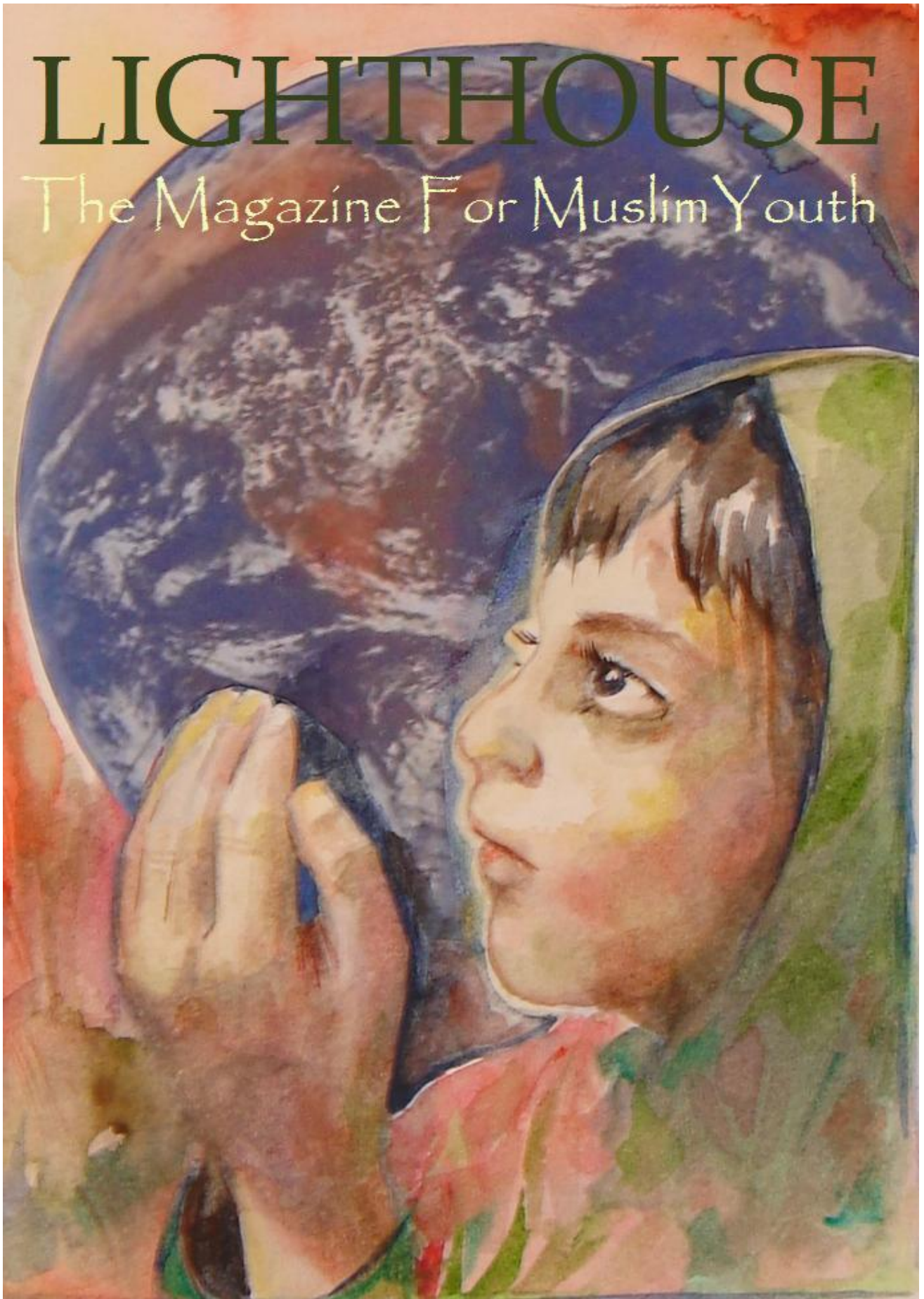


LIGHTHOUSE

The Magazine For Muslim Youth



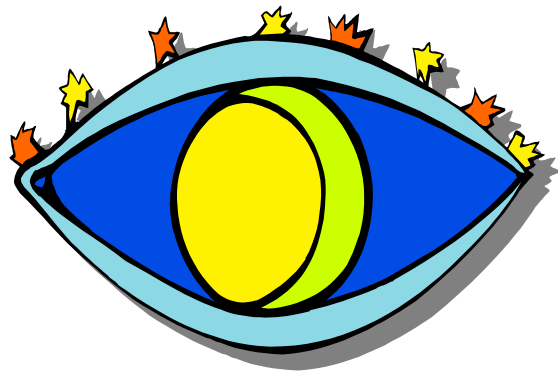
LIGHTHOUSE MAGAZINE JUNE/JULY ISSUE

Did you hear?

