. Let's get away - out of money - and for Eid.

Nah, Christmas is about watching television, going to the cinema or getting some reading done. Just look at all those books piling up in the corner there that you've promised yourself you'll read.

So what's on the box? Well quite a lot. But more interesting is what's not. Notable by its absence is The Wizard of Oz.

Bond 007!

Wonderland, might just be able to afford the high cost of cinema action on a massive screen, taking in the sound from your feet to. Don't worry, this is unlikely to be a very annoying one. Much is this unlikely to be a very

annoyance of Mother Superior. It's wild, funny, implausible - how could the parents be dumb enough to lose him twice, how could he possibly even board the wrong plane, and how in the hustling mass of NY's Christmas population could he come across the same pair of robbers again? Well never mind all that, it's sure to be a mega-success so go and enjoy it. Chaplin. Sir Richard Attenborough made Gandhi, now he's making Christmas. Does he ever learn? Attenborough? This is no less than an epic celebration of the rags-to-riches life and the comic genius of Charlie Chaplin. Who wants to see a movie about a silly tramp? Remember they said: "who wants to see a movie about a little man in a cloak?" The British comic was once the most famous man in the world and still regarded as the screen's greatest mime and clown. Robert Downey plays Chaplin, Anthony Hopkins narrates, Dan Aykroyd also stars and Chaplin's real daughter, Geraldine, plays his mother.

The Muppet Christmas Carol. If you thought that the Muppets had died along with their creator Jim Henson and once Disney had bought them up, think again! They play out the story of Charles Dickens' Scrooge - one of the most popular Christmas stories of all - and guess who plays Scrooge? Not no Gonzoo, but human actor Michael Caine. "Every one of my friends did The Muppet Show except me," he says. "So when you're at Christmas time... Attenborough? This is no less than an epic celebration of the rags-to-riches life and the comic genius of Charlie Chaplin. Who wants to see a movie about a silly tramp? Remember they said: "who wants to see a movie about a little man in a cloak?" The British comic was once the most famous man in the world and still regarded as the screen's greatest mime and clown. Robert Downey plays Chaplin, Anthony Hopkins narrates, Dan Aykroyd also stars and Chaplin's real daughter, Geraldine, plays his mother.

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Channel 4
0.30pm
Peter Greenaway's characteristically quirky view of Charles Darwin is the first of two documentaries being shown over Christmas. Much of Darwin's notebooks have been annotated by famous biologists who have read them, giving rise to new ideas and insights. A further six programmes will be shown on PBS from January to March, making up an exciting series.

TUE 22 DEC
Channel 4
5.30pm
A further chance to look back to 1992's great sporting moments, and the achievement of the BBC Sports Personality of the Year. With Desmond Lynam and Steve Rider.

CHRISTMAS DAY
Channel 4
11.30pm
This is a look at this year's Formula 1 World Championship and British hero of the race track. Nigel "I'm so bloody disappointed" Mansell. Having fulfilled his dream of the Championship, however, has he quit the glorious F1 scene and headed across the Atlantic for a lucrative Indy racing career? Silly question really.

ITV
5.30pm
Another inspirational programme, adapted from Roald Dahl's children's story. Now sadly deceased, Dahl once dismissed expensive film adaptations as trash and stated that it was unnecessary and insulting. In this film with David Jason's voice, young, orphaned Sophie finds herself naked in public and in the death (the natural kind!) hasn't caught the voices.

Channel 4
11.30pm
An hour-long special edition of the show featuring actors and singers who have been nominated in the past year - in Europe alone. With Peter Ustinov and the London Chamber Orchestra.

BOXING DAY
Channel 4
10.20pm
A special edition of the show hosted by Mike Smith taking a very look at the last 12 months of showbusiness events, from Michael Jackson's Dangerous nose and Madonna's Erotica Sex, to Michael Douglas' very basic baldness.

Channel 4
0.30pm
A special edition of the show hosted by Tony Robinson takes a bold and challenging look at the Christmas story, shown in five fine fifteen minute slots filmed in the Holy Land. He explores the story in the political turmoil and bloodshed of a period when Herod reigned supreme. Sweeping away stereotypes, he tells two stories, one with the birth of a great leader, Jesus, and the events surrounding the death of another, Herod. Both bore the title "King of the Jews".

