



HAYDERNAMEH

Volume 1, Issue
47

December 2005

This is the newsletter of Shaykh Fadhalla's murids in the UK, now issued every two months (or so!) The editors are Julia Khadija Lafene and Sadiqa Lake (responsible for Luton news.)

If you have comments, suggestions and contributions, please contact Khadija on home@jlafene.goplus.net or 02089041680

There is now a separate newsletter for young people, Crescent Moon, edited by Bushra Winter and Tariq.

Inside this issue:

Community News-'Itiqaf	1
'Itiqaf (cont)	2
Khayaal Theatre Latest production	2-3
Publications news	3
Trauma Counseling Project—a	4-5
Separation and Gatheredness	6

LUTON NEWS AND VIEWS

Bismillahi -rrahmani -rrahim ITIQAF THOUGHTS

During the last weekend of Ramadan, a group of women gathered at the Luton Centre to do a two-day *itiqaf*. We had all benefited so much from our retreat last Ramadan, we wanted to repeat the experience.

The retreat lasted from *magrib* on Friday until *magrib* on Sunday. We were silent during the fasting hours, when we read, meditated and prayed, with a talk given on different aspects of the Quran each day. Women who were unable to attend the retreat added extra flavour to our experience by providing sumptuous meals for *iftar*.

We all found it hard to express our feelings in words, but wanted to share our experience and the benefits we reaped. Here are some of the comments made just before we left the Centre.

...It usually takes half a day to settle myself and get rid of the external and internal things which are bothering me – but this is the best way to do it.

Put yourself in a situation of no choice, by your own choice and you will be sheltered from the barbs of the shaytan.

You come closer to everyone, sharing the time with each other and become more unified.

*Let us do this more often and Allah's Lights will be clearer and gradually freed from the veils with which we usually cover them. Thank you to the companions on the journey who make it so delightful, by Allah's grace, and thank you to our beloved supporters who provided *iftar* and companionship.*

I could go on and on....

...I have been waiting for the days to pass, so that I can come and do *itiqaf*. I had a glorious time. I enjoyed every minute of it, remembering Allah, praying and reading Quran. I pray to Allah that I manage to do *itiqaf* every year! (*insha'allah!*)...

....so grateful...so grateful...so grateful...

(Continued on page 2)

REGULAR EVENTS

* LUTON DHIKRS

Every Thursday 7.30 p.m at 178 Biscot Road, Luton.

* LONDON DHIKR CIRCLES

No regular circles at present

* London & Luton Ladies' Qur'an Study Groups - One group is meeting in Luton most Fridays a.m.—contact Naseem

* London group will be once a month, starting 17th Dec—contact Khadija for details.

ASK FACILITATORS TRAINING

* We have now had five sessions during the past few weeks, much enjoyed by all who attended. These are reported on the Facilitators' Yahoo group site.

For details contact Hassan Joban

(Continued from page 1)

...It was great - I am grateful...clarity, sincerity, *ikhlaas*...

...Such a blessed couple of days, to be given the opportunity to take one's attention in a focussed way. This was enhanced by beautiful company, shared Qur'an and *dhikr* which was so much more special...

...Singing the Diwan, He brings our hearts together...gratitude to our Shaykh, and those before him, for unfolding the secrets of the way...

...Clarity, peace of mind..we must do this more regularly - even once a month...

...The pub with no beer! Our hearts were one heart. We all feel refreshed and transformed and ready to take out new found energy into the world - and resolve to regularly refresh ourselves in this way..

After doing our final *magrib* salat, the general consensus was...
..."This is a taste of the good company in the next world.

Seated on satin
Cushions"...

Just as we said this the door opened, and Sami Naqvi - a handsome youth, with dark eyes brought in our *iftar* pot of soup. *Al-hamdulillah!*



Bismillahi ArRahman ArRahim

'..remember our servant Dawood,, the possessor of power; surely he was frequent in returning to Allah. Surely we made the mountains to sing the glory (of Allah) in unison with him at the evening and the sunrise. And the birds gathered together; all joined in singing with him...'