“Say He it is Who brought you into being and made for you ears and eyes and hearts. Little thanks it is you give.” The Holy Quran

Chapter 67 verse 23

Have you ever wondered what our life would be without our ears and eyes? These are just two of the countless, amazing blessings that Allah has given us. Our ears and eyes are some of the organs that help us figure out the world around us and communicate with each other. We may think that our body is ours and we can do anything we like with it, however that is only half true. **Our body is ours yet it is a trust from Allah: that means we have to take care of our body and our soul and be ready to answer to Allah about how we used them.** Did we tire and harm our eyes by playing too long with computers and video games? Did we get enough rest, healthy food and exercise to keep the good health Allah gave us? Did we expose our ears to loud music that could harm them for good? These are some of the physical ways we are required by Allah to take care of our health and the precious organs he gave us.



Religion teaches us that every physical thing has a spiritual part to it. It means we have spiritual eyes, ears and hearts as well that require our care. Our spiritual eyes are the ways we sense Allah and see His beauty everywhere. Our spiritual ears are always listening for knowledge and guidance to guide us towards a good life in this world and the next. **Our heart is the part of our body that is most closely connected to our soul. It helps to guide us through the feelings we have so that we know deep down when we did something right or wrong.** Our physical eyes and ears are very important not only for seeing and hearing the



world around us, but because these are the main ways we can harm or benefit our soul.

If a person is watching TV or movies that teach un-Islamic things or encourage rude, shameless behavior, he or she is not using his or her eyes for the right things. We all need some entertainment, but as Muslims we need

to make sure our “fun” is not against our values. *Music is a sound that can be good or bad, just like talking can be good or bad.* Since we have been blessed with ears, we are responsible to try our best to hear good things with them, which means making good friends, listening to music with decent lyrics and avoiding all those things that can poison our hearts and soul, no matter how popular and attractive they may be.

In this verse Allah has mentioned our eyes and ears and hearts and told us to be more thankful. Being thankful to Allah is much more than simply saying “Thank you”. It means using the gift he gave us in the way he wants us to use it. Using our eyes to study and work hard, to learn about the world in useful ways and to find ways of helping others would be a way of giving thanks.

What other ways can you think of to give thanks with your ears, eyes and hearts?

Each time you watch TV, play on the computer or listen to music, think about the messages you are getting from it. Are those messages harming you?

Do you find it hard to concentrate in salat after watching the latest movie or music video? Think why that is so?

Does beautiful music inspire you to write poetry or help you focus while you clean your room? Think of other ways to use music for relaxation.

If you could write a guide for Muslim kids on how to choose their entertainment, what would you write? Share your ideas with us at zamustang@msn.com.

School's out and now what?

Nothing can compare to that wonderful feeling of the last day of school: The freedom, the laughter, the look on the faces of the teachers. In America that means **three months** of no homework, no silly rules, sleeping in late, camping outside, no more bells and lines! About **90 days** of pleasure and peace.

Do a little math with that number and we get 90 days multiplied by 24 hours, or 2160 hours of precious time. Of course we need to spend about 8-10 hours a day sleeping, so we can subtract those (10 x 90 or) 900 hours from our 2160. That still leaves us with about 1260 hours of free time in the summer, or about 12-14 free hours in a day, no matter how long the summer holiday is. *Summer is a time for rest and relaxation and if we are caught up in a whirlwind of summer activities*



that leaves us stressed out and exhausted, we might as well be going to school again and have homework and tests doing the hokey pokey around us!

Of course it is fun to use the summer to learn a new sport or try a new activity, but that should not take up too much of those carefree summer months. It is very important that out of our time, praying to Allah should have some share – in fact we should have more time in the summer to do some extra reading, to get some more knowledge about Islam that helps us become the scholar that every Muslim needs to be.

So this summer let's take some time to enjoy our connection with Allah and to build that relationship. Choose something that you can do by yourself and would find interesting. You might want to try to read a little extra Quran each day with the translation, or have a fifteen minute Arabic lesson, so the language of the Quran is easier to understand. Or you might want to set up a rotating Imam schedule. **Different people can take turns leading the evening prayers when everyone is home. The Imam would have a chance to focus on the quality of her or his salat, so that everyone can follow at ease.** It would make a great family discussion to find out each person's views on what kind of Imam is the best. Some families have

a Halaqa planned once a week, where kids and adults all gather to learn and discuss a certain topic. It is more fun when the kids lead the Halaqa!

Another important idea is to find a service project to do. This could mean having a lemonade stand or garage sale to benefit a favorite charity or food shelf, volunteering in a senior center or a nursing home near you, or watering a neighbor's yard or taking care of their pet while they are gone.



Whatever you plan for the summer, **do plan something.** Relaxing is more enjoyable if we can feel good about ourselves, knowing we did something for our precious soul. Otherwise a dreadful feeling of boredom and restlessness can set in, which is actually the voice of our spirit yelling out to us to care for it, to help it grow, to get involved in something bigger and better.

Go for it.

Write and tell us your plans to make your summer meaningful so we can share those ideas and inspire each other. E-mail us at zamustang@msn.com.