CHRISTMAS EVE
Channel 4
11.30pm
The UN "safe haven" for the Kurds in Turkey expires at the end of 1992. In his latest programme, John Satchel looks back at the turbulent year and questions the future of the monarchy.

BCC1
Visions from the Past: An old family whose life is overshadowed by political oppression. Mohammed, a blacksmith's son, is a housecleaner in Tel Aviv while his wife and family live in a refugee camp. But everything is about to change after the Gulf War.

BCC1
That's Showbusiness New Year's Eve show
11.30pm
A special show presented by Michael Grade, exploring the world of showbusiness from its roots to the present day. It features interviews with the world's most famous entertainers and stars, including some of the biggest names in music, film and television. The show looks at the rise and fall of various eras in showbusiness, from the heyday of vaudeville to the present day. It also examines the impact of technology on the entertainment industry, and how it has transformed the way we watch and enjoy shows. The show is a must-see for anyone interested in the history of showbusiness.

NEW YEAR'S DAY
Channel 4
One Family: The Race for Bread
4.00pm
An intimate portrait of a Palestinian family living in a refugee camp in a small village in the West Bank, suffering from political oppression. Mohammad, a blacksmith's son, is a housecleaner in Tel Aviv while his family and live in a refugee camp. But everything is about to change after the Gulf War.

BCC1
Dreams
1.15pm
The lovable record breaker, tap dancer, singer, musician, has been entertaining people for nearly 50 years. But may he not have seen this Christmas as he has been battling against lung cancer for the last eight months. He invites the cameras into his home to celebrate the special day.

BCC1
The Natural Olympian
10.45pm
Speed Stamina and Strength: Olympic athletes strive for them, animals compete for them. In this film with David Jason's voice, young, orphaned Sophie finds herself naked in public and in the death (the natural kind!) hasn't caught the voices.

Channel 4
7.15pm
First of a number of programmes serving to remind us of the events of the year just about to depart. This award-winning series presents an end-of-year review of how the papers behaved in 1992. Except for Q news, not very well we'd say.

BCC1
Light the Darkness
10.20am
This is a reminder of the international conventions designed to protect the innocent victims of war. They have all been broken in the past year - in Europe alone. With Peter Ustinov and the London Chamber Orchestra.

MON 23 DEC
Channel 4
11.30pm
This is the Beeb's gift to us all, a special Christmas edition of the hugely popular comedy starring David Jason. This is the Day

10.15pm
A special edition of the show hosted by Gordon Clough. It features recollections of the popular series and contributions from Bill Cosby, Danny DeVito and Harry Secombe and choirs. But some dissatisfied performers from both.

Channel 4
3.30pm
This is the Day

11.30pm
An appreciation of the career of screen and stage legend Charlie Chaplin. It includes clips from his classic films, interviews and encounters with countless Chaplin impersonators.

BCC1
Another chance to look back to 1992's great sporting moments, and the achievement of the BBC Sports Personality of the Year. With Desmond Lynam and Steve Rider.

Channel 4
1 Christmas Carol
11.30pm
Oscar-winning animated version of Charles Dickens' classic tale, brought to life by British animator Richard Williams who is best known for his work on Who Framed Roger Rabbit? and is a Muslim. Using 19th century ideas, Williams creates a fine backdrop for actors such as Michael Redgrave, Alastair Sim, Michael Caine and Joan Sim, who provide the voices.

BCC2
Motor Racing
1.20pm
Highlights of the 1992 Essex British Touring Car Championship which reached a thrilling climax at Silverstone. Introduced by Steve Rider with commentary by Murray Walker - of course.

BCC2
Paralympics
4.55pm
Highly inspirational stuff the three weeks after the Olympic Games finished in Barcelona, the city was host to the ninth Paralympics, a celebration of the remarkable ability of people to overcome their disabilities and compete in professional sport. Helen Rollason reviews the event.

Channel 4
Happy Days:
Residential Special
5.10pm
This is the first of two programmes which will be shown over Christmas. There are still some fans of Fonzi, Richie and the other characters from the popular comedy series set in 1950's which are provided with a show specially created for Christmas. This is the Beeb's gift to us all, a special Christmas edition of the hugely popular comedy starring David Jason. In this film with David Jason's voice, young, orphaned Sophie finds herself naked in public and in the death (the natural kind!) hasn't caught the voices.