88:17-19

KHAYAAL THEATRE 'S LATEST PRODUCTION

'The Truth about Your father' - a Dramatic Monologue by Luqman Ali

The Khayaal theatre company's latest production was previewed on 27th November at St. Ethelburga's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation in Bishopsgate. This centre was once a medieval church which was destroyed by IRA bombing, and was rebuilt as a place where people of all faiths can come together for dialogue. As such it was a very apt place for this performance.

In the play a Muslim mother who has herself come to some kind of understanding about her husband (a suicide bomber), is trying to help her son come to terms with it. We do not see the son, but can imagine his presence through the mother's communication with and responses to him.

This play was not what I expected!! I thought there'd be more dialogue about Muslim teachings on violence (though in a way this was dealt with subtly and indirectly), so I came away with a slight feeling of dissatisfaction which I am still trying to analyse. I think I expected the play to give people (me!) answers, solutions and reassurance directly, but I had not reckoned with Imam Luqman's vision, which permeates all his

work - that is, the use of stories to put across a point and to relate to the audience- a genre which is traditional in Muslim culture.

The play starts with the mother going to the site of the bombing and on a wall covered with graffiti sticking her own message - 'Not in My Name'. We then see her typing at her kitchen table, taking phone calls, and obviously very tense and worried about her son, Jihad, (whom she addresses as 'Ji'). When he returns from school, it is obvious that he has been taunted about his father. Desperately she seeks for a way to help him and is inspired to tell him three stories to illustrate what went wrong with his father.

In the first story the wind competes with the sun to get a man to take his coat off. The wind uses buffeting violence which only makes him wrap the coat more tightly round himself, whereas the sun uses gentle warmth, which soon makes him take it off. This graphically shows the futility of aggressive violence.

The second story tells of a proud and arrogant king,

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

who mistreats and imprisons his youngest daughter for honestly saying that she does not believe he has power over her destiny. (shades of King Lear! Or did Shakespeare get his idea from this story?) Eventually the king exiles his daughter, but in exile she becomes more prosperous and powerful than himself. Here we learn that no individual, however powerful, holds the destiny of others in his hand – something can always happen to remove his power. Only Allah has true and ultimate power.

The third story (from China) tells how a good and beautiful Chinese girl was almost deceived into burning a bird to death because she was told the bird contained the spirit of the man she loved and burning it would release him. Only in the nick of time was she saved from committing this cruel act. Thus we see how people can be misled by their own illusions and desires, mistakenly thinking they can achieve their desire by wrong action.

The mother ends by telling her son that the greatest jihad is the struggle to reconcile the duality in one's self. "Your father had two sides in him which he could not reconcile." The implication is that we all have these two sides, and unless we are aware of it, it we can be misled into believing our lower and dark side is right.

The presentation and performance of the play was excellent, the mother very movingly portrayed by Eleanor Martin (our Asiya!). This part gave her the opportunity to display her multi-faceted acting skills, many of which we have not seen before. In telling the stories, she became each of the characters in turn, so that although there was only one person on 'the stage', at times one felt there were many. When the mother began telling the stories, she seemed to become a different person. Here I did feel a lack of connection between the practical rather flustered woman we saw at the beginning and the accomplished story teller.

After the performance Asiya and Luqman answered questions and comments put to them by the director of St. Ethelburga's and members of the audience. Luqman explained how Muslims have tragically lost much of their traditional arts and culture, including drama, to the extent that some people believe that drama was 'introduced to the Muslim world by French troubadours.' Because of this they have lost the time-honoured way of teaching and transmitting ultimate truths, morals and ethics through the use of the imagination and are too bogged down in dogma. The stories in the play were from traditional cultures, but like most of these stories, can be applied to modern situations. He and Asiya had worked together to find the stories; he had written the play, and she had suggested how it could be brought to life on stage. They are planning to take it on tour, to community centres, theatres and schools, and to hold workshops. Many Muslim groups are showing an interest and Insha'Allah they will realise what an effective and valuable way of transmission this is. I believe, however that discussions and workshops will be necessary as many Muslim people are just not used to this way of teaching, or the ideas behind it. Some may even think it is 'bida' because they know nothing about the history of Muslim culture.