I am very rich

I have

In my head (with free installation)

Telescopes and microscopes, for seeing far and near

Two amazing devices that hear, sense, and balance everything around me

Millions of flavor-testers working round the clock for me

A remarkable olfactory system that smells everything from
thunderstorms to chocolate brownies

Foreign particle detection and elimination systems

Twenty five or so marines in white, chomp-chomp, who serve me
without getting paid or taking a day off

A marvelous computer, my very own, always charged and working at
top speed, with personalized controls

A zany instant messaging system with a beautiful screen and about a
zillion different expressions and words

(Did I tell you I was very rich?)

But really, can you guess who I am and what I have

Because you have seen me before, many times

You should know how lucky, how blessed I am

Because

I am you





It's makeover time.

(Don't pull out your mother's makeup bag just yet. A Muslim makeover is slightly different ...) We are told by Hazrat Aisha, that Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh) said "The tooth-brush purifies the mouth and is a means of seeking the pleasure of the Lord."

A Muslim makeover starts with the teeth, going on to refresh the whole body in one minute, making the wudzu an amazing health preserver.

"Its time for salat, hurry do your wudzu" is what you must hear your parents say many times a day. If you are like most kids, you stall while you can, then rush to the bathroom, go through the steps of wudzu faster than a bullet train and head for the prayer rug. Did you know that if you did your wudzu faithfully you just gave your health a mini makeover? And if you did a careless, sloppy job, you missed a great opportunity.

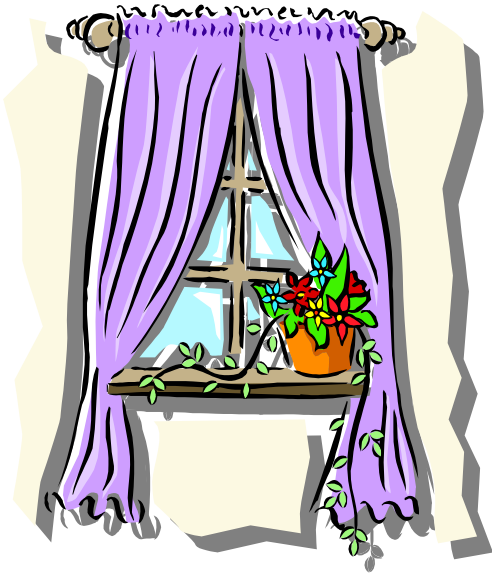
Let's dissect the wudzu to see the many ways in which it keeps us healthy:

Washing hands: If we don't wash our hands properly before we start, we are practically rubbing those germs everywhere else. Give those hard working hands a good scrub. *No rushing please.*

Rinsing the mouth or tooth brushing: When we rinse our mouth several times a day, all the food particles stuck between our teeth get washed out. The peanut butter that was glued to our gums and the gummy worms we chewed on all head down the drain to that mysterious place. And not a moment too soon, for food stuck to our teeth starts the process of decay. When we rinse well or give a quick scrub to our teeth and tongue with the toothbrush, we are making sure we will have teeth in our mouth when we smile at our grandchildren!

Sniffing water up the nose: This is a tricky one. Many people don't like the sensation of water up their noses. But it is an important part of wudzu. So many people suffer from nasal allergies and sinus problems. *By sniffing that water up we are taking our nose to the spa, ditching the germs and breathing easier.* Taking a gentle snuff once a day will help us get used to the feeling of water going in and gradually the fresh feeling of being unplugged will be one we learn to enjoy.

Washing our face: Those with oily skin can use soap to wash during wudzu while those with dry skin can just freshen up with water and dab some lotion on in the end.



Ears: It is a blessing we are not able to look behind our ears, as we might find a layer of grime there. Not if we are doing our wudzu properly. Giving a quick swipe with wet hands on the front and back of our ears keeps them in prime condition.

Washing our arms and wiping our head and neck gives us a wonderful, wide-awake feeling without having to take a shower. It wakes us up if we were getting drowsy.

Last but not least we wash our feet. Since feet are on the ground they get grubby the most and need frequent washing, even more so in the summer. *Since poor hygiene and sweaty feet can cause many problems, the ritual of wudzu helps us stay away from the fungi that can invade our pink tootsies.* A good time to spend a few extra minutes scrubbing between your toes is when you come back from school. Those poor feet have been caged up for a long time and need to stretch out and be cleaned. They will smell much better!

AND ONCE WE ARE CLEAN, HEAD TO TOE,

WE ARE ALL READY TO GO

TO STAND BEFORE ALLAH AND PRAY.

Now you might be thinking: Who has time to do such a detailed job at each prayers time? Let's see how long it takes. Please grab a stopwatch, and a brother, sister or parent for a few minutes. Time them doing wudzu twice.

Once ask them to do a speedy, sloppy job and time how long it takes.

