



The Traditional Learning Methodology

Dr. Abdel Hadi Honnerkamp

I was once with a group of Moroccan Intellectual University professors from the Qarawayin and one of them said about me to his companions, "This person from the West entered Islam through a process of reflection and intellectual reasoning, therefore, his Islam is better than ours." I was thinking about the incorrectness of his statement when a man sitting next to me leaned over and whispered, "They do not know that it is Allah who inspires hearts with Islam. The Orientalists may know more about Islam than many uneducated Muslims do, but Allah has not tendered their hearts. It is the touch of the heart that brings people to Islam."

I found his words insightful. In traditional education, there is something that touches the student's heart in almost every sitting with the scholars. Traditional education is a means of transmitting the intrinsic unity that is a part of Islam, the concept of *la ilaha illa'Llah* is not compartmentalized. When a student of traditional knowledge studies *fiqh*, it is not because he is eager to know the particular details of water, but rather because he needs to perform his ablution correctly and

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This newsletter is intended to assist those who hear this call to raise their understanding and practice of their Deen. The process of study, reflection, and dhikr that results in increased knowledge, understanding, and practice of the Deen is such that it requires personal commitment. No newsletter, no teacher, no program can serve as a substitute for individual commitment. Our intent is simply to broaden and strengthen the network of those who share this interest. We would announce activities and list useful resources. From time to time we will publish pieces from texts. We will try to direct you to books, tapes, classes and teachers from which you may derive inspiration and guidance. We welcome articles and material from all who want to participate in this endeavor. The future development of this newsletter will depend substantially upon the information and material you provide for the purpose of increasing our common access to useful resources and to keep each other informed of what is happening or planned. And Tawfiq is from Allah alone.

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achieve the higher goal of obeying his Creator. By transmitting this knowledge to the student, the scholar provides him with the tools necessary to attain his life's goal. It is this relationship between student and teacher and the conviction that what is being transmitted is the truth that sets traditional education apart from the modern educational process.

The method of transmitting traditional knowledge is analogous to a teacher giving his student a puzzle box. On the box is a picture of what the puzzle is supposed to look like. The teacher informs the student that he is to form the picture and that the box contains all the pieces needed to accomplish his task. He promises him, "There are no pieces from any other puzzle in this box, and if you are patient and apply your time wisely, each piece will come together and form the picture, and I assure you that the picture is beautiful and will give you great joy." In general, this is what a traditional scholar is doing when he tells his student that the Qur'an and *ahadith* of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, form a complete picture. We may not at any given moment see the picture with our own eyes, but we are open to the fact that this picture indeed exists and will eventually be realized. Some people criticize traditional schools of *hifz* by saying, "Look at these children. They memorize Qur'an not even knowing the meaning of what they are memorizing." This may be true; however, it is the words they memorize now, and the meaning behind the words that

they will internalize as they grow into adulthood. Traditional education is a means of transmitting necessary information for the gradual realization of eternal truths.

Modern education, on the other hand, is a system based on individual discovery. A teacher enters his classroom with a box containing puzzle pieces and tells his students, "I myself don't know what the picture is to look like, so I cannot tell you. But there are pieces in this box. I'm not sure if the pieces are from one puzzle or from several different puzzles, but here they are. Try to put them together. Find your own way. Discover it yourself." This type of educational system produces individuals who reach maturity still wondering what life is all about, unsure of their purpose as human beings. Their societies have lost sight of the reality that Islam has preserved and will continue to preserve until the end of time.

Students of traditional knowledge and modern educational systems alike are confronted with questions about their existence. What is real? Are some things more real than others? What are human beings? Are we thoughts in God's mind? Are we real? What is our goal and how do we achieve it? The methodology by which traditional education answers these fundamental questions is what sets it apart from other systems. The fact that the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, are the ultimate source of all Islamic knowledge is what makes tradi-

tional Islamic education a working whole and a totality that does not compartmentalize.

We don't have a faqih in one area and someone following the path of realization of God in another area. We don't have a linguist on one side and someone studying rhetoric on the other. In the west, everyone has a specialty that no one else knows as much about because it is so specific, whereas, in Islam, all sciences are interrelated by their reliance on the Qur'an and ahadith as their foundation and criterion.

It is not to say that Muslims don't use *kashf* (unveiling), intellectual reasoning or experience to form conclusions, as these are all means for attaining knowledge prescribed within the Qur'an itself. But whereas in the western system of education these processes are given final authority, Islam gives precedence to the Qur'an and Sunnah. If an individual has a *kashf* that is not in accordance to the Qur'an or Sunnah, it is simply invalid. If a thinker in the west were to say that a certain conclusion he had reached through intellectual reasoning was negated by something written in a divinely revealed book, he would be thought a fool. When we go to the *fuqaha*, *muhadithin*, or masters of the path for knowledge, our trust in them and their seal of authenticity stems from their own conformation to the Qur'an and Sunnah of the

Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

Now that we have established the source of all traditional knowledge, we must determine, what does Islam say is real? I recently read a letter written by a famous sheikh of Fez, Sidi Muhammad Al-Atar, in which he discussed a multi-leveled, God-centered reality. Allah manifests Himself in all of His creation. Nothing is devoid of His being and His light, the awareness of which should instill in all Muslims respect for everything, whether it is an ant walking on the ground or a lifeless stone. Between Allah and His creation exists a vertical relationship; we are entirely dependent upon Him. Between His creatures — humans, animals, vegetables, or minerals, a horizontal relationship of *tamul* is at work. This is the essential spirituality, the essential sacredness that influences our interaction with the rest of Allah's creatures. In them we find a means of expressing our own humanity. It is a representation of the Oneness that forms the basis of our creed. The inherent unity of traditional education is not explicitly in sitting in circles and studying the *mutun* of *fiqh* and *ahadith*. Traditional learning rather, escalates into something much greater that leaves no aspect of the world we live in untouched by its sacredness, and that is in a sense what makes it so totally traditional.

