

# AFTAB

FALL 2010

COVER PHOTO BY JONATHAN BREWDA

**AFTAB MAGAZINE** EDITION 5 FALL 2010  
CO-EDITOR IN CHIEF ATIF WASTI

TABASSUM RAHMAN

LAYOUT DESIGNER ALI SHAH

NYU CSALS ADVISOR STEPHEN POLNIASZEK



PHOTO BY SHYEMA AZAM

## AFTAB: RAYS OF LIGHT

The Islamic Center at New York University's publication which serves as an outlet for creative writing, poetry, art, and other articles. This is a publication through which members of the New York University community can exchange ideas, share their literary and artistic talents, and communicate on the topic of Islam as well as the broad range of issues facing the Muslim community.



<i>WHITNEY TERRILL: The Indifferent Witnesses</i>	<b>4</b>
<i>IRAM ALI: A Collective Eulogy</i>	<b>4</b>
<i>THE RASKOL KHAN: 'Blood' (Lyrics)</i>	<b>6</b>
<i>AAMIR SIDDIQUI: The Game</i>	<b>7</b>
<i>IRAM ALI: The Death of Apollo</i>	<b>8</b>
<i>AYHAN ASLAM: My Creator</i>	<b>10</b>
<i>RANIA MUSTAFA: My Hero?</i>	<b>12</b>
<i>LISA SHAH: Stand Up</i>	<b>13</b>
<i>TAZMIN H. UDDIN: Hijab</i>	<b>14</b>
<i>GARETH BRYANT: American-Trees!!!</i>	<b>15</b>
<i>DANIEL IQBAL: The Adhan</i>	<b>16</b>
<i>GARETH BRYANT: The Sunset!!!</i>	<b>18</b>
<i>GARETH BRYANT: The Sunrise!!!</i>	<b>18</b>

*Thank you to all the contributors.*







PHOTO BY JONATHAN BREWDA

**'BLOOD' (LYRICS)**

Bismillahi Rahmani Rahim  
I'm on a mission to unify my deen

It's the vision I distilled into a mission  
The sun stands still while our cities do the twisting

\*\*\*\*\*

Come brothers just love one another don't judge one another don't blood one another  
Come brothers just love one another don't judge one another don't blood one another  
Come brothers just love one another don't judge one another don't blood one another  
Come brothers just love one another don't judge one another don't blood one another

Bow down with those who pray  
Rasulullah alaihi salaam say  
Don't kill a man unless he steps in your face don't kill it's a waste don't kill it ain't safe

Don't kill a man who follows Islam's way  
Don't kill a man when he kneels and prostrates  
Come brothers just love one another don't judge one another don't blood one another

For what sins does the poor man pay?  
Tomorrow is the end is what the poor men say  
Sorrow and offence is what the poor men take so don't judge or nudge a sense out of a  
poor man's faith

Give of what you love for only Allah's sake, every  
Day I like to pray and do what Allah said  
Patience and gratitude Muhammad's way so love for all creation is our policy

Come brothers just love one another don't judge one another don't blood one another  
Come brothers just love one another don't judge one another don't blood one another  
Come brothers just love one another don't judge one another don't blood one another  
Come brothers just love one another don't judge one another don't blood one another

Patiently waiting for Allah's grace to elevate me, I  
Break into fates and capers that take me to meditations  
Above denominations I rapture many stations I capture battle flags and have them  
wrapped up in the basement I'm

Racing for a space to plant a garden estate to raise a  
Race of many faithful while we war with the state, lions  
Roar for a plate the pride soaring in chase they find the weakest in pace wasted leaking  
out the side of his

Face, and so, that's how it goes hear me  
If you are a mole fear me you will not be whole nearly  
Raise walls, but my people can we face God? It's one ummah one blood and one Islam!