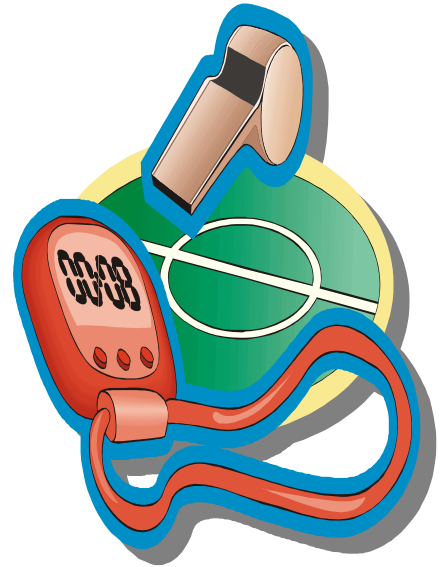
Then ask them to do a **proper** wudzu.

There will only be a difference of 30 seconds or so between the two! Does it really save any time if we rush?

It is surprising given the number of things done in wudzu, how little time it takes. Washing hands: 10 seconds. Quick swish with toothbrush and rinse: 10-20 seconds. Nose job: ten seconds. Face wash: 10 seconds. Arms wash: 10 seconds. Head, neck and ear wipe: 10 seconds and feet might take 5-10 seconds each. **All in all a decent wudzu just takes about a minute of your precious time** (provided you don't start doodling on the bathroom mirror with toothpaste). That minute could easily have been wasted daydreaming on the toilet or trying out different hair styles in the mirror. So the wudzu is well worth it the minute it takes to complete. The next time that Shaitan sends you some negative, distracting thoughts about wudzu, remind yourself that it is not hard at all nor does it take a long time.

Wudzu is a good time to get many annoying thoughts out of our heads and prepare to pray with a fresh clean mind and body. Have you noticed how if you take the time to focus on a good wudzu, it is easier to be mindful in salat. Cleaning and tidying ourselves is like the foundation for praying and if we lay the foundation well, the next stage goes well too.

Many happy mini makeovers to everyone



Grape juice

Sakina took a long look in the mirror, hairbrush in hand, and sighed in dismay. She felt like throwing the brush at the mirror and cracking it into a thousand pieces. But she did not. She slumped into her room, collapsed on her bed and burst into tears.

Saman rushed into the room, breathless from running, and called to her sister.

“Hey, get ready lazy bones. This is no time to nap. I finally talked Muhib into taking us to the mall. He’s in a good mood today. Hurry before he changes his mind.”

Sakina did not move.

“Sakina ... sis what’s the matter?” said Saman softly. She noticed the tissues lying by the bed.

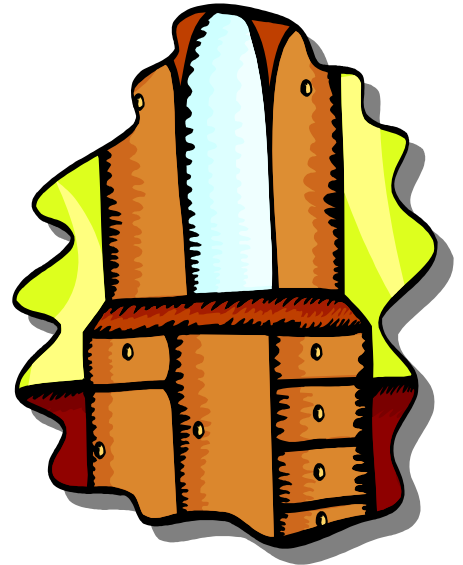
“Nothing! Nothing’s the matter” said Sakina angrily. “YOU go ahead and shop at the mall. Just leave ME alone!!”

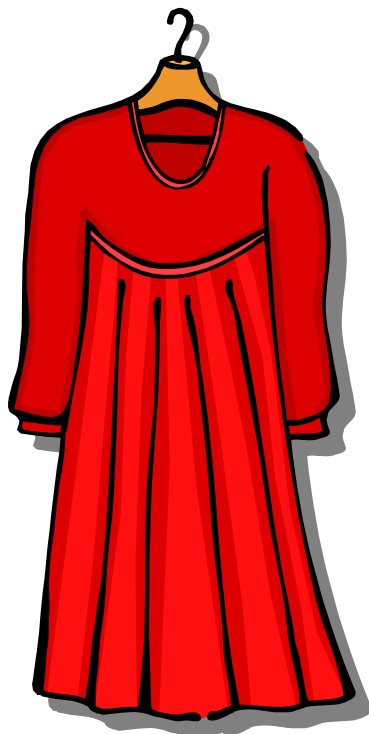
Just then Muhib peeked into their room. “Hurry up girls, I have a basketball game in two hours. Are you fashion queens having a hard time deciding what to wear to the mall, just to go shopping? Save the fashion for the party and get in the car.”

Saman pointed at Sakina and shook her head. Muhib’s eyes widened and then he sat down by Sakina and gently stroked her hair.

“Come on Sakina. Up and ready. You are so lucky to have the chance to go to an all-girls dance and have lots of fun. I just had to stay home from all my middle school dances. Let’s get you something beautiful to wear.”

“Something beautiful to wear?” came Sakina’s muffled voice. “All the beautiful dresses in the world cannot make me look any different than I do right now. Just leave me alone. *Please*”.