What is a human being from the Islamic perspective? All humans, whether Muslim or not, are viewed as slaves (*Al 'abd*) of the Creator. Some slaves are in revolt and some are seeking the means to realize their servanthood. Regardless, they are one and all slaves of Allah. The human being is the slave in one respect and the *khalifah* in another, going back to the horizontal relationship between human beings and the rest of Allah's creation. In addition, the Sufis might say the human being is a reflection of Allah Himself. "*Allah man la yarham la yurham,*" one who does not show mercy to others will not be shown mercy by Allah.

The human being, therefore, is a slave of Allah, a representative of Allah on earth, and also Allah's reflection. Yet at the same time, each of us is a unique individual. We have oneness and we have unity. An integral part of uncovering the nature of humans is discovering what the human being is capable of knowing. Allah Most High has created within us areas of awareness. Thus, we have *nafs*,

qalb, *sirr*, *ruh* and the centers of *aql*. Each of these centers of awareness are posited within the Qur'an and sayings of the masters, and they allow us to obtain knowledge of the Unity of Allah.

The role of the *aql* is described in the Qur'an as an intermediary between the *nafs* and the heart. The heart has difficulty communicating directly with the *nafs*, perhaps because the *nafs* hardly believes the heart exists. The *'aql*, however, quite often succeeds in convincing the *nafs* about the arguments received from the level of the heart, moving it into confirmation with the path of unity. For example, the "adhan of fajr" *nafs* says, "Oh no, 3:30 a.m. - I am not getting up." The heart knows through receiving light from *Allah ta'ala*, "You will be able to prostrate to Him and be close. You will be able to remember His Name. It will be wonderful." The *aql* says, "All right, look *nafs* if you get up and make your ablutions and pray, there will be great things in store for you. And so the *nafs* can be convinced to get up. And it seems that the *aql* *Allah ta'ala* has given us was given as a means of addressing the *nafs*. Because if we look at *nafs*, *aql*, heart, *sirr*, and *ruh* these are different.

Our masters have advised us concerning them. In *The Degrees of the Soul*, by Shabrawi, this topic is discussed in significantly more depth. The lower degrees are not aware of the higher ones. The higher ones are aware of the lower ones, so the *nafs* does not really even know exactly that there is a *qalb* to aspire towards, and in the same way Abu Abdulrahman al-Sulamy and other people who have talked about this subject: when the knowledge of a higher degree, of a higher center of knowledge comes down to a lower one it loses its meaning. So that when knowledge of the heart falls into the knowledge of the *nafs* it becomes ostentation and pretension. This is why many of the people of the path of spiritual purification are definitely against speaking too openly about the aspects of Divine Reality.

The above article is an excerpt from the author's lecture at the 1998 Fez Rihla program.

The Context for Dar al Islam Activities

Anas Coburn



Madeleine Albright chatting with Muslims from the Washington, D.C. area at an *iftar* dinner held at the State Department, a Sufi conference covered by CSPAN, documentary footage of an American Muslim on Hajj shown on a major network, a fundraising event held at Madison Square Gardens – it isn't hard to find evidence of increasing Muslim involvement in American society, and increasing recognition of the presence of Muslims in North America. Our brothers and sisters are active in many different ways, each according to their judgement about where their contributions are needed. We have Islamic Centers, media organizations, political organizations, educational organizations, associations of physicians, social workers, engineers and social scientists. There are Sufi organizations, Salafi organizations, and ideological organizations like the Ikhwan al Muslimeen and the Jamat al Islami, all competing for attention in the North American Community. Until very recently, however, there were no organizations with a stated agenda of representing the traditional, mainstream Islam. What this has meant is that those with the loudest voices, often representing the extremes, have tended to dominate the discourse about Islam in North America. This is especially significant in the context of the current re-examination of the role of religion in American public life. As Luis E. Lugo, Director of the Pew Charitable Trusts writes,

Given that the United States is the most religious of Western societies, it is not at all surprising that it also is witnessing a similar revival in public faith. Even as the older Protestant "mainline" churches continue their steep decline in numbers and cultural influence, new groups have emerged to take their place. Most prominent among these, of course, is the large and growing evangelical wing of the Protestant community.

... There is also a growing debate within the Jewish community about the negative consequences of a secularized public square, not least on

the religious identity of that community, and about how resources in that tradition can contribute to the renewal of American democracy. For obvious reasons, these discussions are closely linked with contentious debates within the state of Israel itself concerning the proper relation of religion to democracy. Along similar lines, will not our growing Muslim population also add to the mix of American politics elements from the wider debates about religion and public life that now convulse the Islamic world?

Recently, the Pew Charitable Trusts awarded \$1.2 million for a study of Muslims in the American Public Square (MAPS). The Co-Directors of the MAPS project, Dr. Sulayman Nyang and Zahid Bukhari, recently held a meeting with Muslim leadership in the Washington, DC area at the Center for Christian /Muslim Understanding at Georgetown University. During the meeting, five sets of issues were discussed: living as a Muslim in a pluralistic society, the evolving role of Islamic Centers/Mosques, the impact of gender, ethnic and generational differences, the institutional response of the Muslim community in setting a national agenda, and the struggle for international issues and its impact on the domestic arena. Dar al Islam representatives emphasized the necessity of understanding the thirst for authentic knowledge of the *deen* that exists across a broad segment of the Muslims of America. But this wave of interest in sustained traditional study of the *deen* remains appreciated and understood by only a minority of the leadership.