So listen to the lyrics of this song go  
Fearless if the spirit of its wrong it's written on the  
Walls dreaming of the sphere before the fall sort of metaphorical all in all we hear the call

Come brothers just love one another don't judge one another don't blood one another  
Come brothers just love one another don't judge one another don't blood one another  
Come brothers just love one another don't judge one another don't blood one another  
Come brothers just love one another don't judge one another don't blood one another



Aamir Siddiqui  
**THE GAME**

This is my Jummah game.  
During the khutbah  
I look at each man entering the prayer hall to find my father.  
One man has his stooped shoulders  
Another has his wispy white hair.  
My father isn't coming.  
These episodes fracture into pieces  
Slowly drifting into the chasm.  
Maybe smoothing the jagged edges  
But never filling it.  
The emptiness for a long time was difficult to bear  
Coming to Jummah has provided an ethereal connection.  
This one has his shuffle.  
That green shirt looks familiar.  
Your fathers now fill the space with fragmented memories  
Now that he is gone, this game is all I have.

**THE DEATH OF APOLLO**

His appearance is perfection. He is a varsity baseball player and has the perfect physique. It is as though his biceps are purposely formed on every shirt he wears. No girl fantasizes about him like they fantasize about the other guys. The other guys fit their descriptions of what is “normal.” He doesn’t. He is socially awkward and keeps to his own little group of friends. All of them are labeled “losers.” I don’t want to be seen talking with him. That would be, as the common high school cliché goes, social suicide.

\*

One night, I am sitting at my computer and see that he is also online—of course, he added me as a friend on a social networking site. I would never do that. Ever. Anyway, I start talking with him. Eventually, our conversation begins to get interesting.

“I keep my friends in striations,” he says.

“Striations?”

“Yeah, you know there’s the sun. Then the planets go out in striations, but the first striation is always empty. And girls never get past the fifth unless I have some romantic interest in them.”

“LOL.”

“You LOL too much,” he responds.

“I like to laugh, is there a problem with that?”

“Oh, no. Of course not.”

The conversation goes on for at least three more hours. The way I imagine him, he is a robot sitting in front of his computer with no sign of wear from the clock that reads 2AM. He is always in control of his behavior and words. Nothing can penetrate him and neither does he allow anything to come near him. I try to end the conversation with a “good night.”

“There’s no need to be so formal,” he replies.

“Well, I’ll be formal and you can say bye however you like.”

“Alright, peace.”

\*

The next day, I am walking to school as usual when I come by the house on the corner. The blue paint is peeling, the screen door is holding on to the hinges for dear life, and a few of the

tiles that are supposed to be on the roof, now lay in a pile in the front yard. I slowly walk along the sidewalk trying to get a glimpse of the darkness inside. A light turns on.

“Why did you turn on the light?” a frail woman in worn out pajamas yells. I can only see her greying hair and wrinkly arm clutching a wooden cane. “We don’t have enough to pay for the bills yet!”

“Who do you think you are to talk to me like that?” yells a deep voice, “It’s not like you’re the one paying the bills. I’m the one who is working to support this family! I am the one who is taking care of that grandchild of yours!”

“He’s your sister’s son!”

“Well, he’s not my son!”

My pace begins to quicken as the yells become muffled sounds in the background. I know who lives there. I can’t believe he was able to sit on the computer and talk with me for hours while all of this is going on in his house. I hurry to school so that I am not late. I know he’s always on time to class. Maybe it’s to avoid the sight of the crumbling house by getting out at dawn.

\*

In school, there is not a hint of recognition in his eyes as I walk into class and take a seat across from him. Occasionally, however, there are short glances toward my direction. I quickly look away if he sees me staring. No one thinks it is polite to stare regardless of the reason.

During lunch he sits with his friends in the corner of a circular room. The way I imagine it, the corner exists in his mind. He is a complicated person with a complex personality, I don’t think anyone knows what is going on in his mind, not even his friends. I want to know what is going on in his mind, but I do not ask. How does his uncle treat him? Why does he live with his grandmother? Where is his mother? I get up and go to class. The thoughts are left like unwanted orphans.

\*

A few months have passed since the last time I talked to the socially awkward guy. I still see him, I still pass by his house, I still notice his lack of attention. I don’t say anything. He seems really controlled for a guy going through so much. I don’t give it much thought.

\*

(continued on page 10)





PHOTO BY RANIA ASHRAF

A month has gone by. As I am sitting in math class, the usual voice comes on overhead.