Muhib pursed his lips up and motioned for Saman to come out with him. Sakina heard the car start a few minutes later and she sat up and rubbed her temples. *They left without me*, she thought sadly, *knowing that she herself had told them to do that*. Her head was aching from crying, but it was no match for the ache in her heart. She had not wanted to spoil Saman's fun, yet sometimes it was too hard for her to act cheerful on occasions when everyone talked about looking good. Sakina was a twelve year old girl who was fond of clothes and shoes like most girls, but ever since she had started getting the white patches on her hands, she had stopped thinking of herself as pretty. The doctors had told her that it was a condition called Vitiligo, which caused patches of skin to lose the pigment melanin, and become completely white. The patches really stood out against her chocolate brown skin. There was no actual cure for it, but her mother did take her for phototherapy, and the special light was supposed to make her hands better. Except that before she got used to hiding her hands, she got new patches on her face near her chin, and there was no way to hide them.

Sakina was out helping her father plant some tomatoes when Saman and Muhib got back. She loved gardening. It helped her relax when she felt like she was going crazy. Her father would tell her about flowers and vegetables, stories about the farm he grew up on and they would plan their garden together. She loved her plants as if they were close friends, silent and loving, with no cruel questions to ask. She was busy digging when Saman came outside wearing her new dress. Sakina had to smile. Saman looked lovely in the crimson long dress with layered sleeves.



“You look super!” she smiled at her excited sister.

“Wait till you see the one Muhib chose for you,” said Saman.

“Me?” said Sakina. “I don’t need a dress Saman. I hope you have a wonderful time at the party, but I ... I’m not going.”

“Sakina, you look great, you always do, with or without a new dress. Most people don’t even notice those white patches. We can use some makeup to cover them up and no one is ever going to know”.

“Saman, you don’t understand” said Sakina softly, “This is not something I can hide and I hate it when people ask me what’s wrong with me, when they move away as if I had some horrible disease that they could catch, when they look at me with pity, or when they point and stare. I would much rather stay home with the people used to seeing me this way. I’m ok. I don’t even like parties.”

Saman sighed and went to change her dress.

She could only imagine how hard it was for Sakina to deal with Vitiligo, yet it made the whole family sad when they saw her pulling away from one activity after the other. She was still getting good grades in school, but the Sakina who loved to act in plays, sing, win debates and play chess was now becoming a girl who just wanted to stay at home. Saman knew she would not have much fun without her sister, yet she did not know how to help Sakina ignore the careless comments that people made and realize that she was still beautiful.

Muhib was the first one up on Saturday, leaving for an early basketball game. It was Sakina’s turn to make banana pancakes for breakfast. She was finishing her last bite, dripping with honey when she heard her mother say:



“Girls, I’m on my way to the store to prepare for tonight. Saman, can you please dust and vacuum the living room since Sakina made the pancakes.”

Saman rolled her eyes and sunk her head down onto the table.

“Are we having guests?” asked Sakina nervously.

“Yes dear, did you forget? Mrs. Lucy is in town and she is coming to dinner tonight. You remember my old teacher don’t you? She was the one who got me into teaching. Oh I think you were only two or three when you met her, Sakina. I remember you spilled grape juice all over her white shirt,” chuckled their mother as she headed out the door with a list in her hand.

Saman lifted her head, giggling, a bit of banana stuck on her forehead. “We’d better not have grape juice tonight” she said as Sakina threw the kitchen towel at her. Little did the girls know that tonight would be an evening to remember, but not because of grape juice.

By six o’ clock the house was sparkling clean, dinner was in the oven and Muhib had gone to pick up Mrs. Lucy from the hotel. As soon as she heard the garage door, Sakina tried to slip upstairs, but her mother caught her hand.

“We greet our guests at the door, honey. And you don’t have to worry about anything. Mrs. Lucy wasn’t even upset about the grape juice. She is blind.”

Sakina stared at her mother in surprise as she saw an elegant elderly lady with curly hair that matched her white cardigan come into the room. Muhib gently guided her with a hand on one arm and she had a cane in the other hand. Sakina looked around their home at all the things Mrs. Lucy could trip over and started to worry. She was about to move the small tables to the side when Mrs. Lucy called her name.

“And where’s that monkey Sakina? I never did get the grape juice out of my white blouse. Not that I minded it a whole lot”, she said laughing. Sakina went up to say



Salam and hug her. To her surprise Mrs. Lucy seemed to know her way around quite well with her cane.

Soon they were all seated at the dining table, eating her mother's delicious roast chicken and haleem. Saman and Muhib were talking a lot and laughing at Mrs. Lucy's hilarious jokes. Sakina knew that she could not see her white patches yet she still felt shy. She kept wondering how Mrs. Lucy could be so happy and energetic without being able to see anything. She was awakened from her thoughts by Saman nudging her under the table. Mrs. Lucy was talking to her.

"Now Sakina, since when did you become so quiet. I haven't heard your voice at all. I remember you as the bubbly kid who climbed in my lap and wouldn't get off, babbling non-stop. Are you still playing chess and winning debates?"