In 1994 Dar al Islam initiated

programs to encourage traditional study of the deen. In June of that year Dar al Islam held the second Annual North American Muslim Powwow in Abiquiu New Mexico. The theme for the gathering was "Knowledge Based Islam." Present at that gathering were three figures who were to go on and play key roles in encouraging the kind of study and practice of Islam that is now spreading with such vitality among students in North America -- Zayd Shakir, Hamza Yusuf and Nuh Keller. These scholars, together with Abdullah Al Qadi and a growing number of others, represent an approach to Islam which is based on a solid, traditional, mainstream scholarship. This is, of course, nothing other than authentic Islam informed by knowledge and wisdom as it has been articulated and practiced by its great scholars for 1400 years. In the week following the 1994 Powwow Dar al Islam began to carry out the programs we call Deen Intensives with Sh Hamza Yusuf and Sh Abdullah Al Qadi as the core faculty. The Badr Foundation in New Jersey conducted a Deen Intensive in December 1995, with the same core faculty in addition to Sh Abdal Hakim Murad. As word of the programs spread among young Muslims across North America and England, the demand for more of these intensive programs quickly grew. Very soon there were not enough Hamzas' and Sh Abdullahs to meet the demands. By the summer of 1996 the concept of Deen Intensives had spread far and wide, and by now students from South Africa, Hongkong, Sweden and Australia

have attended the Intensives.

Today, the concept of the Deen Intensive has become a meme imbedded among the Muslim students in North America. As the number of Muslims participating in intensives and regular halaqas grows, Dar al Islam is working with the organizers of various deen intensives to find additional ways to facilitate the growth of this trend. One of the most important tasks before us related to the Deen Intensives, spring from the word of our beloved Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, "I have come to complete noble character." We have noticed in ourselves and among many of our brothers and sisters a serious erosion of the *adab* that characterizes interactions among the people of *taqwa*. In conferences and meetings, in interpersonal relations and even in the masjid themselves, it seems the carpet of mutual respect and civility is becoming threadbare. Even among students of sacred knowledge, it is only too often that tongues are out of control and hearts clouded. Our leaders, Sheikh Hamza, Sheikh Nuh, and Imam Zayd Shakir all emphasize the practice of *adab* and control of the tongue, and even prescribe exercises for their students in this regard. We believe it is time to reach beyond "preaching to the choir" and carry the message of the vital importance of *adab* to brothers and sisters beyond the current circle of those participating in Deen Intensives.

We would like to see the erosion of adab become a topic addressed in a variety of forums, and through a multiplicity of media. The tremendous light and positive energy in the hearts of Muslims across the land can be increased if we can but develop our taste for the sweetness of the good word and modest behavior and our abhorrence of behavior that falls short of the mark.

Dar al Islam is engaged in a number of activities besides the Deen Intensives. These include our Teachers Institutes and other workshops for Secondary School Teachers, Speakers Bureau, and our work to encourage a value-centered approach to instruction in Muslim Schools, which we call the Tarbiyah Project. We continue to offer workshops in Shura and Consensus Building, as well as custom-designed seminars and workshops on issues relating to nonprofit management and development. We are working to make our IslamAmerica website a valuable resource for those interested in materials relating specifically to the development of Islam in America. All of this is tied to our central mission: changing the fabric of society by strengthening the Muslims and their contributions to it and by educating the non-Muslims about Islam and what it has to offer.

Dar al Islam looks to a future where Muslims of America live Islam with a depth that nourishes their spirits, a diversity that is a cause for celebration; a delight that sustains the quest for increased knowledge; and with such understanding, compassion, and empathy that calling America to Islam is an integral part of their lives.

Andalusian Reflections

Dr. Umar Faruq Abd-Allah Wymann-Landgraf

In the 10th century C.E, Hroswitha, a Saxon princess and earliest known German poetess, wrote of Cordoba, the caliphal capital of al-Andalus, that it was: "the ornament of the world." In the Age of Hroswitha, Islam and civilization were synonymous. The Abode of Islam had a fabulous pinnacle in the east: Sunni Persia, and another, more spectacular, in the west: al-Andalus.

Christian historians in the Middle Ages spoke of "the two Spains," one Christian and the other Muslim. They meant by Spain, "Hispania": the Iberian Peninsula, Spain and Portugal, not the political entity called Spain today. There was no doubt which of the "two Spains" was the greater and more splendid. Europeans have called the Andalusians Moors and their culture, Moorish. Our names: Moore, Morris, Maurice, and Moritz, were medieval forms of "Moor" and "Moorish".

Muslims, on the other hand, spoke of al-Andalus," embracing all parts of Iberia that were Muslim. "Al-Andalus" expanded or receded, as the fortunes of Islam in Portugal and Spain ebbed and flowed. Muslims focused not on the phenomenon of the "two Spains" but on that of the "two banks" [*al-'udwatan*]: the northern and southern shores of the straits of Gibraltar. The immense cultural, commercial, political, and military power of al-Andalus lay in the secret of its

"the two banks." When the banks were united or well linked, al-Andalus was the richest, most formidable land of Europe. When the "two banks" and their peoples were severed, al-Andalus weakened and faced defeat before the barbarous armies from "the vast land" [*al-ard al-kabirah*]: Europe beyond the Pyrenees.

Al-Andalus was among the greatest manifestations of civilization Europe has ever witnessed. The Andalusians were consciously European and cultivated that identity in their poetry. An Andalusian poet might depart from norms and speak, for example, of a beautiful woman with green eyes and red hair, not the traditional Arabian beauty with black hair and big dark eyes. Ethnically, Andalusian Muslims did not differ significantly from their Christian neighbors to the north.