“Good morning everyone,” the coordinator of student activities says, “I would like everyone to please have a moment of silence for the recent death of a student.”

My heart begins to beat loudly into my ears as I frantically look around. He’s not in class. Everyone is looking at each other. They search for the possible secrets that someone’s eyes may hide. No one says a word for the whole minute.

“Thank you. Please rise for the pledge of allegiance,” the voice continues.

For the first time, my legs are too weak to hold me up. I stay seated. More students than usual get up to say the pledge. I was always the one who got up no matter what. Not today. I can’t.

After class, I hear everyone talking about him. It is as though he was her best friend or his lunch buddy. They all pretend like they care when they didn’t look twice at him during his life. He was the awkward guy, no one cared about him. He was reserved despite his strength. He was reserved despite his hardships. He was reserved despite them and their jokes.

“I think he was having family problems or something. I don’t know. It’s really sad,” says a girl trying to get the attention of a guy who is also on the baseball team.

“Yeah, it is really sad,” he replies.

I don’t say anything. The story isn’t for me to tell. I didn’t know him.

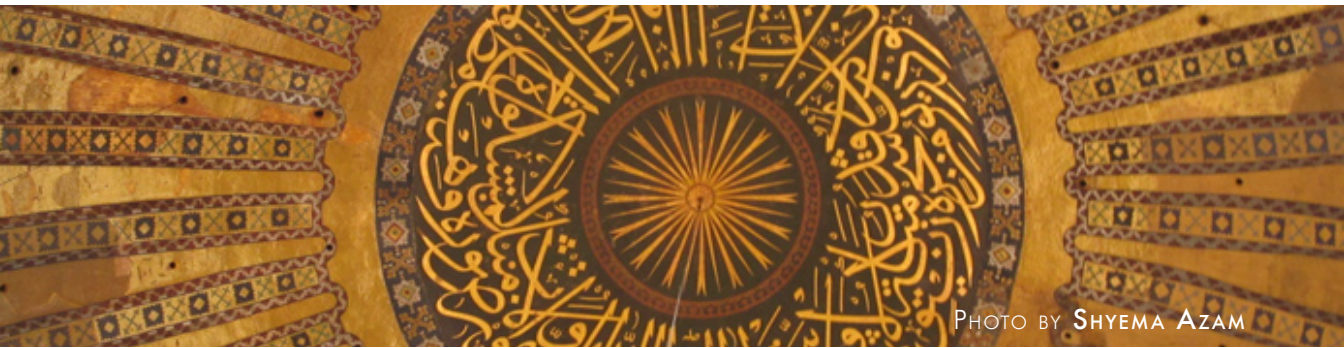


PHOTO BY SHYEMA AZAM

Ayhan Aslam

## MY CREATOR

Contemplation of his reflection  
leads me to prostration  
I feel him rescue me from these prisons  
that know no boundaries  
lonesome lingers of lust  
leave long lost labels  
as I lay my head to rest  
descending into seven satisfactory heavens  
yet I levitate  
levitating  
levitation  
punctured bruises pressing  
and pounding on my forehead  
from his prickling  
yet delicate  
and penetrating  
yet gentle kisses  
that leave saintly stains.

On bended knees I pray  
transmitting  
transliterations translating in trances  
melodies solemn and dire  
99 attributes  
30 chapters in scripture  
114 in verses  
rehearsed behind  
veils camouflaging all my doubts and sinfulness  
yet so certain of all my uncertainties  
destitute of faith washed away by primordial ocean waves  
my story unfolding itself though never constellated  
as the omniscient narrator of life  
addresses modern atrocities and obscurities  
observing chemistry like converging plates in plate tectonics  
tonic like  
clouds bumping and grinding to the beat  
of heavenly hymns

producing thunders  
birthing rain  
baptizing our lands  
his unwavering mercy leaves me in wonderment  
he even seizes to make the sky blush  
hues of  
blue orange and  
red with pink and violet tones.