Some members of the audience felt that the play should have dealt more directly with 'politics' and the issues of injustice which led young Muslims to commit extreme actions; however, Luqman felt that there had been much discussion on this, but nothing dealing with the spiritual issues, which in fact are not separate from the political.

Most of the audience seemed very moved by the performance, and I pray that it will be a powerful force for the revival of true Islam.

Reviewed by Khadija



PUBLICATIONS NEWS

There have been some changes in ZP UK.

Abdulkarim & his staff (Pure Health) are now taking care of the working stock and the accounts at his premises in Chaucer House, Biscot Rd. Luton. The will be dispatching any orders.

However, Bara is still in charge of inquiries and orders, and updating the stock list on Nuradeen website. Therefore, ALL ORDERS SHOULD BE CHANNELLED THROUGH HER at barabaker@yahoo.co.uk.

The stock which was in the loft at Biscot Rd. has been moved to Shahbaz's offices at Phoenix House.

We need to market this stock or dispose of it somehow. In particular the CDs made during Shaykhna's visit need to be sold. These consist of 3 Cds of Jummaah talks, The ASK launch, and 'enlightenment and Islam'. If you want copies, please contact Bara.

We are also eagerly awaiting 'Son of Kerbala', Shaykhna's autobiography. Advance orders may be placed with Bara.

In future the 'Print on Demand' system may be used. This will prevent build-up of excess stock.

Khadija

TRAUMA COUNSELLING TRAINING

'Our Lord! Thou embracest all things with mercy and knowledge; therefore grant protection to those who turn to thee..' 40:7

Sabnum Dharamsi and Abdullah Maynard made an intention to contribute to the Pakistan Earthquake survivors by helping to prepare people who are going out to Pakistan. Their first intensive training session was held recently in Luton, attended by people who had already been in Pakistan and were planning to return and also people who were planning to go themselves. I attended in the capacity of helper, but found the session immensely illuminating for myself – after all, trauma can happen anywhere and if we want to 'help' we have to be aware of what is within us. Mustafa Hadi introduced the session with his slide show of pictures from the disaster area.

DAY 1

Sabnum began by explaining the aims of the training, which would be intensive in response to urgent need. The aim was firstly, to be prepared, reflect and think to avoid becoming 'one of the shocked' (being able to recognise needs and one's own limitations): secondly, to equip participants with the awareness of the meaning of natural disasters as well as the skills to support those affected within an Islamic context. (such as proactive listening)

Abdullah asked us to reflect on the purpose of our being there. He asked us all to reflect on what had brought us to the training. Many of us were comparing our comfortable lives with those of the victims, feeling responsible for doing something. Since all human beings are the same at a higher level, we are all seeking a meaning in painful events; we all need constant reminders of our connection with our fellow humans, and of Allah's guidance. There is both ease and difficulty and when we are in a state of greater ease, we have the ability to help others. Allah's tauhid is reflected in our interconnectedness & our response is subject to his rouboubiyya.

Naseem then gave us an excellent briefing on the nature of the self, which it is essential to understand in any kind of counselling; from the Islamic perspective, this means the study of the soul, which is not mentioned in modern psychology. Basically the human being is on a developmental journey from before time through the earthly realm, back to after death. In this realm, the human being is a soul+self within a body. As a child the person is dominated by the commanding self when the lower self is dominant. During the journey of life, if the person is progressing in the right direction, the soul comes to command the lower self, and the fulfilled self is in submission to the soul. Even the 'low desires' are perverted reflections of the soul's desire for perfection. At what-

ever stage we are when we die, so we will enter the next world. Naseem gave us a handout summarising the different types of 'self' from the lowest to the highest. She explained the stages of a human being's life, and the need to be aware of where a client is and where we ourselves are. The following points emerged:

- Avoid fostering dependent 'benevolent' relationships
- Our intentions could be sullied by the idea that 'they need me'.
- In this realm of action we are being honoured & it is we who are receiving a gift
- Although conditions can determine the state of the individual, we are all equal in that we all have personal will to overcome difficulties or not.
- At all times be aware of your own agenda

We then did a practical listening exercise, termed proactive listening, in which there were three steps – hearing what the person says, looking for the higher meaning and reflecting empathically. These were described in detail on a handout.