Andalusian civilization was tolerant and cosmopolitan. It embraced Muslims, Christians, and Jews. Its Muslim population was diverse: Iberians [Latins and Celts], Berbers, Arabs, Teutons, sub-Saharan Africans, Slavs, Persians, and others. In its darkest times, al-Andalus knew ugly racial divisions, especially between Berber and Arab, but succeeded rapidly in Arabicizing its population and wielding them into one body. Many Christians and Jews embraced Islam. Maimonides [Musa ibn Maimun],

the great Jewish physician and Talmudic scholar of Cordoba, is reported to have held that the greatest danger before an Andalusian Jew was attraction to Islam. The Muslims of al-Andalus had a sincere and deep attachment to Islam and Arabic. In practice, their society was trilingual. It cultivated a sophisticated Qur'anic Arabic but also used Andalusian colloquial Arabic and "*al-'Ajamiyah*" [*aljamiado*], a romance tongue close to Castilian Spanish but written in Arabic script.

The appeal of the Andalusian way of life enticed Christians and Jews and many populations on the perimeters. Andalusian Christians and Jews took pride in the Arabic tongue and Arab habits and styles. Several Andalusian Jews wrote on the virtues of Arabic and held it superior to Hebrew. Judah ben Tibbon, a physician and translator of Arabic works into Hebrew, held that Arabic was the richest language in the world and the best suited for every type of writing. He felt Arabic, as opposed to Hebrew, was the supreme poetic language and the perfect language for philosophy, since, by its nature, it penetrated the hearts of matters, made the obscure dear, and expounded subtleties.

People of the Book, especially Christians, were called "*musta'ribun*" (mozarabes): "those who imitate the Arabs." When Alfonso VI reconquered large regions of northern and central Iberian in the 11th century, he had to "Europeanize" the Christians of his new domains and make them "Latin" Christians again instead of the Arab

Christians they had become. Alfonso introduced the Roman liturgy in place of the Mozarabic. He patronized Romanesque art instead of Moorish and spread the Carolingian script. From the time of Alfonso VI on, one of the chief offices of the Church and, later, the Inquisition would be to obliterate Moorish culture and replace it with that of Latin Christianity.

The "Arabic speaking" phase of Islamic civilization in Iberia lasted more than eight hundred years from 711 until after the fall of Granada in 1492. But Muslim influence in Iberia lasted longer. Millions of Muslims remained in Iberia after Granada's fall. Those of them who could not leave freely or flee successfully were forcefully converted to Catholicism in the 16th century and forbidden to speak Arabic or keep their Moorish culture. The Church divided Iberia between Old Christians and New, two distinct and unequal social classes kept under the Inquisition's scrutiny for centuries. Forcefully converted Muslims were called "Moriscos" [little Moors], while forcefully converted Jews were called "Marranos" [swine]. Often Morisco children were taken away to be raised as Christians in monasteries, cloisters, and other Church institutions.

Large populations of Moriscos were expelled from the south of Spain and from its eastern coastal regions and were resettled in the north. But extreme measures could not kill the spirit of Islam in Moriscan hearts. They rebelled frequently and continually begged Muslim pow-

ers to come to their rescue. Ultimately, Spain expelled hundreds of thousands of Moriscos from 1609 to 1614. But this same act helped break the power and wealth of Imperial Spain, which relied on the energies and skills of its Moriscos. It marked the end of Spain's golden age. Never again would "the Catholic kings" recapture their lost glory. The French cardinal, Richelieu, chief minister of Louis XIII, said of the expulsion of the Moriscos that it was: ". . . the most audacious and barbarous counsel recorded in the history of all preceding ages."

The genocide of the Moors and Moriscos, Jews and Marranos contrasts to the Islamic toleration, which had been the hallmark of al-Andalus from its beginning and one of the secrets of its great achievements. The "Grand Inquisition," which began in 1483, was "the first act of united Spain." Most European Christians loathed the Inquisition, especially when Spain, in its Inquisitorial spirit, sought to crush Protestant movements. Philip II sent his "Invincible Armada" with such an intent against newly Protestant England in 1588. Spain's murderous wars against the Dutch Protestants, which went on intermittently from 1579 until 1648, were the Inquisition's work. European hatred of the Inquisition and reaction against it were among the reasons for the Protestant Reformation's success. The 19th century French historian, Charles, Comte de Montalembert said: "I grant indeed that the Inquisition in Spain destroyed Protestantism in its germ, but I defy anyone to prove

that it has not given it throughout Europe the support of public opinion and the sympathies of outraged humanity." Yet the Inquisition's long and grotesque shadow hung over the West for centuries. The bloody Spanish civil war (1936 - 1939) was in part the fruit of the brutal division of Spanish social classes that the Inquisition fostered. Even the Ku Klux Klan, the genocidal policies of nazi fascism, and Slobodan Milosevic's policies of "ethnic cleansing" belong to its bastard offspring.

Andalusian Muslims were generally conservative. New developments in the eastern Islamic world were not readily received in al-Andalus. But its civilization was not rigid. Rather, it blended a profound understanding of Islamic tradition with unique originality and improvisation when circumstances required. Andalusian legal scholars allowed their Christian minorities to erect new churches, for example, whereas other Islamic lands only allowed them to keep their old ones.

Cordoba and other great Andalusian cities were brilliant centers of learning. Students from as far away as England and continental Europe came there to study. Roger Bacon was among them and held that learning Arabic was essential to scientific progress. Like their counterparts in the east, Andalusians made intelligent use of *waqf* properties, which supported free hospitals and free schools, maintained roads and bridges, quartered armies and garrisons, provided for official journeys into Europe to

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free captives and prisoners of war, and even provided mercifully for beasts of burden too old to labor. The legal precedents of Islamic Iberia are an important source for the minority fiqh for Muslims in Europe and America today.

Al-Andalus produced many of the greatest minds of the Islamic and Arabic sciences. Their works remain unmatched even now. Andalusians also mastered mathematics, geometry, the physical sciences, and medicine. They put down the foundations of the history of science. Even Moorish music was an advanced science, Andalusian music being among the most highly developed music forms the world has known and one of the sources of our classical music. Andalusians did not just use their music for enjoyment but also to cure the insane. Moorish architecture and fine arts developed traditional models with distinctive originality. The profound developments of Andalusian art may be traced through the centuries from the great mosque of Cordoba to Granada's al-Hamra' in its silent majesty.