manifestation of godliness  
marveling at his magnificent beauty  
majestic in holiness  
mannequin of truth  
seraphic features  
though no vision  
could ever serve him justice  
because he stands alone

my surface of sadness  
removing it's layers  
like flowers bashfully blooming  
in the spring time

my mountain of insecurities and doubt  
drowning me into whirlpools of purity.

so close  
he is the jugular vein in my neck  
and yet when I call his name  
five times a day  
I receive no response  
perhaps in due time  
between mercies and blessings

we are distanced by immeasurable lengths  
that no alignment of stars could ever  
bring me towards him  
that no compass could ever  
trace his steps  
and no space ship could ever reach him  
and no intercedor could intervene on my behalf  
but yet I feel him in my veins  
like morphine

living between hope and fear  
between love and death  
between heaven and hell  
and not even mountain fulls of doubt  
can lure me away from  
the worship of my creator

certain of all my uncertainties

with every gratifying utterance of prayer  
faltering  
and vibrating from my lips  
its profoundness  
reaching into the depths of my soul  
resonating light  
in places that feel so hollow

on days that don't shine  
his magnitude of mercy  
that knows no end  
omnipotent  
sovereign of sovereignty...



PHOTO BY SHYEMA AZAM



A couple of weeks ago someone asked me, "When you think of a female superhero, who comes to your mind?" I had a flashback to third grade when my teacher had assigned us a project pertaining to that question. Sailor Moon was my super hero then so I spent the whole day drawing her and writing out her amazing qualities and characteristics. I was so proud of my little tribute to my 'hero' and I proudly gave my project to my teacher. The next day, I came into our classroom and saw a swarm of my classmates staring at the back wall which was plastered with our projects. I ran up to the wall in search of my own project. I found it, but it wasn't the one that caught my eye, the project underneath it did. A girl had chosen to write about an actual influential and amazing character by the name of Khadijah bint Khuwaylid. I remember all the excitement and pride in my project slowly melting away and the thought "Why didn't I think of that?" badgering my mind.

-9 years later-

One of my friends made the same inquiry and it still caught me a bit off guard. Rarely do we think of the sahabah and the sahabeyat as heroes. We think of them as amazing Islamic people, but not heroes. Which brings us back to the original question, "Who is our hero and by what standards do we define her?" A hero should be brave, daring, venerable, admirable, loving, steadfast, but the list goes on and on. Does Wonder Woman fit this description? Eh. How about Bat Woman, she comes from humble backgrounds? Not really. I got it now, Sailor Moon! She's the one, right?! No, you're really far off. Most of us, now, might not look up to these fictional characters as heroes, but we sure do admire some of those people walking down the red carpet!

Meanwhile, the more appropriate answer to such a question could be someone who started her very own successful business and made for herself a name amongst her people, she was the most beloved to the Prophet (peace be upon him): Khadijah. She could be a pregnant mother who walked through the desert carrying heavy loads to make sure her father and the Prophet (peace be upon him) were well fed and safe like Asma bint Abu Bakr. Someone who jumped in the middle of battle and guarded the Prophet (peace be upon him) when most of the men ran away in fear like Nusaybah (Um Um-arah). She could be someone whom we know to be very knowledgeable: Aisha. But to label others our heroes would be to leave those who deserve that right in unjust oblivion. While the aforementioned are only a handful of the numerous astounding and prominent women in our beautiful Islamic history, there are far more to be researched and admired. These are the type of women that qualify for the title of heroine, and far surpass, in importance and piety, the people we may look up to now.





In response to the several suicides in recent weeks by young gay teenagers, I feel compelled to remind the Muslim community of our responsibilities as Muslims and as human beings. While Islam's position on the impermissibility of homosexual acts is quite clear, this does not mean that we should turn a blind eye to those individuals who are being oppressed. These young men who took their lives did so at least partially because of the ongoing bullying, harassment, and violence they faced at school.

"You should kill yourself."  
"You should go away."  
"Who cares about you?"

I cannot even fathom the level of emotional and psychological abuse that these young men were forced to experience. No one was there to stand up for them.