"N.... no I, uh, I just like gardening with my dad," mumbled Sakina.

"Gardening is a wonderful hobby. Can you please show me your garden after dinner?"

"Yes, of course, I would be glad to", replied Sakina, thankful that Mrs. Lucy did not persist in asking questions.

It was Saman and Muhib's turn for after dinner clear-up, so Sakina guided Mrs. Lucy outside. She was glad there were not many steps in the way. She showed her the tomato plants, strawberry runners, peppers and her flower bed with the precious mini roses. Mrs. Lucy seemed as impressed as if she could actually see everything. Sakina felt comfortable with the kind lady whose hands were soft and gentle in their grip. She disliked people who squeezed her hands too



tightly. Mrs. Lucy asked to sit somewhere and Sakina led her to the swing seat and sat down beside her. Mrs. Lucy patted her hair and then gently touched her face as if making out her features.

“My, my, you are even prettier than I remember. That little button nose has grown long and elegant and your high cheeks bones are just dee-lightful. Now, why did you say you stopped participating in debates?” she asked.

Sakina bowed her head. “I have Vitiligo, Mrs. Lucy. The ugly white patches are on my face and on both my hands. I don’t like being with people so much now because I get strange looks and questions and comments. So after school I just stay home as much as I can.”

Mrs. Lucy gently stroked her hands. “Dear girl, at your age everyone bothers about their appearance and I can understand how it would make you feel bad to have those patches. But will you let a small thing like that hold you back? It is still a small thing, you know, even though it may seem huge to you.”

Sakina did not say anything so Mrs. Lucy went on.

“Does this Vitiligo affect your tongue or your ears or your eyes?”

“No” said Sakina, suddenly glad that it was not worse.

“Does it stop you from walking, running, breathing, touching, laughing or crying?”

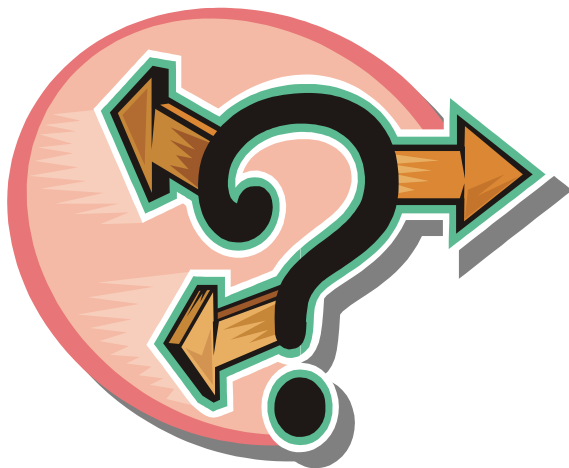
“No” said Sakina “It just ... looks strange”.

“So you can still feel happy, grateful and confident that the rest of your body is working just fine. You have no other disease and best of all you can see everything Sakina, even your white patches. If your eyes did not work, a thing like that would not bother you because you could not see the patches, or anything else.”



Sakina quietly thought about what Mrs. Lucy said. She was right. Sakina had let this one problem take over her entire life. She had forgotten to use and enjoy all the other blessings Allah had given her, just because of what someone might say or think about her. Mrs. Lucy seemed to read her thoughts.

“You know what, child? When I first lost my eyesight, it really bothered me how some people reacted. They would ask me silly questions, like could I get dressed by myself. Of course I can get dressed by myself. I’m blind, not paralyzed. At first I was annoyed, but then I realized most of these people had not met a blind person before and did not know how to deal with one. I then made some decisions: that I would be an active, capable and confident blind person and prove that I could do anything, so people who met me would think differently of the blind. I also



decided that I would answer any and all questions people asked me, till they ran out of questions. I needed to help them to understand me. I prayed to Allah every day to help me, make me strong and He did. It hasn’t been easy, but I have a wonderful life, dear. I am blind, but I teach, I travel, I cook, I sew and I enjoy a beautiful garden when I find one. I can smell your vegetables and flowers, sense the

freshness around me and the fragrance. Allah never takes everything from a person. He just wants to test us, to make us grow stronger, not to limit us.”

Sakina felt too full to speak so she threw her arms around Mrs. Lucy and hugged her and then she ran inside. When she came down a few minutes later, walking tall, she was wearing the beautiful sea green long dress that Saman and Muhib had bought for her.