During its illustrious centuries, al-Andalus was powerful on land

and sea. Like Spain in its golden age, the force of Andalusian arms was based on sea power. Formidable strength in arms was matched with cultural, economic, and political prowess. For centuries, al-Andalus enjoyed an economic prosperity that eclipsed the former achievements of Roman Spain. Andalusian economic power affected continental Europe, Britain, Ireland, and Scandinavia and altered earlier trade patterns. The powerful Andalusian economy brought prosperity to those within and around Iberia, but it triggered unwittingly centuries of poverty and backwardness in northern Europe by siphoning off the flow of its traditional commerce.

Throughout the world, Andalusians were famed as craftsmen, agrarians, and breeders of horses and livestock. For centuries, the Andalusian Arabian was the finest horse known to Europe. It was also the ancestor of the American Indian pony, which descended from horses the Spanish had brought to the New World.

Andalusians mastered waterworking to a degree not thoroughly understood even today. They produced brilliant steels and alloys, fashioned excellent swords and weapons. They built ships worthy of the Atlantic and mosques and other edifices that will be admired until the end of time. They fashioned silks and made quality textiles, leather goods, ceramics, furniture,

lamps, chandeliers, perfume burners, and jewelry. It was said that in Moorish Seville, one could find anything imaginable even "sparrows' milk." The Muslims of al-Andalus introduced oranges, lemons, cotton, and mulberry trees to Europe and led the medieval world in an agricultural revolution. Olive trees last for centuries, and it is said many of those on the hills of Spain today were planted by Moorish hands.

The Spanish and Portuguese identities are linked inseparably to the heritage of al-Andalus, although, even today, few Iberian historians have been able to come to terms with that legacy. But they are not the only heirs of the Andalusian past. The histories of Europe and the Americas are also tied to al-Andalus in subtle and unexpected ways. The emergence and dominance of the Vikings from the 9th till the 11th centuries is a profound part of western European and Russian history. This complex phenomenon had several causes, but the powerful Andalusian economy of the time, which sapped economic growth in northern Europe, was among them. The Norman kingdom of 10th century France, which conquered Britain in the 11th, is among the critical developments of medieval history. The Normans originated as Danish Vikings whom the Andalusians defeated on the Atlantic in one of the greatest naval battles in history. Victory saved al-Andalus from depredations but sent the defeated Viking remnants to northern France, where they cut out for themselves their new "Norman [Northman] kingdom". In the



Courtyard in al - Hamra'

10th and 11th centuries, Muslims had a small governance in Switzerland and eastern France. Toynbee regarded this presence as one of the crucial developments of the Middle Ages prior to the crusades. Swiss Muslim power was related to al-Andalus, directly and indirectly. The Swiss were the only Muslims ever to make the Roman Pope pay *jizyah*. It took the combined armies of Byzantium and continental Europe to defeat them.

There seems to have been a friendly connection between al-Andalus and medieval Ireland. At the time, Ireland was a land of learning and had the most advanced civilization in northern Europe. The Andalusian period of Jewish history was Judaism's golden age. Arabized Andalusian Jews studied Hebrew grammar and lexicology in the light of the great Arab grammarians and cultivated other Arabic and Islamic sciences. Andalusian Jews produced many of the great books of Judaism. The banishment of Jewry from Spain and Portugal in the 15th and 16th centuries dealt Judaism a blow from which it never recovered. Zionism also has roots in al-Andalus, and it has been said that the Zionist movement should be dated from the destruction of Andalusian Jewry. Formerly Andalusian Jews were behind the principal intellectual developments of Judaism in its post-banishment period.

Andalusians may have reached America before Columbus discovered the west Indies in 1492. He claimed to have seen populations there dressed like Granadan Moors. The discovery

of the Americas should not be separated from the Andalusian background and the broader relation between medieval Europe and the Islamic world at large. Moriscos built Columbus' ships in Moorish dry docks. The theory that the earth is round was Moorish, not Christian. Muslims had elaborated the idea and measured the earth's circumference seven hundred years before Columbus. Columbus brought an Arabic translator to the Caribbean, Luis Tories [a Morisco or Marrano], hoping to find and communicate through Muslim populations in the Far East, that he imagined he had found. Thus, Arabic was the first language Europeans used on American soil to try to speak with the native populations.

Even the brutal Spanish conquests of native Americans from the late 15th until the mid 16th centuries must be understood against the backdrop of the "Moorish problem" of Catholic Spain. Ponce de Leon's Caribbean battle cry was: "*Santiago mata Moros*" [Saint James, kill Moors]. It was the old battle cry against the Moors. Ponce de Leon and his Iberian soldiers had been galvanized by the genocide they and their forefathers perpetrated against the Andalusian peoples. Their American conquests enacted the reconquest of Spain. But it is also said the *conquistadores* sought to outdo the great deeds of the Islamic conquerors of the 7th and 8th centuries. Sometimes they imitated them, as, for example, when they founded Lima (Peru) and Popayan (Columbia) after the model of the Arab garrison cities, al-Kufah and al-Basrah. The

spirit, techniques, and treacheries of the Spanish campaigns in America had been honed in the long and difficult campaigns against the Moors. Officially, Moriscos were forbidden to emigrate to the Americas, but in reality they came in large numbers, especially to Mexico, Guatemala, Cuba, Columbia, Peru, and Bolivia. Moreover, the Jesuits spread in Latin America a special type of indolent and indulgent Catholicism, which the Inquisition had tailored to depoliticize and control the Spanish Moriscos.