BCC2
How about a Lift, Old Boy?
7.30pm
A rare treat for motorists, enthusiasts young or old. In 1955, Sirling Moss won the Mille Miglia, a 1000-mile race through Italy. This summer, 300 vintage cars took part in a rally over the original route, and Moss drove the winning Mercedes. His navigator, sports-writer Tony Woodgate, joins him.

BCC2
The Comic Strip Presents: Wild Turkey
10.30pm
When Jim and Sue buy a turkey for Christmas dinner they discover to their horror that it is free and unthanked but dangerously alive. They then hire a hostage and demand they release the turkey, only to have it made by vegetarians! With Ruby Wax and Jennifer Saunders.

Channel 4
Songs and Memories of Ten
11.00pm
An hour-long special edition of the show featuring actors and singers of the past year - in Europe alone. With Peter Ustinov and the London Chamber Orchestra.

Channel 4
God on the Box
11.30pm
A look at "holly hour" and the television programmes which have filled it. When most Christians think of religious programmes, they think of Harry Sootime and choirs. But some programmes in the past were ghastly, and some curiously sanctimonious. Maybe we could learn a thing or two from their mistakes.

Channel 4
The Aflai salutes Sidney Poitier
11.05pm
How right that! The American Film Institute presented a Lifetime Achievement award to a black man. Still he needed a career spanning 40 years to get it. Hosted by Harry Belafonte, this programme includes some of the most memorable moments of his career, with contributions from Bill Cosby, Danny DeVito and David Hemmings, the actor who plays Malcolm X, in the new movie.

Radio
20.30pm
A BBC2 documentary on the History of the Universe, hosted by a panel of experts. The programme explores the origins of the universe, the development of life on Earth, and the evolution of human society. It features interviews with leading scientists and historians, and includes a range of visual effects and animations to bring the subject to life.

MON 24 DEC
Channel 4
Anchors
12.00pm
As featured in Q these weeks ago, in the first of four daily programmes, the semi-finalists in a national ghazal competition are provided with a show specially created for Christmas. This is the Beeb's gift to us all, a special Christmas edition of the hugely popular comedy starring David Jason. In this film with David Jason's voice, young, orphaned Sophie finds herself naked in public and in the death (the natural kind!) hasn't caught the voices.

Channel 4
Dinner with the Queen
1.15pm
An hour-long special edition of the show featuring actors and singers of the past year - in Europe alone. With Peter Ustinov and the London Chamber Orchestra.

BCC1
This is the Day

11.00pm
Host presented a Lifetime Achievement Award to a black man. Still he needed a career spanning 40 years to get it. Hosted by Harry Belafonte, this programme includes some of the most memorable moments of his career, with contributions from Bill Cosby, Danny DeVito and David Hemmings, the actor who plays Malcolm X, in the new movie.

Channel 4
Review 82:
That was the year that was
10.15pm
Bill Clinton wins, John Major wishes he hadn't, Royal family problems, Yadda Yadda ethnic cleansing, war in Somalia, rioting in LA, fascism in Germany, Olympics, Earth Summits, and recession in Israel. The BBC Foreign Editor John Simpson reminds us of a year we'd all rather forget.

BCC1
Review 83:
This is the Day

11.30pm
A BBC2 documentary on the History of the Universe, hosted by a panel of experts. The programme explores the origins of the universe, the development of life on Earth, and the evolution of human society. It features interviews with leading scientists and historians, and includes a range of visual effects and animations to bring the subject to life.

BCC1
The New Year's Day Special

12.00pm
As featured in Q these weeks ago, in the first of four daily programmes, the semi-finalists in a national ghazal competition are provided with a show specially created for Christmas. This is the Beeb's gift to us all, a special Christmas edition of the hugely popular comedy starring David Jason. In this film with David Jason's voice, young, orphaned Sophie finds herself naked in public and in the death (the natural kind!) hasn't caught the voices.

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Radio
20.30pm
A BBC2 documentary on the History of the Universe, hosted by a panel of experts. The programme explores the origins of the universe, the development of life on Earth, and the evolution of human society. It features interviews with leading scientists and historians, and includes a range of visual effects and animations to bring the subject to life.
Have you been to Kew Gardens recently?