As Muslims, we are obligated to speak out against all forms of oppression and do everything we can to prevent tragic events like this from happening. Prophet Muhammad (saws) is reported to have said:

A person should help his brother, whether he is an oppressor or is being oppressed. If he is the oppressor, he should prevent him from continuing his oppression, for that is helping him. If he is being oppressed, he should be helped to stop the oppression against him. [Bukhari, Muslim]

This hadith implies that regardless of whether we are coming to the aid of the oppressed or the oppressor, we are putting an end to oppression. We have to. Many people think that by doing nothing and remaining neutral they are avoiding the consequences of taking any actions. But the truth is that Allah has made it mandatory for us to do something. When we are called upon on the Day of Judgment and Allah asks us what we did when our brother or sister was being ridiculed, harassed, or physical abused right in front of our faces, how will we respond? Will our answer be to our benefit or to our detriment?

Those of us who have been blessed with the ability to speak out must do so for the people who do not have a voice. Let us be there to support those individuals who truly need our help and stop judging others when it is truly Allah who is the sole Judge. Let us be those people in our communities to whom oppressed individuals can turn because they know that we will defend their rights. And, if nothing else, let us be friends and companions for those who face difficult situations to remind them that there is at least one person who cares about them.

This world needs more people who stand up for the rights of others. We have to be these people.

May Allah make us better Muslims by giving us the courage to raise our voices against oppression on behalf of the people who cannot do so.

PHOTO BY PRIYA CHANDRA



---

Tazmin H. Uddin

**HIJAB**

He Is

When, he entered my life I can't remember  
But he's been with me, January through December  
He's with me through every season,  
With me even without reason  
He stands with me in every weather  
And helps me improve as a person and become better  
He's with me in the heat and the cold  
And to him I believe, my soul has been sold  
He calls me to all that is good  
Improving my dress and attitude  
He's with me through thick and thin  
And reminds me that true beauty comes from within  
He's never uttered a word  
Even when others have called him absurd  
And it pains me when one glance of him fills people with hate  
And I know they say love is blind but for me it's too late  
I don't care what others think or want  
I'll remain loyal to him through every glare and taunt.  
He's my shield and protector  
My very own knight in shining armor.  
When I think of him my heart begins to smile  
And I know every obstacle I face is worthwhile  
He's always been there for me  
And sometimes I wish people could see what I see  
He reminds me to be modest and do my best  
His very presence lays my worries to rest  
He reminds me to always stay grounded  
Reminds me of the pillars upon which my faith was founded  
He reminds others to not judge me by how I look  
And tells the world I'm following the command of a Holy Book  
He reminds me to judge based on action  
And reminds me to keep a pure intention (and fulfill every obligation)  
He demands that I put my best self forth  
And values me enough to let me know my worth  
I hope people respect the choice I've made  
My love for him will never fade  
And I hope people will let me be  
In his presence I truly feel free  
He is my hijab and if you didn't know now you do  
He's my first love, seriously it's true  
And now that my hijab has been personified  
Every glimpse of him fills my heart with comforting pride  
When he's with me I feel the blessings fall in this world and the hereafter  
And with him I choose to remain now and forever.

Gareth Bryant  
**AMERICAN-TREES!!!**

If only these Trees could talk:  
They would tell of the first Africans arriving at their shores.  
The men turned into slaves, the women turned into whores.  
Constantly beaten, told to work & serve.  
Torturing anyone, with courage or nerve.

If only these Trees could talk:  
They would recall our people being stripped of our religion, languages, and  
cultures.  
They would tell of our people being presented as a feast for the blood-thirsty  
Vultures.  
They cry to Allah, that He may save these people, from their oppression.  
But, they were used as an example, to teach the world a valuable lesson.  
The atrocities done to our people are a proof that tyranny is wrong.  
Still, we endured. We accomplished so much, because we are strong.

If only these Trees could talk:  
They would weep, over countless Black men, who hung from their branches.  
They would yell out in fury for those who were cut down, by rifles & lances.  
They would remember those who resisted slavery, and decided to fight back.  
They killed every Cracker they saw, sought revenge, and went on the attack.  
These Trees would never forget Nat Turner. He had every White man living in  
fear.  
They couldn't wait to catch him. The Trees are the only ones who tell the story  
clear.

