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APRIL 17 IS THE FIRST DAY OF RAMADAN

KARIMA OMAR on HIJAB

"Tell the believing men to subdue their eyes and keep chaste; this is purer for them. God is fully cognizant of whatever they do. And tell the believing women to subdue their eyes and keep chaste, and not to reveal their beauty, except that which is necessary, and to cover their chests...." [24:31]

I have also re-examined the issue of hijab. This was another careful and painstaking process and, after 5 years of dressing like everything from a nun to the Grim Reaper to a chemotherapy patient (pharmacists always looked at me with such pity, assuming that I was bald under my scarf!), have stopped imposing man made restrictions on myself. It feels so good simply to follow the commands for general modesty and actually, feel more modest—more Islamic—without a scarf than with it.

However, I have been rather cowardly in "coming out of the closet" on this issue. Although I stopped wearing a scarf several months ago, I hadn't appeared at any large Muslim gatherings—until my official "coming out" recently. Ya Allah! What an experience! All in all, it went better than I thought, although at first I was ready to hotfoot it out of there. Those who knew me had never seen me sans scarf—and of course, didn't recognize me at first! (I noticed that many were scrutinizing my scalp to see if I were a natural blond!) Although I had to explain and argue a bit, there were several other uncovered women there, women who had been through similar experiences and had come to the same conclusion regarding the ayat on general modesty.

At one point, I almost chickened out. I had brought a scarf along for prayer (I know, that's not required, but I didn't want to cause a scene amongst the poor souls who would deem it necessary and may have feared that their own prayers would be invalidated by the sight of my hair!) and the organizer (who is/was a good friend of mine) said he'd prefer if I wore it—all night. I actually started to, but was checked by an encouraging look from my husband—which of course led to rumors that my new spouse had forced me to run amuck "scarfless"! Needless to say, I did a lot of explaining that night, but it was good—you see, I have some skeletons in my Islamic closet in the form of ghastly articles I wrote in favor of hijab, in a galaxy far far away, so, they had come back to haunt me!

I think one of the saddest things about these culturally imposed cloth prisons is the fact that so many women view hijab as a goal to be attained—I can't stand to hear them say, "I'm not ready for it," as if they were talking about a higher state of consciousness (or unconsciousness, rather!). Anyway, I finally feel comfortable, alhamdulillah, and, contrary to the propaganda of the "fossilized" ulema (I love that term!), my uncovered head hasn't caused pandemonium or riots in the streets (alas, I don't think any of us is that beautiful!)

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*** SPECIAL ISSUE *** SPECIAL ISSUE ** SPECIAL

Brilliant Islamic Writer Karima Omar EXPOSES HADITH & SUNNA AS SATANIC

ALL TIME FAVORITE ABUSED HADITH

by Karima Omar Kamounah

Do not take down anything from me except Qur'an; anyone who took down anything from me except the Qur'an, he should erase it..." (Abu Sa'id al Khudri/Muslim #7147)

Hmmm. Well, maybe he had a point. After all, look at what we've done with his words, alleged or otherwise. We've twisted, tortured; tampered, distorted and broken the childproof seal of enough to warrant a Shelter for Abused Hadith. Sure, there'll be quite a waiting list, so let's just start with some of the more popular ones:

(1) "Had it been permissible that a person prostrate before another, I would have ordered that a wife prostrate before her husband." (Abu Hurairah/At Tirmidhi)

See, this poor little hadith has been whipped with its own "had"—which many Muslims dutifully pluck from its roots. It also hasn't done wonders for the Qur'anic assertion that, "The Believers, men and women, are protecting friends and helpers (awliya) of each other." (9:71) Somehow, it's hard to do a whole lot of protecting or helping in a prone position.

(2) "If a woman dies while her husband was pleased with her, she will enter Paradise." (Um Salamah/At Tirmidhi)

So I don't have to worry about prayer, about charity, about feeding the poor or helping old ladies across the street! All I gotta do is pop open my husband's cans of Hansen juice and keep my mouth shut while he's watching "Star Trek" and I'll go to heaven. Gee, Islam really is easy, isn't it?!

(3) According to Bukhari, Vol. 1 #458, Muslims tied a non-Muslim to a pillar of the mosque.

Anyone who uses this to support the argument that Christians and Jews may visit mosques should be shipped to San Francisco, where the social benefits of such activities are fully appreciated.