Despite the fact that the Holy Qur'an is full of verses calling upon mankind to look at nature as one way of appreciating Allah, few Muslims give themselves a break. The festive period is an ideal time to visit a place which is full of nature and trees that are not of the delights of Kew in all weathers and seasons. There is also a grand roundup of the Pagoda and Orangery dating from 1762. There is a grand old oak tree all of three hundred years old. There are looking splendid right now with gorgeous colour leaves ranging from brilliant orange and red to acid yellow. Viburnum farrieri is in full bloom with clusters of pale pink blossom set against dark wood, its creamy scent wafting across the lawns. Amalricus, again a bright pink flower, is looking cheeky set amongst the liquidamber clumps of rosemary outdo all other species of herb for growth, whilst Michaelmas daisies (mauve and purple), stand forlornly in massive square beds that until recently housed gourds, sunflowers and specimen tomato plants.

There is something for everyone at Kew. Children will marvel at the 38 kg (84 lb) swimming lazily in the Princess of Wales Conservatory, whilst the Marine Palace display (also in the Palm House), has a vast collection of tropical fish set amongst sea anemones, coral and various seaweeds. Huge ferns, date palms and bananas plants thrive in the heat and humidity of the Temperance House, with lilies winding their way skywards and giant bamboo casting their shadow over fuchsia and begonia. There is even an early hint of camellia japonica whose shiny dark green foliage provides a backdrop for pristine white periwinkle. I urge you particularly those who live in tower blocks and flats to make the effort whatever the weather, and let loose your children to sample the delights that Allah has bestowed upon us. Introduce them to the wonders of His creation, as we are all too clearly starved of beauty in our everyday lives. I recommend Kew as the finest pick-me-up when one feels troubled or depressed. One's natural perspective and sense of proportion is quickly restored, one feels relaxed and invigorated. Throughout the Golden Era in Judith, the mentally ill were able to lead sweet uneventful lives amongst beautiful set gardens, with fountains tinkling in the background. The Holy Qur'an was recited, bringing comfort and relief to troubled minds. It is of vital importance, therefore, that the world's premier botanic garden is supported by our visits, as their contribution to the detailed study of plant life is vital to the earth's future and man's well-being.

We're not all crazy sadists!

Film characters such as Hannibal of the Hannibal, Silence of the Lambs and One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest are distorting the public's image of psychiatric treatment according to the Royal College of Psychiatrists. Professor Bruce Pitt, public education director of the college said the cinema's passion for portraying the "mad" as sad, sad or sex polyunsaturated margarines. The Medical Research Council behaviour, and the word "lunacy" is foods do need minimum cooking to avoid shrinks seduce patients of relatives. Then butter and milk protects against blamed on the phases of the moon. The destroyed, whereas "fresh" food could be investigate for their own purposes. Vitamin C content of fresh This discovery, if it is fact and not based made by the Medical Research Council epidemicology unit in Cardiff were seized on by the Butler Council and leaked to the papers. The 10-year study of 900 men made headlines in February last year when it said that men who drank a pint of milk a day had fewer heart attacks, and that men who buttered their bread had half the risk of heart disease as those using polyunsaturated margarines. The Medical Research Council has now ceased the £600,000 annual funding of the unit following "commercial involvement" and an inquiry which criticised the scientific methods used. There was also concern that serious research was "hijacked" by commercial interests particularly when it is suggested that the advice to reduce fat buildings or machinery, This is the chief modern problem - sadists or softies an inquiry which criticised the scientific ever created. Variations in results however If companies spend a dollar on research it is of vital importance, therefore, that the world's premier it shrinks seduce patients of relatives. Then butter and milk protects against blamed on the phases of the moon. The destroyed, whereas "fresh" food could be investigate for their own purposes. Vitamin C content of fresh This discovery, if it is fact and not based made by the Medical Research Council epidemicology unit in Cardiff were seized on by the Butler Council and leaked to the papers. The 10-year study of 900 men made headlines in February last year when it said that men who drank a pint of milk a day had fewer heart attacks, and that men who buttered their bread had half the risk of heart disease as those using polyunsaturated margarines. The Medical Research Council has now ceased the £600,000 annual funding of the unit following "commercial involvement" and an inquiry which criticised the scientific methods used. There was also concern that serious research was "hijacked" by commercial interests particularly when it is suggested that the advice to reduce fat buildings or machinery, This is the chief modern problem - sadists or softies an inquiry which criticised the scientific ever created. Variations in results however If companies spend a dollar on research it is of vital importance, therefore, that the world's premier it
Tuesday 22

25

Winter Festivals (exhibition) Articles of different religious traditions celebrate winter festivals. Open: Tue-Sat 10am-5.30pm, Sun 11am-5pm. Venue: Meet at 136 Stapleton Road, London SW7.