If only these Trees could talk:  
They would rejoice at Harriet Tubman, leading others to freedom.  
Taking them north and to Canada, seeking a Slave-Free kingdom.  
They would tell us of the Mass 54th, fighting for their freedom & their lives.  
Showing bravery & skill on the battle-field, they caught everyone by surprise.

If only these Trees could talk:  
They would tell of the hard road to freedom, equality & justice.  
Telling the world what strength we had to deal with all of this.  
That we're not leaving, we built this country & are here to stay.  
That we have conquered every challenge placed in our way.

They would tell of a people degraded to the lowest degrees.  
But, still, they emerge & succeed. They are as strong as trees.



PHOTO BY JONATHAN BREWDA

Daniel Iqbal  
**THE ADHAN**

It is a key element of stereotypical Hollywood movies set in Muslim lands: veiled women and bearded men are walking the streets of crowded bazaars. Donkeys and mules roam the alleys while travelers sit perched high on camels. Children play in the dusty kasbah streets. The sun is high overhead, the heat oppressive. The crowning feature of the exotic scene: a mysterious call to prayer being sounded in the background.

The adhan (or, as it is known in Iran, South Asia, and Southeast Asia, *azan*) is so commonplace for us Muslims that we often absent-mindedly overlook it. Indeed, many times all we do to acknowledge the adhan is to turn the volume down on the TV and itch for it to be over so we can return to watching our favorite show in comfort. This is a gross injustice to the adhan, one of the world's most captivating sounds and undoubtedly a blessing from Allah. So what's the story behind this phenomenon anyway? We Muslims must ask: what significance does it hold in our lives?

The word "adhan" is derived from the root D-N, meaning "to permit." It is a short, efficient, and beautiful way to summon Muslims to prayer. Five times a day throughout the Muslim world, the enchanting sound of the muezzin calling the faithful to worship reaches every nook and cranny of every street, a reminder to the people of their responsibilities as Muslims. The adhan is one of the ways Allah conveys His omnipotence and omniscience to human beings. The Lord never rests, it tells us.

Essentially, the adhan is the story of Islam summed up in a few short sentences.

Allah is the greatest  
 Allah is the greatest  
 Allah is the greatest  
 Allah is the greatest  
 I testify that there is no god except Allah  
 I testify that there is no god except Allah  
 I testify that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah  
 I testify that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah  
 Come to prayer  
 Come to prayer  
 Come to success  
 Come to success  
 Prayer is better than sleep (only with Fajr salah)  
 Prayer is better than sleep (only with Fajr salah)

Allah is the greatest  
 Allah is the greatest  
 There is no god except Allah  
 Here, Islam's fundamental principles are highlighted and emphasized in a clear, straightforward manner. The doctrine of tauhid and the oneness of Allah, Muhammad's role as the final messenger to mankind, the importance of prayer, and the achievement of salvation through the purification of the soul are all mentioned. Thus, the adhan serves a dual purpose – it reminds Muslims of their responsibilities while articulating Islam's main beliefs to all, Muslim and non-Muslim alike. In this sense, the adhan is a form of da'wah, educating its listeners about the faith it so magnificently represents.

The first use of the adhan occurred shortly after hijra when the early Muslims began congregating for prayer in Madinah. According to Bukhari, Muslims deliberated before deciding on the use of the human voice to summon the faithful to prayer:

"Narrated Ibn 'Umar: When the Muslims arrived at Medina, they used to assemble for prayer, and used to guess the time for it. During those days, the practice of adhan for the prayers had not been introduced yet. Once they discussed this problem regarding the call for prayer. Some people suggested the use of a bell like the Christians, others proposed a trumpet like the horn used by the Jews, but 'Umar was the first to suggest that a man should call (the people) to prayer; so Allah's Apostle ordered Bilal to get up and pronounce the adhan for prayers."