Day 2

We started with a discussion about day one.

- Trauma can trigger off other traumas from the past
- There are physiological effects and recognised stages of bereavement
- By using mufakkira (reflection) know your own state: Allah will give you what you need to deal with the situation (a kind of Istikhara)
- The ASK programme can help us a great deal
- By observing the strength and faith of some of the survivors the helper can be helped!
- The Islamic therapeutic relationship is about being a witness, taqwa and trust

More listening practice

Practice being empty – this is better than being an 'expert'.

We did a practice in which we first listened with full attention for 1 minute; then with wavering attention, then with no attention and then with full attention. This made us aware of the different levels/layers of attention and also how it feels not to be listened to. Here we engage the attribute of will in order to be consciously aware of how we are listening; we need to let go of ourselves, remembering that nothing comes except by Allah's grace. In a disaster situation we must expect that the normal developmental line of the person will be out of joint, so we

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

must listen to where the person in trauma is. We must focus on the person, but not delve too deeply to satisfy our own 'nosey parker' needs. This focus is compared to that of prayer, when presence is the main state of mind we aim for.

Sadiqa then gave a short presentation on breathing exercises, which can help the counsellor and the client. She quoted some wise sayings, such as, "when the breath wanders the mind is unsteady, but when the breath is still, so is the mind still." "... In breath the visible and invisible worlds meet..." The breathing techniques help us to go to the place inside us where no one can touch us and where we are protected. People often resist going into the body, as they think it has nothing to do with the situation they're in; in fact when there is trauma the body does have a protective 'shutting down' mechanism.

After this there was a very interesting presentation on what the 'experts in the field' (the Emergency Resource Centre) have found through research into traumatic events. First we were reminded that all of our situations are encompassed by the fact of death & that our lives start before birth, go through life and then after death to the next life. Allah says "We created Death and Life" (death first). We must remember at all times that people have knowledge within them. The people in the hills didn't want to leave their villages because they had not buried their dead. If people are distressed, allow them to go to a deeper level of knowledge; respond to what's already there, for example Dr. Farah taught her nurses to take the names of the dead and tell the relatives we would pray for them. This made a lot of difference to their peace of mind.

Here are just a few of the important and interesting points that came up from the ERC's report and Sabnum and Abdullah's comments:

- After a natural disaster about 3-4% of the survivors will suffer mental psychosis, but in 'unnatural' i.e. manmade disasters the % goes up to 7%!!
- About 15% will suffer mild mental disorder, which is perfectly natural, since mild to moderate stress reactions are to be expected and are

an accurate reaction by the survivors to danger.

- This stress includes rescue workers.
- We need to recognise if reactions are extreme and pass them on to mental health workers who can deal with them
- Resilience is the most common observation
- Effects of traumatic events are not always bad- in some cases survivors felt they had been strengthened
- Disaster may bring communities together and re-orient individuals to new priorities & the self turns more towards the soul
- These processes are happening in every situation in life
- Survivors will suffer a wide spectrum of emotional, cognitive, physical and social effects, such as loss of normal feelings of affection, impaired concentration, self-blame, increased relational conflicts, insomnia etc
- Most of these gradually get better with the right help and treatment but some things make it worse:
 - Lack of emotional and social support
 - Other stresses, such as cold
 - Lack of information about reasons for the event
 - Interference with people's self-management
 - Treatment in an authoritarian impersonal manner

We ended with a session led by Abdullah on Practising Reflection.