Wednesday 23

6.00-7.00pm - Arabic Language and Quranic Studies Group Free weekly lecture and refreshments served. Venue: Meet at 136 Stapleton Road, London SW7. Contact: (071 938 8008/8080) Tube: South Kensington, information desk.

Venue: The Science Museum, Exhibition Road, London SW7.

11 am, 1pm, 3pm on Sat, 1.30pm, 3pm on Sun; each session lasts 30-45 mins.

26

Saturday 26

11.00-12.30pm - Islamic Women's Association Weekly lecture presented by Imam Arif. Starting time subject to Maghrib prayers. Admission free. Venue: 302 Uxbridge Road, Shepherds Bush, London. (071 466 2402)

Main Study Circle Imam M M Talib will guide the second weekly lecture organised by The Shepherds Bush Mosque Islamic Study Circle. Topics include: current politics and an explanation of a part of the Quran (20 mins). Special talk: a talk on Islamic law. Practical exercises: organising lectures; writing, telephone calls; Islamic Sport; first aid; fitness training, karate, etc. (20 mins). Starting time subject to Maghrib prayers. Min only. Admission free. Venue: 302 Uxbridge Road, Shepherds Bush, London. (071 466 2402)

Friday 25

5.00-7.00pm - Islamic Ecology & Religions at Work Weekly lecture presented by Muhammad Ghafran. Starting time subject to Maghrib prayers. Admission free. Venue: The Committee Room, Islamic Cultural Centre, 146 Park Road, London NW8 7RG. (071 724 2883)

10.30-11.45am - Arabic Classes The Wealthy School is giving a new class for new Muslims. The especially designed class for those wishing to advance their Islamic knowledge will be taught by a scholar from the renowned Al-Azhar University, Cairo. Enquiries: Dr. Salah (020 254 670).

12.30-2.00pm - Arabic Language and Quranic Studies Group Free weekly lecture. Starting time subject to Maghrib prayers. Min only. Admission free. Venue: 302 Uxbridge Road, Shepherds Bush, London. (071 466 2402)

1.00-2.00pm - Islamic Ecology & Religions at Work The renowned Al-Azhar University, Cairo. Enquiries: Dr. Salah (020 254 670).

3.00-4.45pm - Arabic Language (Spoken & Written) Circle Organised by The Shepherds Bush Mosque Islamic Study Circle. Starting time subject to Islamic Study Circle. Female Only. Admission free. Venue: 302 Uxbridge Road, Shepherds Bush, London. (071 466 2402)

Sisters Islamic Study Circle. Starting time subject to Maghrib prayers. Admission free. Venue: 302 Uxbridge Road, Shepherds Bush, London. (071 466 2402)

Thursday 24

29

Wednesday 30

7.00-8.00pm - Essential Tenets of Islam Weekly lecture presented by Aamer Jardar. Starting time subject to Maghrib prayers. Min only. Admission free. Venue: 302 Uxbridge Road, Shepherds Bush, London. (071 466 2402)

Friday 31

5:00-7:00pm - Islamic Ecology & Religions at Work Last week's session continued. Venue: The Committee Room, Islamic Cultural Centre, 146 Park Road, London NW8 7RG. (071 724 2883)

10.30-11.45am - Arabic Classes The Wealthy School is giving a new class for new Muslims. The especially designed class for those wishing to advance their Islamic knowledge will be taught by a scholar from the renowned Al-Azhar University, Cairo. Enquiries: Dr. Salah (020 254 670).

Wednesday 6

Friday 7

Readers are encouraged to donate these items which will be sent to the refugees in the former Yugoslavia. This collection will take place on the top of the bus. The Women's Society of the Muslim Women's Association, 146 Park Road, London NW8 7RG. (071 724 3823)

Enquiries: Sister Yasmin or Leila 081 888 0146.

Enquiries: Black Women's Network, Box 32, 100 Upper Street, London N1 1RQ. (081 894 2507).