(4) "...I looked at the (hell)fire and saw that the majority of its residents were women." (Imran/Bukhari Vol. 7 #126)

And paradise is under the feet of mothers (An Nisa, Ibn Majah, Ahmad), right, gotcha. Guess motherhood is an automatic elevator to sainthood and appliances, second floor.

(5) Narrated Anas: "The Prophet used to go round to (have sexual relations with) all his wives in one night, and he had nine wives." (Bukhari, Vol. 7 #6)

Whether it's true or not (and, given his age and occupation, it's highly unlikely), is it any of my business?!

(6) "If there is a bad omen in anything, it is in the house, the woman and the horse." (Ibn Umar/Bukhari Vol. 7 #31)

OK—so get out of the house, get away from me and don't you touch my horse (or camel, car or skateboard, as the case may be).

(7) Everybody must get stoned! "In the case of a married male committing adultery with a married female, they shall receive 100 lashes and be stoned to death." (Ubada bin as Samit/-Muslim #4191)

Huh? But doesn't the Qur'an say to "Flog both the adulterous woman and the adulterous man with a hundred lashes..." (24:2) and absolutely nothing about marital status? Hmmm. Things are certainly getting curiouser and curiouser, aren't they, Alice?

Ironically, the Qur'an prefixes this law (24:2) with the assertion that these verses are "perfectly clear [Aayaatun Bayyinaatun]" (24:1).

(8) Aisha narrated that the Prophet married her when she was six years old and he consummated his marriage when she was nine years old. (Aisha/Bukhari Vol. 7 #65)

How did they know exactly how old she (or anyone else, for that matter) was, given the fact that 7th century Arabia was not renowned for its record-keeping? And, even if this account of Aisha's age were accurate, this may have been hunky-dory back then, what with the average life span being about 40 years and human beings maturing considerably younger. But try practicing this *sunnah* in 20th century America. Uh-huh. Between court appearances and psychiatric evaluation, you'll be lucky to consummate the marriage by the time that sweet young thing is ninety.

(9) "Angels do not enter a house in which there is a dog or a picture." (Abu Talha/Muslim #5249)

This has led to such mind-boggling statements as, "I'm kicking your dog and tearing up your passport picture for religious reasons." Oh. And we wonder why people have misconceptions about Islam. By pictures, he undoubtedly meant the sort before which one prostrates and, by dogs, the unkempt, unvaccinated, unhousebroken 7th century worst-of-breed who hadn't had the advantages of psychoanalysis, canine aerobics, orthodontic work and charm schools.

Obviously, whoever invented this *hadith* never heard of the righteous dwellers of the cave and their dog (18:18), or the hunting dogs in 5:4.

(10) A report in the Traditions says that if a woman licks blood and pus from the wounds of her husband even then she would not accomplish her duty in full. (Kanzul-Aamal)

A true classic, one that never goes out of style! Who cares that no one has heard of *Kanzul-Aamal*? This sounds too kinky to pass up!

(11) "When a man sends for his wife for the satisfaction of his need, she should go to him even if she is at the oven." (Abu Ali Talq ibn Ali/At Tirmidhi and An-Nisai)

Speaking of kinky, this sounds like a Muslim Marabel Morgan, or at least a fire hazard. This and the one about a woman submitting to her husband even if she happens to be riding on a camel at the time must have been recorded by a hyperhormonal male whose wife had a few too many nocturnal headaches.

(12) "If a man orders a woman to lift a mountain she should be ready to lift it." (Masnad Ahmed)

Sure, and what's this about the weaker sex?

(13) Patient patients—"The one who visits the sick is in fact like one who is in the fruit garden of Paradise so long as he does not return." (Abu Rabi/Muslim #6227)

Anyone who has ever been ill and alone can appreciate the gentle wisdom of this saying. But we often take it to its limit, amassing vast crowds of unhygienic visitors around the unfortunate patient who wants only to be left alone with chicken soup and "General Hospital". "The best places to sit are those which provide the most room." (Abu Sa'id al Khudri/Abu Dawud #4802) So, as they say in California, "Give 'em some space".

(14) "A woman should not fast except with her husband's permission." (Abu Hurairah/Bukhari Vol. 7 #120)

Ooops—I forgot to ask my husband before he left for the salt mine this morning. Pass the cheesecake, I can't fast today.