Everything comes from and returns to Allah. anything hidden will emerge. We must think through the significance of our efforts to be of service at an emotional level. To do this we could try to see things through the eyes of ourselves as children. The situations we come across may remind us of our own history, but we must be aware and take responsibility for this.

The significance of the earthquake (zilzal) is that everything we thought secure is shaken up. The world is completely disturbed, so every iota of bad or good will emerge. It is not about judgement, but about furqan (discrimination) and all of us are on the journey of learning this.

We need to accept Allah's mechanism for teaching us – His signs are all around us, within and without.

Reported by Khadija (apologies for any omissions)



Separation and Gatheredness

Existence may be experienced within the dynamic of one of two modes.

Either separation or gatheredness. They are opposites.

Separation is the modality of thoughts, analysis, discrimination, and the perception of individual objects. This and that. Gatheredness is that of withdrawal from its opposite. Things merge, become distant, disappear. It entails in its fullness the relinquishing of the discriminatory faculties: this means the attributes of hearing, seeing, speaking, knowing, then willing, the power of being present at all, and at last, life itself.

This complete surrender to the gatheredness is what the teacher refers to as annihilation. Going-on is the final complete state of the man of knowledge. These two terms are defined and redefined throughout the work, but their texture should not be mixed up or confused with any superficial trance state or emotional hiatus caused by listening to music or looking at mountain tops. Complete de-programming is necessary before this matter can take place, the whole self-form has then become so fragile and so much a remnant of what it was that the last stage is itself a fine, the most fine, destruction. It is referred to in the Qur'an when it speaks of 'the mountains blown away like carded wool.'

'The meaning of Man' pg 456.

"Know that separation belongs to majesty and gatheredness to beauty. All that is beauty and gatheredness in your outward is majesty and separation in your inward. All that is separation and majesty in your outward is beauty and gatheredness in your inward. This is the sunna of Allah in His slaves. Whenever majestic separation takes over your outward part while beautiful gatheredness is in your inward, the situation reverses itself until beautiful gatheredness takes over your outward while majestic separation is in your inward as long as its opposite is taken from you. It is the state which was before it. Whoever that occurs to by force is not the one about whom we are speaking. We are rather speaking about the wayfarer who acts by choice, and so it is by attraction. He is the one who possesses his self, and whoever makes it over to one of the

lords of the art because when one dominates his own self, it begins to obey him whenever he uses it. As for chattels in the hands of their slaves, we are not speaking about them. Man is not without what owns him or what he owns. The sign that its property is good is that if its owner wants to dress it in majestic separation outwardly, he requires that beautiful gatheredness then be in his inward. If he wishes its opposite to dress it in beautiful gatheredness outwardly, there must be majestic separation inwardly. Therefore his self becomes a chattel in his hand like the trainer and breaker of horses in the command and prohibition. Whenever he claims that wayfaring belongs to attraction and does not discipline his self to wear majestic separation outwardly for a long time until the sincerity of his discipline is manifest to him and all creation, elite and common, his claim is false, and he is deluded when his self cheats him and plays with him. This is because the self is formed with natural disposition to love of beautiful gatheredness, and its outward parts. With the people of the Path, it is haram for the murid in his beginning. He said in the Laws: "Whoever claims to witness beauty before he has *adab* by the majesty, reject him - he is a *Dajjal*. Look at the words of ash-Shadhili, may Allah have mercy on him: "O Allah! People are sentenced to abasement until they become mighty, and they are sentenced to loss until they find. The one who has no abasement becomes the one who has no might, and the one who has no loss becomes the one who has no finding. The one who lays claim to finding without abasement is deluded. The one who lays claim to finding without loss is a liar." This is one of the roots of the Path which is the only road for the murids. As for perfection, it is neither in outward separation or inward gatheredness, or the reverse. It is in the balance of the two until they are equal in the self, in their existence and loss."

Sidi `Ali al-Jemel, 'The meaning of Man' pg28.

Contributed by Saleem McGroarty

'And everyone has a direction to which he should turn, therefore hasten to do good works; wherever you are, Allah will bring you all together; surely Allah has power over all things.' 2;148