Many Andalusians, Moors and Moriscos, were able to escape Iberia and the Inquisition. They had a tremendous influence on the Islamic world, to which they emigrated. Andalusians helped Arabicize many parts of Africa, especially what are today the Sudan and Mauritania. Andalusian soldiers and sailors made up powerful contingents in the Muslim forces of Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, and other Islamic lands. Many of the corsairs and "Barbary pirates" were Andalusians, some of whom saw themselves not as pirates but as worthy fighters trying to get back the Andalus their forefathers had lost.

Today, the legacy of al-Andalus has many lessons for Muslims and non-Muslims alike. We, Muslims, think of al-Andalus as an Islamic "paradise lost" In reality, it was not a paradise on earth. It had beautiful and ugly sides.

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It accomplished great achievements but had terrible failures. We must not romanticize al-Andalus but ponder what of its legacy was good and what was bad. Had it not been for its dark side, al-Andalus would have never ceased to exist.

Among the greatest lessons al-Andalus teaches is the nobility of toleration and harmonious coexistence between peoples and faiths. But it also narrates a tale of oppression and genocide that must be told the world.

Today, the Spanish and Portuguese governments have changed and taken praiseworthy stances toward Muslims in their countries. They have also opened the Inquisitorial files. A modern Tunisian scholar tells of going to Spanish municipalities and requesting their Inquisitorial records. In some cases, women officials would bring them to him and hand them over with tears in their eyes, asking the Muslims to forgive them. The history of al-Andalus also shows the absolute necessity of unity and cooperation: a lesson we refuse to learn. Our fledging Muslim communities in Spain, Britain, and America are as divided as they are small and the nation states of the Muslim world are no better. Indeed, they sometimes work against each other in a manner that would have shocked even the "petty factional kings" (*muluk at-tawa'if*) of al-Andalus.

Dr. Umar Faruq now resides and teaches in Chicago, IL.

A Rihla program was held this summer in Granada, Spain. Teachers included Sh. Hamza Yusuf, Sh. Abdallah al-Kadi, and Sh. Muhammad al-Yaqobi.

Imam al-Haddad on Giving Good Counsel

Excerpts from *The Book of Assistance*,
published by the Quilliam Press

- You must be of good counsel to all Muslims. The highest point of this is that you conceal nothing from them, which if made known would result in good or preserve from something evil. The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) has said, "Religion is good counsel." Part of this is to support a Muslim in his absence as you would in his presence, and not to give him more verbal signs of affection than you have for him in your heart. It is also part of this that when a Muslim asks you for advice, and you know that the correct course does not lie in that which he is inclined to do, you should tell him so.
- The absence of good counsel is indicated by the presence of envy of the favors God has given other Muslims. The origin of such envy is that you find it intolerable that God has granted one of His servants a good thing whether of the religion, or of the world. The utmost limit is to wish that he be deprived of it. It has been handed down that "envy consumes good deeds just as fire consumes dry wood." The envious man is objecting to God's management of His dominion, as if to say "O Lord! You have put your favors where they do not belong."
- It is permitted to be envious without rancor whereby when you see a favor being bestowed on one of His servants, you ask Him to grant you the like.
- When someone praises you, you must feel dislike for his praises within your heart. If he has praised you for something you truly possess, say: "Praise belongs to God who has revealed the good things and hidden the ugly things." And if he praises you for something you do not possess, say "O God! Do not call me to account for what they say, forgive me what they do not know and make me better than they think."
- In your case, do not praise anyone unnecessarily. When you wish to give advice to someone regarding any behavior of his that you have come to know about, be gentle, talk to him in private and do not express explicitly what may be conveyed implicitly. Should he ask you to tell him who told you that which you know, do not tell him lest it stir up enmity. If he accepts your advice, praise God, and thank Him. If he should refuse, blame yourself.
- If you are given something as a trust guard it better than if it was yours. Return that which was entrusted to you, and beware of betraying trust. The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said "He who cannot keep a trust has no faith" and "Three things are attached to the Throne of God: Benefaction which says "O God! I am by you, therefore

let me not be denied!" Kinship, which says "O God! I am by you, thus let me not be severed" and Trust, which says "O God! I am by you, so let me not be betrayed!"

- Speak truthfully and honor commitments and your promises, for breaching them are signs of hypocrisy.
- "The signs of a hypocrite are three: when he speaks he lies, when he promises he breaks his promise, and when he is trusted, he betrays that trust."
- Beware of arguments and wrangling, for they cast rancor into the breasts of men, alienate hearts and lead to enmity and hatred. If anyone argues against you and has right on his side, accept what he says for truth must always be followed. If on the other hand he is wrong, leave him, for he is ignorant, and God has said: "And turn away from the ignorant" [VII :199] Renounce all joking, if very occasionally you do joke to assure a Muslim's heart, then speak only the truth. The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) has said: "Neither argue with your brother nor quarrel, and do not make him a promise and then break it"
- Respect all Muslims, especially those deserving of merit, such as the scholars, the righteous, and the elderly. Never frighten or alarm a Muslim, never mock or ridicule them, or demise them.
- Be humble for humility is the attribute of believers. Beware of pride for God does not like the proud. Those who humble themselves are raised up by God, and those who are proud are abased by Him-There are signs that distinguish the humble from the proud: "that God may separate the vile from the good" [VIII:37].
- Signs of humility include a liking for obscurity, dislike of fame, acceptance of truth whether it be from a lowly or noble person, to love the poor, associate with them, to fulfill the rights people have upon you as completely as you can, thank those who fulfill their duties to you, and excuse those who are remiss. Signs of pride include a liking for positions of most dignity when in company, praising oneself, speaking proudly, open haughtiness, arrogance, strutting, and neglecting the rights of others upon you while demanding your rights from them.