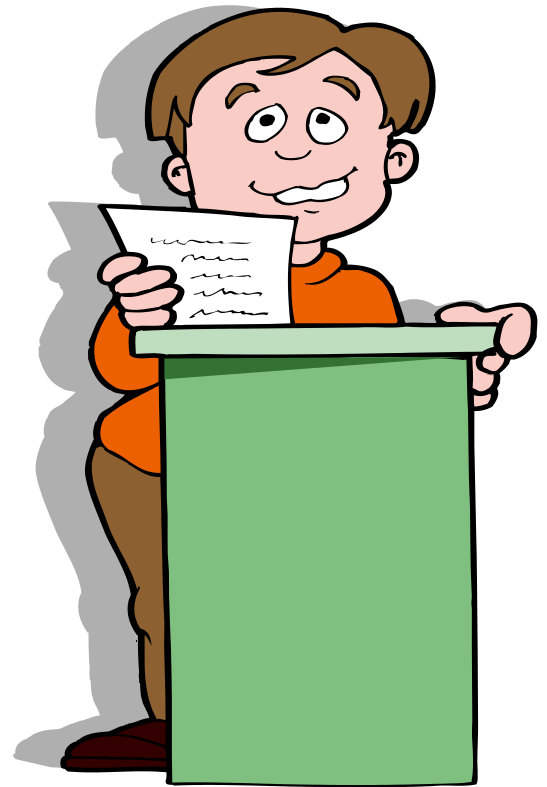
Saman shrieked in delight, “Sakina, you look like a princess. Oh I wish I had bought green too instead of red.”

Sakina saw her mother and father smile at each other, happy that the old Sakina was coming back.

“Can you sign me up for the debate team again Muhib?” she asked.

“Only if you promise you won’t beat the socks off your older brother” laughed Muhib.

Mrs. Lucy was grabbed her purse and stood up. “I think it’s my time to go, before this beautiful young lady attacks me again with some grape juice. Muhib, hurry son and help me out. I should have learned my lesson. I’m wearing white again.” And everyone laughed, Sakina the loudest of all, knowing what the kind old lady meant. She prayed quietly in her heart that she could pass on the lesson that Mrs. Lucy had just taught her: That all obstacles can be overcome when we think of our blessings more than the thing we are missing, and use faith to light up our way.



Now playing ...

The Body Orchestra

Lub dub, lub dub goes the heart

Pumping, pushing blood

swish swish through the veins, to the feet

What a wonderful beat

Chomp crunch go the teeth

Breaking food down

So it's easy to digest and absorb

Tasting and enjoying all that we eat

Gurgle, glomp goes the stomach

Churning, mixing

Food that's now mushy, once sour or sweet

Our body is amazing from our head to our toes

The more we exercise it, the faster it goes

Whoosh, sigh go our lungs

Pushing air in and out

Getting the oxygen we need

So we can run, jump and shout

Our body is amazing from our head to our toes

The more we exercise it, the faster it goes.

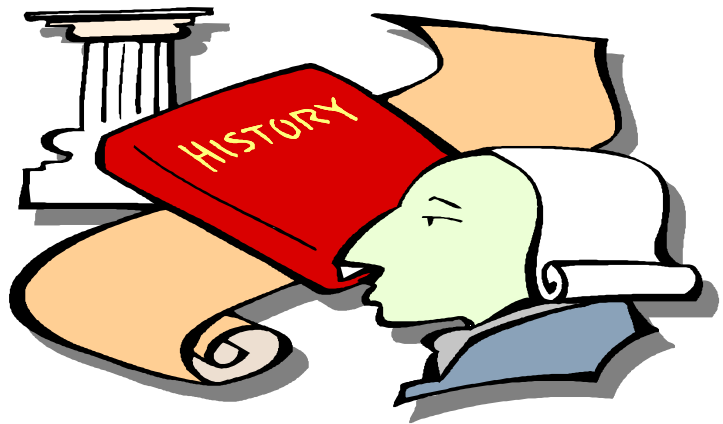


Ask Ayesha and she will answer your weird, wise and wacky questions

Dear Ayesha, I like to follow the rules because the rules make me feel safe, but my friends sometimes make fun of me and say I am not cool because I don't break the rules. Do you know any rules that are not too bad to break?

Dear Rule Rebel,

Rules! Rules! Rules! Doesn't it seem sometimes that life is just so chock full of rules that we can't even keep track of them? Our parents give us rules, teachers give us rules, and the government has its own set of rules and laws, and then to top it all off, God has given us an entire Book of Rules too! Some kids, like your friends maybe, get so tired of following all the rules that they decide it's just better to do what they want without regard to the rules. But do you know something? **Most rules exist for a specific reason; and if you understand the "why" behind the rule, following it just becomes a natural way of living life and not such a chore.**



Now, it may seem like there will be as many reasons behind why rules exist as there are rule themselves. Actually, that's not true! **There are only two basic reasons for all the rules in the world:**

- 1. To make yourself a better person and keep you from harming yourself**
- 2. To keep you from harming other people and keep them from harming you**