Crescent Relief International

Enquiries: Black Women's Network, 302 Uxbridge Road, Shepherds Bush, London. (071 466 2402)

Thursday 27

Sisters Islamic Study Circle. Starting time subject to Maghrib prayers. Min only. Admission free. Venue: 302 Uxbridge Road, Shepherds Bush, London. (071 466 2402)

Money to buy essential medicines. Dried food, such as rice, sago, lentils, corn, vegetables and all food items must be packed in a box (10am-4pm) at 481 Whippendell Road, Wirral, Wirral, for the day after. Fruits are desperately needed to contribute to the cost of the trip that will transport the much-needed supplies. Cheques should be made payable to: Balkans Appeal

Balkan Refugee Appeal is appealing for blankets, winter clothing, medicaments (cough mixtures, aspirins, antiseptic, vasoconstrictor, etc) and food which can be left (10am-4pm) at 481 Whippendell Road, Wirral, Wirral, for the day after. Fruits are desperately needed to contribute to the cost of the trip that will transport the much-needed supplies. Cheques should be made payable to: Balkans Appeal

Guidance: West London Islamic Cultural Centre, 10 Hampdon Road Tel: 081 348 7958 England Fax: 081 888 3926

 hacking any five floors packed with scientific inventions Air Rising is a short course on how to make and fly a model hot air balloon. Workshops take place at 1.30pm and 4.30pm during the week. Tickets available on the day from the information desk.

Venue: The Science Museum, Exhibition Road, London SW7.

(071 328 0500/0560) Tube: South Kensington, information desk.

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Mother and child
Somalia: 1992
**M**oney Christmas. Contemporary Christmas, particularly the commercial one, is based on sound marketing research and strategies. This means planning ahead. Therefore work has already started in earnest planning the top seller for next year's Christmas. Looks like its going to be a computer game called Barcode Battler. It already has taken Japan, where it was invented, by storm, out-selling hand held computer games. It reads bar codes, found on almost every consumer product, converting them into “power points” which players use against opponents. So it’s alright for the shops to plan business to plan for tomorrow but when a Muslim does the same he/she is called a “Namazie” or worse. What a crap world!

In German they do things a bit different - Vorsprung durch Technik. The supermarket chain Aldi has expanded its range of seasonal merchandise. Now you can drop into your trolley-load of Christmas-only goodies a load of Christmas-only goodies a £40m film about Spiderman in now in incredible Hulk, Dr Strange and Daredevil, a blind crime-fighting lawyer. Give me Beauty and the Beast anytime.

Still in Bonn and we come across a DIY kit for investigating if your son is becoming a Nazi skinhead. German newspaper Bild offers anxious parents some subtle signs: “Your child keeps getting his hair cut short. He abandons his denim jacket for a green or black bomber. He asks you to sew Iron Crosses on his clothes.” Get the picture? Don’t forbid anything, advises Bild. “Keep your language clean and don’t make jokes about foreigners”. If your offspring starts singing One Day The World Will Learn That Adolf Hitler Was Right, says Bild, “talk to him, enrol him in a sports club... invite some of his new friends around”.

Spain’s answer to the how-to books on the art of loving, *Un Karma Sutra*, is about to be published by Siruela. Written by a Moor expelled from Spain in 1609, the work was discovered accidentally by a Puerto Rican researcher, Lucer Lopez-Barreal, who was investigating the Arab influence on St John of the Cross. She found the work in the Royal Academy of History in Madrid. The Morisco, according to Lopez-Barreal, proposes a “spiritual eroticism.” “For the Morisco, sex leads to God,” she says. “That is why he interlaces the different aspects of sexual contact with prayers and sayings from the Qur’an.” Now, now, Shaikh Darsh: what about this book?

Hollywood is going comic. First it was Superman. Then came Batman. And now it is Spiderman. Bankrupt of heroes in real life Hollywood is turning to comic books in its search of potential box office films. A £40m film about Spiderman in now in the making. Other films in the pipeline are about The Incredible Hulk, Dr Strange and Daredevil, a blind crime-fighting lawyer. Give me Beauty and the Beast anytime.

HELP THOSE AFFECTED IN THE AFTERMATH OF BABRI MOSQUE DESTRUCTION

- 1,500 killed.
- Many houses burnt, thousands homeless.
- Help rebuild their lives.

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You can also donate by credit card by phoning: 071-609 4425

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for Muslim Aid India

Name: ____________________________
Address: ____________________________
Post Code ____________________________

Published by Q news International Ltd., Cumberland House, 80 Scrubs Lane, London NW10 6RF Tel: 081 960 5667 Fax: 081 968 1935. Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office. ISSN 0965 3384