Charlottesville Program

A weekend program was held on the University of Virginia, Charlottesville campus December 4th and 5th, 1999. The instructor for the program was **Shaykh Abdullah Adhami**, who was teaching from a book by Imam Izzuddin Abdus-Salam (Sultan al-Ulema') "The Spiritual Meaning of Salah." The program was organized by the local MSA. There was also a community dinner with a good turnout at which Sh. Adhami spoke on "Love in Islam" and answered questions for hours.



Memories of a Deen Intensive

Fareeha Khan

It was the final morning of the Chicago Deen Intensive Program. The sun was rising to our right. As we settled in for our first session, after Fajr, the sky continued to change colors, from pale blue, to lavender, to fuchsias and gold. Normally, we would have been sitting with Shaikh Jamal for an explication of the *Bai-quniyah*, a hadith methodology text, but on this day, he had asked to meet specifically with the women from his *hanafi* fiqh class. Fearing he had not covered as much material as he should have, he didn't want to leave us without imparting a few more things.

And so the women sat for their special session with Shaikh Jamal. The sky continued to brighten, and the light came in as soft streaks, illuminating the already shining face of our beloved Shaikh. Even though it was the middle of August, the early morning was cold and crisp. Shaikh Jamal began to teach, and as he spoke, his breath would condense in mid-air because of the cold temperature. I sat near him, reading aloud from the text of *Salvation of the Soul*. The rest of the women sat in front of us wrapped in blankets and warm sweaters. As he continued to teach Shaikh Jamal noticed a young woman sitting toward the back of the room, snuggled close to another sister because she was cold. In the middle of enumerating a point on the proper performance of *salah*, he called out to her, "Sister, are you cold? Why don't you take my shawl?" Before she even had a chance to respond, his bright green shawl was off his shoulders and passed down to her. We could not believe the humility of our Shaikh, the supreme gentleness of his heart. We were all in awe and our love for him was reconfirmed, as it had been at so many other times throughout the week, not only for Shaikh Jamal, but also for all the teachers present at the Deen Intensive.

This was just one incident that testified to the gentleness and humility characteristic of each of our teachers. There were countless experiences at the Chicago Deen Intensive that illustrated the immense blessing of the presence of our teachers and the gathering that we were part of. Not one of us can ever forget the insights gained, not only through studying the texts, but also by simply observing the behavior of our *shuyukh*, and the effect they had on everyone around them.

Shaikh Ya'qubi, who came all the way from Syria to be with us, was particularly inspiring. Just by observing him, one could see that he was in a constant state of remembrance. As most of us had never sat with him before, we were not fully aware of how highly regarded he is within traditional circles of knowledge. He presented himself as the least accomplished of us all (*SubhanAllah*), and yet, it was obvious from the way the other teachers such as Shaikh Hamza and Shaikh Jamal consulted him, that he was indeed someone great.

There were so many times when he would go through the *Shifa* of Qadi Iyad, a classical text on the Seerah of Rasulullah, *sallAllahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, and the reader who was assigned to him would begin weeping because of the sheer beauty of what he was teaching. His deep love of the Rasul, *sallAllahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, and the firm conviction with which he taught the *Shifa* were enough to bring tears to his students' eyes at least once throughout the course of the lesson.

During one particularly blessed session, the Shaikh presented to us a gift incomparable to anything else at the Deen intensive. Shaikh Ya'qubi, *hafidahu Allah*, has the *ijaza* to transmit various *ahadith*, many of which he traces through his father, Shaikh Ibrahim Ya'qubi, who was one of the greatest *shuyukh* of this century and also the teacher of Shaikh Jamal. During one session of the *Shifa*, the Shaikh honored us by relating one of these *ahadith*. He recited it to us along with the full *isnad*, with only seventeen individuals between himself and Imam Bukhari.

As he read the isnad to us, slowly and with a strong, even tone, we could feel ourselves moving with him through time, through the moments in which this hadith was related to each of the great people in the chain. As he neared the actual reading of the matn of the hadith, his voice began

to falter. He was overcome by emotion because he could feel the sublime sacredness of what he was relaying. To hear him in this state was enough to bring the whole gathering to tears.

All around me, my sisters sat with awestruck expressions and tears rolling down their cheeks. It was a moment none of us will ever forget.

Those of us who were at the Chicago deen intensive were blessed with the presence of five amazing teachers. Shaikh Jamal az-Zahhabi, who also taught in Fez for the Rihlah, had come all the way from Lebanon. He went through certain sections of the *Salvation of the Soul*, a traditional text of *Hanafi fiqh*, and also covered the *Baiquniyah*. Shaikh Muhammad Ya'qubi taught *Hanafi fiqh* from the same text, as well as the *Seerah* (the *Shifa*) of Qadi Iyad and *al-Aqeedah at-Tahawiyyah*. Shaikh Abdullah Adhami, travelling from his home in New York City, went through certain classical texts that dealt with the topic of "Gender Relations." Shaikh Hamza Yusuf, from the Bay Area, covered a text on purifying the actions of the tongue.

Our fifth teacher, Shaikh Abdur Rahman bin Murabtul Hajj was only with us for a few days at the Chicago deen intensive. The teacher of Shaikh Hamza and the son of Murabtul Hajj who received his title after traveling for the Hajj on foot from Mauritania. Shaikh Abdur Rahman was by far one of the most distinct personages at the program. He taught from *al-Aqeedah at-Tahawiyyah* for the few days that he was there; he would explain the text in clear, beautiful Arabic, and Shaikh Hamza would translate his words. Unfortunately, however, he became ill a few days into the program and had to leave. Upon his departure, he asked Shaikh Hamza to convey a message to us: he had had a dream in which he saw that our gathering, our aide of learning was a blessed one. As the students at the Chicago deen intensive, we felt unworthy of this *basharah* from Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala*. The only reason we could infer for the Shaikh to have such a dream was because of the presence of the teachers themselves, not through any effort of our own.