(15) Aisha said, "The Prophet used to wash his head with marshmallow while he was sexually defiled. It was sufficient for him and he did not pour water upon it." (Abu Dawud #256)

Now, perhaps at the time it went without saying that a marshmallow was some sort of plant. But I tried to follow this *sunnah* with a bag of toasted Campfires, and I've had sticky white stuff in my hair ever since.

(16) When going out to answer the call of nature, the Prophet said to Abu Hurairah, "Fetch for me some stones for cleaning the private parts." (Bukhari Vol. 1 #157)

This has created numerous plumbing problems in certain homes, where well-meaning and literal-minded Muslims have discovered that stones don't flush half as easily as Charmin.

(17) "After me I have not left any affliction more harmful to men than women." (Usama bin Zaid/Bukhari Vol. 7 #33)

More harmful than wars, plague and pestilence? More harmful than cluster bombs, AIDS and Rambo? Besides, who are men supposed to have all the sex with that they're always worrying traditions about?! Well, perhaps this isn't such a bad idea—perhaps we should allow the men who believe this to put it into practice—alone. Together. Let them turn their mosques into boy's clubs and see how long they survive...

(18) Miqdad related that the Prophet said, "When you see those who shower praise (upon others), throw dust upon their faces." (Hammam bin al Harith/Muslim #7143)

Oh yeah, some of us follow this saying to the letter, those of us who follow the *sunnah* of the Gestapo. You wouldn't catch us risking a lethal fistful of sand to say something nice about someone. You wouldn't catch us making sinful gratitude noises or issuing subversive

compliments. Sure, he also said something about "If someone is given something, he should give a return for it if he can afford it; if he cannot afford it, he should praise him. He who praises him for it thanks him, and he who conceals it is ungrateful to him." (Jabir bin Abd Allah/Abu Dawud #4795), but that might make someone feel good and that wouldn't be fitting, just wouldn't be fitting.

(19) "If any of you, when having sexual intercourse with his wife, says, 'Bismillah, Allahumma jannibni-Sh-Shaitan wa jannib-ish-Shaitan ma razaqtana', and if it is destined that they have a child, then Satan will never be able to harm him." (Ibn Abbas/Bukhari Vol. 7 #94)

Is that why Muslims have become so lax about Islamic education, about setting a good example and instilling values in their children? Guess they all must have said the right thing at the right time...

(20) Are bathrooms *biddah*? Aisha narrated, "The Prophet said to his wives, 'You are allowed to go out to answer the call of nature.'" (Bukhari, Vol. 1 #149)

So the men can have the powder room, while the women use the backyard.

(21) "Do not eat with your left hand, for Satan eats with his left hand." (Jabir bin Abdullah/Muslim #5007)

How many self-fulfilling prophecies has this spawned in left-handed children? Besides, I didn't know that Satan eats food. If that's the case, why don't we just cancel his grocery allowance and save ourselves a whole lot of grief?

(22) "A believer eats in 1 intestine, whereas a non-believer eats in 7 intestines." (Ibn Umar/Muslim #5116)

I don't know; I'll have to ask my gastroenterologist about this one.

(23) "If someone takes 7 pressed dates in the morning, neither magic nor poison will hurt him that day." (Sa'd/Muslim #664)

So, pour me another shot of Drano with a cyanide chaser, Wicked Witch of the West! You can't hurt me—I've had my dates.

(24) "When a person enters his house and mentions the Name of Allah at the time of entering it and while eating food, Satan says (to himself), 'You have no place to spend the night and no evening meal.'" (Jabir bin Abdullah/Muslim #5006)

Really? So all I've gotta do is say the magic word and I can do whatever I want? I can invite a heavy metal band over for a pepperoni pizza and wash it down with a quart of Scotch with no ill effects? And to think I've wasted all this time trying to be good.

(25) Follow the leader—"You shall uphold my *sunnah* and the *sunnah* of the rightly guided caliphas (Al Khulafaa' Al Rashideen) who will come after me." (Abu Najih Irbaz bin Sariah/Abu Dawud, At Tirmidhi)

Ok, great, but the term "Al Khulafaa' Al Rashideen" didn't come into use in Arabic until about 200 years after the time of the Prophet and besides, this group says these guys were rightly guided and that group says no way and—sigh...

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