The familiar story of Bilal ibn Rabah, a freed African slave, calling the first adhan has special significance. In the cut-throat and often revoltingly intolerant world of the seventh century, a black man was given this honor with no opposition from any of the lighter-skinned Arabs. Bilal is an example of Islam's universality and its commitment to pluralism and racial equality – in our own nation, blacks were not given equal rights until the end of the 1960s. Edward Blyden, a Liberian politician, wrote in 1874:

"The eloquent Adzan [sic] or Call to Prayer, which to this day summons at the same hours millions of the human race to their devotions, was first uttered by a Negro, Bilal by name, whom Mohammed, in obedience to a dream, appointed the



first Muezzin or Crier. And it has been remarked that even Alexander the Great is in Asia an unknown personage by the side of this honoured Negro.”

Today, the adhan is transmitted mainly through loudspeakers in Islamic societies, but the old practice of the muezzin calling it through the power of his own voice, without the use of modern technology, still persists in many areas. We Muslims living in predominantly non-Muslim societies often rely on computer technology or special adhan clocks to hear the adhan, while many of us simply stick prayer timetables onto our refrigerators and act accordingly without necessitating its use.

The muezzin, a corruption of the Arabic mu'adhan, is an integral part of the adhan. Traditionally, the muezzin was blind, preventing him from looking down into the vicinities of houses from the towering top of the minaret and thus from violating the citizens' privacy. Although the muezzin rarely calls the adhan from the top of a minaret today, the old tradition persists – muezzins are still largely poor, weak, elderly, or disabled in many parts of the Muslim world.

For Muslims, the adhan has become the center of various traditions and practices. After moving into a new house, many Muslims recite the adhan clearly and loudly enough to where the sound will be heard in every corner of the new home. Likewise, it is mustahab, or recommended, for Muslims to recite the adhan in the right ear and the supplementary iqama in the left ear of a newborn child. Although such practices are often cultural rather than religious, they highlight the importance of the adhan and, by extension, religion in the everyday lives of the faithful.

In many Muslim nations, the adhan itself has become an integral part of the cultural fabric of the land. A visit to Cairo or Istanbul would simply not be the same if the adhan did not sound in the streets, for example. The different mosques' competition for the “dominant” adhan, so to speak, is also a traditional and somewhat amusing aspect of the adhan's prominence in these countries, having existed since the earliest stages of Islam. Different mosques in different areas of the city start and stop the adhan at slightly different times and use different tones and tempos, creating an oddly beautiful, yet very cha-

otic, scene. In Egypt, Minister of Religious Affairs Mahmoud Hamdi Zaqzouq recently announced a project called “Tawheed al Adhan,” meaning the “Adhan Unification Project,” to put an end to this situation in Cairo, the nation's capital and the largest city in Africa. This plan will instill a single adhan from Al Azhar Mosque which will be transmitted by wireless receivers to local mosques and then broadcast through loudspeakers to the streets of the city. Although this development, scheduled to be completed by the end of 2010, will surely benefit the hectic lives of Cairenes, a long-established cultural tradition, albeit containing some faults, will be lost.

Perhaps the most awe-inspiring feature of the adhan is its ability to unite all Muslims under a single banner – their religion. Across the world, the diverse Muslim ummah, encompassing many diverse cultures and colors, bows to its Lord at the call of the same adhan. Even Sunnis and Shiites, the two groups whose rivalry has received so much media attention since the beginning of the war in Iraq, essentially have the same adhan save an optional interjection by Shiites praising Ali and an added verse after “hayya 'alal falah.” Walk the streets of Baghdad or Lahore, Kuala Lumpur or Algiers, Samarqand or Dhaka, Casablanca or Jakarta, and the sound of the muezzin calling the faithful to prayer will blast through loudspeakers, echoing across the rooftops, in almost the exact same manner. In a fragmented and disunited Muslim world that the early believers would have been appalled by, this is perhaps the most notable function of the adhan today.

Above all, the adhan serves as an inspiration to Muslims by reminding them of the simplicity of their faith. Hindus use conch shells, or shankhas, to invoke the gods; Tibetan Buddhists use small cymbals, or tingshas, in prayer; Jews utilize a ram horn known as a shofar; Christians rely on the ringing of church bells. Muslims, in contrast to all of these, simply harness the power of the human voice. Much like churches have pews while mosques simply have floors to sit on, Christians have prominent clergy while Muslims have none, and Christianity reveres Jesus as God in flesh and the savior of humanity while Islam stresses that God is above taking human form and that everyone is responsible for his or her own sins without any redeeming figure to “save” them, the adhan is representative of Islam's stark simplicity and refreshing attitude towards life – only the being and the Creator. No artificial preservatives.