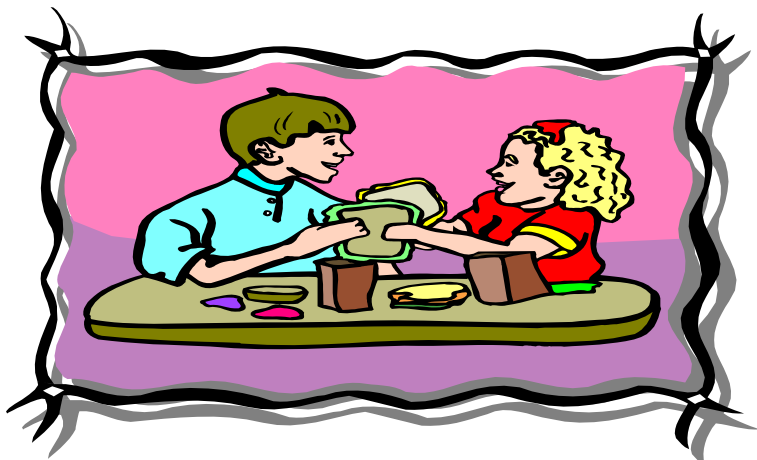
Roughly speaking, the Quran has split all rules into two categories that exist for the reasons I wrote above: the "rights of God" and "rights of mankind". Although there is no specific place in the Quran that mentions things this way, the beginning of the Quran says by way of introduction to it:

“This Book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who keep their duty, Who believe in the Unseen and keep up prayer and spend out of what we have given them” (2:2,3)

These verses tell us that the Quran is a guide for us. Also, it tells us the two basic principles that should guide our lives,

1. Believing in the Unseen
2. Keeping up prayer and spending out of what we have been given

Now, remember, the Quran usually contains deeper meanings than what the words might seem to say at first. So let us look a little closer at these two principles. The first rule we have to always follow is, believing in the Unseen, or in Allah. What does believing in Allah really mean? Allah is the greatest source of good. To believe in Him, His ultimate power over all things and people, and the perfection of His being is to recognize our own imperfection and how far we have to go to make ourselves more like Him. In other words, Allah is the most perfect example of all the good things that we should try to be. If we always look at Him as an example of how good we should be, and not compare ourselves to the people around us, we will always try to make ourselves better and better! This idea has also been called the right of Allah. In other words, it is the duty we owe to Allah and our own souls, the rule that says that we should act to make ourselves better people.



The second principle is to keep up prayer and spend out of what we have been given. Prayer is the best way to remember the beauty of the Divine, to remember how wonderful Allah is. To pray is also asking to do those actions

that help us, and those around us. Similarly, to spend out of what we have been given means using the things Allah has given us to help others. This doesn't necessarily mean giving money to the poor (although that kind of charity is included in it too). It also means using your skills in a useful way so that they help all the people around you. If you're good at math and your friend isn't, help your friend. If you're good at telling jokes, make someone who is sad smile. If you're good at listening, sit down with your grandparents and have them tell you about when they were kids. If you don't think you have any particular skills, give your time! Help your mom with all the stuff she has to do. Ask your dad if he needs you to do anything to help him out or if he would just like to hang out with you when he comes home from work. *We all have a duty to help other people, and this is what is referred to as "the rights of mankind", or the rule that tells us to help other people and never, ever hurt them.*

So let's get back to your question. Is there ever a rule it is OK to break? Well, it would be hard for me to come up with a list of rules it is OK to break and not OK to break. Instead, I would say that **when you are faced with a rule, think of the reason for it. Does it exist to make you a better person? Does it exist to keep**



you from hurting someone else? If so, you should probably follow it. In fact, sometimes, you may not know why a rule exists but if it doesn't really go against something you believe, you should probably follow it. When I was in school, I never understood why I wasn't allowed to chew gum in class. I thought it was a stupid rule. When I was in college though, and

that rule didn't exist anymore, I was sitting next to a girl in class who was chomp, chomp, chomping away on her gum to the point that I couldn't even hear the lecture. I don't remember anything about the lecture but I remember the sound of chomping gum! Suddenly the no gum rule made sense; it was so that the gum chewing doesn't disrupt other people! So if a rule doesn't make sense, just remember, it may just be that you don't understand the reason behind it.

Every once in a while, you may be faced with a rule that doesn't make sense or goes against another rule set by someone else. For example, when I was in school, there was a rule that girls had to wear short shorts in our P.E. class. But my parents didn't allow me to wear short shorts and I know that in the Quran it tells us to dress decently so other people will treat us with respect and dignity. So I felt the short shorts rule was a rule I had to break. I wore sweat pants instead. At first, I got into trouble; but then I explained to the teacher why I couldn't wear those short shorts. She probably thought I was weird. My friends thought I was weird. So what, though? With time they got over it and who wants friends that think you're weird just because of the way you dress anyway?



The short shorts rule probably isn't the kind of rule your friends are encouraging you to break. I get that. I guess the point I am trying to make to you is that it isn't about the particular rule. It isn't about following it or breaking it just to prove you're cool. It's about being yourself, making yourself a better person, and not hurting anyone else. Don't think that kids are the only ones who have to follow rules. We all do, even as grown-ups. Sure, grown-ups don't get detention or grounded if they don't follow the rules. But everything has consequences. **Sometimes, when you break a rule, you end up hurting someone else. Sometimes, you break a rule and hurt yourself by acting against your soul.** Either way, you may not realize the consequences now, but eventually, we'll see the result of everything we do. It may be now, or maybe Allah will show us later. Always remember though, nothing we do goes unnoticed by Allah. So do your best to act in a way that fulfills your duty to Allah, to your soul, and to all those people around you!