Not only was the presence of the teachers at the Chicago deen intensive a tremendous blessing, the marvelous setting and environment in which the program took place were factors that all of us appreciated as well. The deen intensive was held at Camp White Eagle, a site located some two and a half hours away from the city of Chicago. Our cabins were nestled within the forest of the "upper flats," and if we trekked the "Whatapuffame" trail down to the lower flats, we could sit along Leaf River or meander through the various trails and orchards of the campsite. To be in such a serene, natural setting was just one more beautiful reminder of the many favors that our Lord 'Azza wa Jall had conferred upon us throughout the week.

For the students of the deen intensive at Chicago, the parting at the end was perhaps the only thing that made us unhappy. As we began packing our belongings, and as our shuyukh began to depart for Chicago, each of us could feel a sense of loss. It was almost as if we were all leaving a part of ourselves here in this setting as we went back to our respective homes. Upon returning from the deen intensive, many of the students had stories to share on the "Rihlah" listserve, stories that enumerated some of the remarkable moments of the week. The most amazing of all the messages, however, was not from one of the students, but rather from one of our shuyukh. Shaikh Ya'qubi conveyed to us a message through one of the program's organizers, which, once again, made our love for him increase, "I was touched by the seriousness of the students in Chicago. I pray Allah reward them for giving me the opportunity to convey some of the little knowledge that Allah granted me. They gave me a great opportunity to increase my knowledge in many things, not to mention the English language. May Allah help them all on their way to seek the sacred knowledge and enlighten their hearts and give them *tawfeeq* and *ikhlas*. I am happy that they benefited from my teaching, but I will not be deluded to imagine that what I did is great, nor to believe that what I did was a result of my efforts, as I know myself and my incapacity and shortcomings. It was only out of the bounties of Allah ta'ala that my tongue happens to be speaking or my mind was thinking or my heart was ever throbbing."

May Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* protect our blessed shuyukh and reward them for their effort, their patience, and their humility.

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

The Deen Intensive Landscape

- Ihya Productions in Toronto organized a six day Ramadan Deen Intensive over the Christmas holidays (Dec. 1999). The teachers were Sh. Abdullah Adhami, Sh. Muhammad Al-Ya`qoubi and Sh. Jamal Zahabi. Nearly 300 students participated in the program which was held in the city at the Masjid of the International Muslim Organization.
- A Conference: "An Old Word in a New Age" was held on April 23, with 5000 participants in Cardiff, Wales.
- Immediately before the Cardiff conference a week-long intensive called "Dar Al-Arqam" was held at the Islamic Foundation in the UK. The program was organized by the Ibn Abbas Institute. Teaching at that program were Shaykh Al-Ya`qobi and Sidi Jihad Hashim Brown.
- Imam Zaid Shakir taught at a one-day program in London on May 6. These "Light Study Programs" as they are called are organized by an active team of young and enthusiastic brothers and sisters led by Sidi Rifat Sheikh.
- The Muslim Students' Association at The George Washington University held a traditional program using the Deen Intensive model and entitled "Reviving the Sunnah: Learning, Loving, and Living." May 23 through May 26. Instructors were Abdallah Adhami and Mokhtar Maghraoui.
- Another program being modeled after the Deen Intensives is the Islamic Retreat in the Adirondacks, June 16-24, whose program focuses on *Tazkiyat-un Nafs*. The program announcement for this states: "Retreat activities will comprise of teaching as well as practice. Sessions cover what the ailments of the Nafs and Qalb (heart) are and how to change the state of these inner ailments from our hearts. Throughout the retreat we will try practical spiritual exercises such as Dhikr, Fikr, (contemplation & reflection) and Ibadah (like Salah). Through these we will try to connect with Allah's creation by enjoying with spiritual focus the natural beauty around us." The methodology and content of Deen Intensives is clearly evident. The Instructors for the program are Mokhtar Magraoui and Imam Nur Abdullah, who attended Dar al Islam's first Powwow.
- On July 1, Zaytuna Institute held its second conference titled: "Depending on the Days of Allah". The conference was held in the San Francisco bay area. The conference was well attended and featured a variety of speakers including Sh. Abdullah Bin Bayyah, Imam Zayd Shakir and Sh. Abdullah Al-Qadi.
- From July 2-8 there was an Advanced Deen Intensive held at Zaytuna's institute in Hayward, CA. This is the first time that such a program was held at Zaytuna. The brothers stayed in tents and the sisters stayed in the newly renovated building adjacent to the lecture hall.
- On July 9, a single day event is being held in Connecticut entitled "Meeting the Challenges of the New Century: A Day to Remember". This conference was hosted by Imam Zaid Shakir's community. Speakers included Hamza Yusuf, Zaid Shakir, Siraj Wahhaj. This event was a fundraiser for a new Institute of traditional Islamic Sciences Imam Zaid and his community are intending to construct on land they have purchased adjacent to their masjid.
- A Weekend Intensive in the Chicago area was held on July 21-23 with Imam Zayd Shakir.
- A four week long Rihla took place at Azagra Madrassa in Al-Andalus from Aug. 7 to Aug. 31, with students both from North America and the UK.
- A post Ramadan Deen Intensive will be held at Hugh Taylor Birch State Park in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, starting on December 31 and ending the Jan. 6. The teachers are Sidi Jihad Hashim, Shaykh Yaqoubi and Shaykh Abdullah Adhami. Cost of the Program is \$150.00 (US) which will cover application fees, food, and lodging for the week. Applications can be retrieved from Deen Intensive Florida webpage: <http://members.aol.com/dipflorida/2001.html>. If you have further questions please contact Aisha Subhani: Asubhani@aol.com
- The Hira Retreat is now underway for brothers and sisters in the Michigan area. On Oct. 21-22 Sh. Mohammad Al-Ya`qoubi along with local teachers facilitated a weekend of learning. The program will continue on the third weekend of every month for the next six months.