PHOTO BY SHYEMA AZAM

---

Gareth Bryant

## **THE SUNSET!!!**

The Day is just about nearly done.  
The Sun sinks slowly, in the West.

The Sun is almost gone.  
It has to leave, for rest.

The Sky gets darker; the Horizon becomes pink & yellow.  
There's a slight breeze; the atmosphere is quiet & mellow.

The Night begins to chase the Sun far away.  
It has shed enough of its light, for one day.

There's a dark blue tint, stretching & covering the Sky.  
The Sun leaves us with its Solar glare, saying goodbye.

The Sunset has arrived, the Sun must give way.  
We must endure the departure of our sunny day.

We look on, as we see the Sun being devoured, by the land.  
We are helpless, as if we're watching it sink, into quicksand.

The Darkness has overtaken the Light.  
The Day is gone, it is now the Night.

The Sunset reminds us that nothing lasts forever.

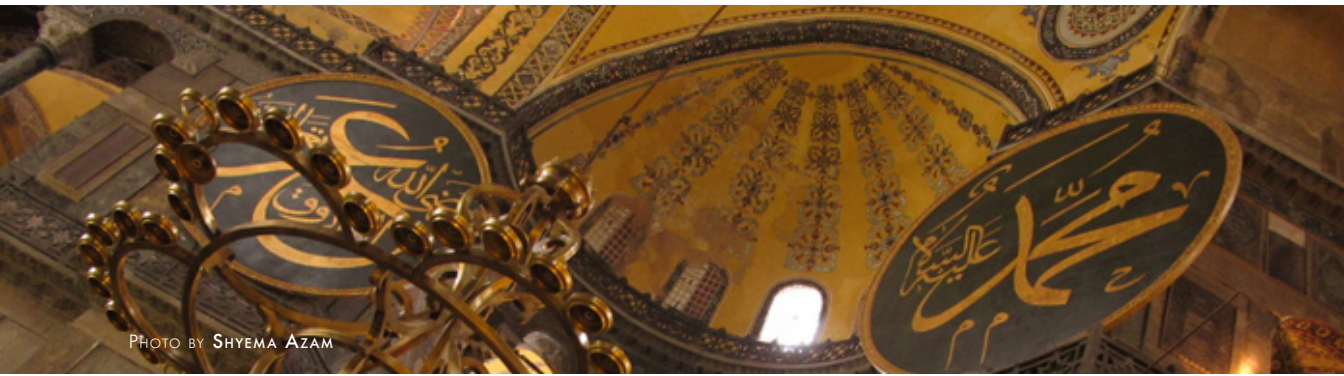


PHOTO BY SHYEMA AZAM

---

Gareth Bryant

## **THE SUNRISE!!!**

Bright rays of light cut the Sky.  
They form shades of pink & blue.

They give chase, to the dark shadow of the Night.  
The Sun begins a day that is bright & brand-new.

From the long-stretched Horizon, the Sun's golden rim  
emerges high.  
As if it were a mighty Tree, it springs rapidly above, from the  
ground.

Its glow is greater with each moment, as it ascends to the  
Sky.  
The Sun is big & bright; it begins shedding its light all  
around.

The mood is calm, as the Sky becomes lighter, yet clearer.  
The Sun floats in the Sky, just like a leaf floats on a River.

In a Rainforest, the Sun makes the leaves of the Trees greener.  
In a Desert, it makes the winds of a Sandstorm a little meaner.

It rises from the East every day, without the slightest hesitation.  
It is one of the signs of Allah, made for Human contemplation.

In Nature, the Sun shines on Mountains & Valleys.  
In cities, it even shines on street corners & alleys.

The Sunrise is a reminder, that we've made it through the Night.



PHOTO BY PRIYA CHANDRA





ISLAMIC CENTER AT NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

