

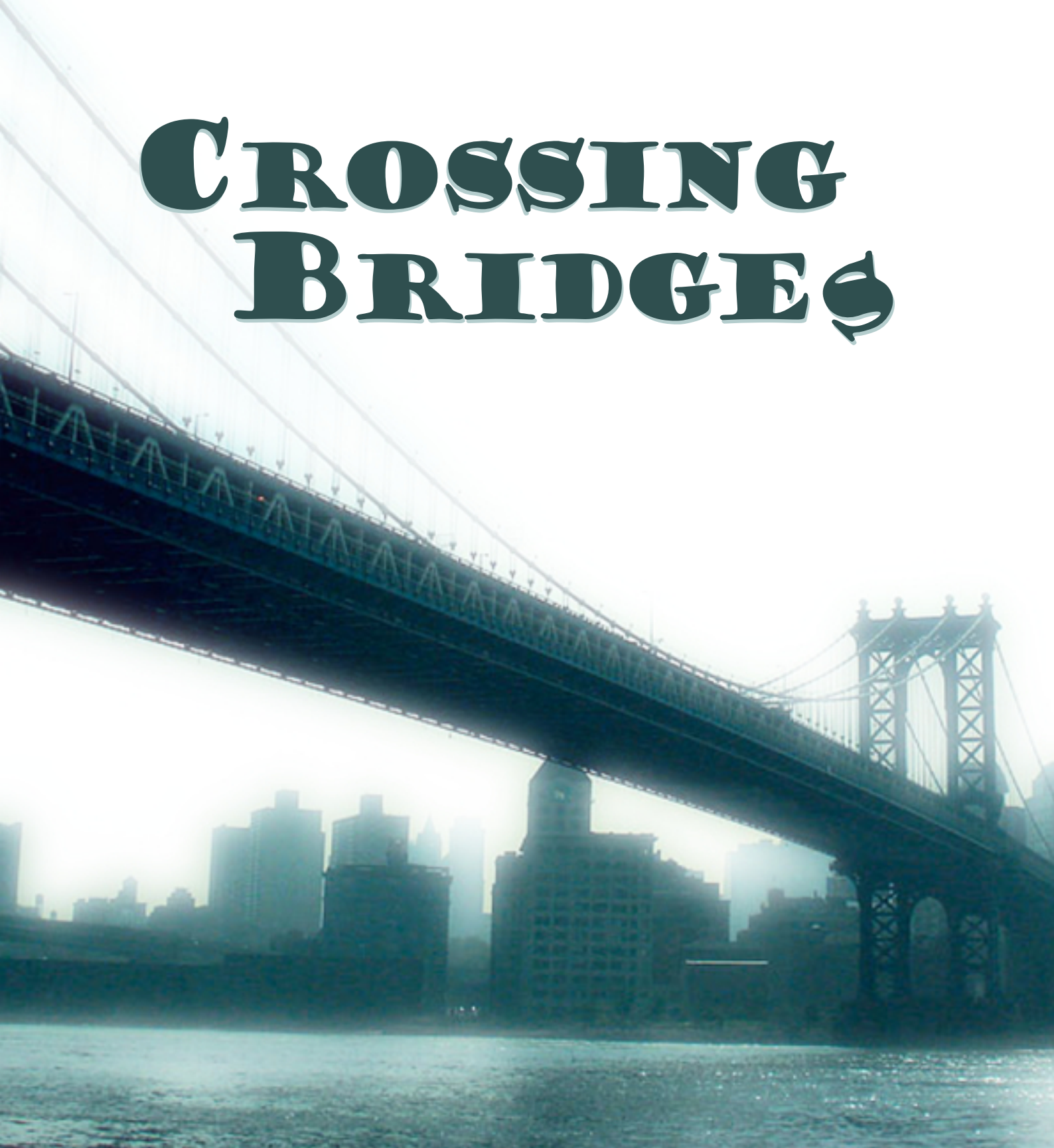
# Ittihaadeeth

Breach of Covenant

Volume 4, Issue 1

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## CROSSING BRIDGES





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**Alif, Lam, Meem.**

**This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for the muttaqeen.**

**[2:1-2]**

## Editorial

Bismillah.

The beauty of Surat al-Baqarah can never be entirely put into words. And only the person who reads, studies and reflects upon it can even begin to understand the expanse of its meanings.

This noble Surah takes us back to our origins with the story of our father, Adam, and the purpose of creation. It warns us of our eternal enemy, whom we seek refuge in Allah from, and it describes for us the three categories of people (believers, disbelievers, and hypocrites), of which there is no fourth.

As the ayahs progress, we learn also about Bani Israa'eel, the people who breached their covenant with Allah time and time again. And it is after this theme that the class was named, Breach of Covenant.

In the early stages of this newsletter, the edition was titled "Broken Bridges" to represent that repeated theme of betrayal. Indeed, those who breach the covenant are not unlike the person who breaks apart the bridge, destroying his way to jannah with his own hands. But the stories of Bani Israa'eel were lessons for us, and the question arises: they breached their covenant, but will we keep ours?

And so, hoping in Allah's mercy and fearing His punishment, we re-named the edition, "Crossing Bridges." We ask Allah to allow us to fulfill our covenant with Him, and we pray for our safe passage and yours through the dunya, across the siraat, and into the highest levels of paradise.

Please do not deprive us or yourself from the ajer of reading this publication and passing it on to others.

# Virtues of Surat al-Baqarah

## Shaytan Runs Away From It!

“Do not make your houses graves, and indeed, the shaytaan does not enter the house in which al-Baqarah is read” [Saheeh].

When people decorate their houses, they put images and things that make the angels go away. Instead, beautify your home with the recitation of al-Baqarah, and make the shayateen go away!

## Intercession on the Day of Judgment

“Recite the two bright ones, al-Baqarah and Aal Imran, for on the Day of Judgment, they will come as two clouds or two shades, or two flocks of birds in ranks, pleading for those who recite them...” [Saheeh].

It's a protection in the dunya and the akhirah!

## Last Two Ayahs are a Treasure

The Messenger *salla Allahu alayhi wasallam* said, "I was given the ayahs from the end of Surat al-Baqarah from a treasure underneath the Throne, no Prophet was given them before me" [Saheeh].

And know, “The last two verses from al-Baqarah, whoever reads them in a night, it is enough for him.”

## Has the Greatest Ayah in It

“The greatest surah in the Qur'an is al-Baqarah, and the greatest ayah in it is ayat al-Kursi” [Ghareeb Hasan].

And it's sunnah to recite the ayah after every obligatory salah.

## Lessons, Lessons, Lessons!

The surah repeatedly speaks of Bani Israel, and later of the Jews in general. These verses speak of the mistakes they made...

... and are lessons for US to learn from!

How much do **YOU** love Surat al-Baqarah? How often do you **READ** it? How much of it did you **MEMORIZE**? And how hard do you **WORK** to incorporate its **BLESSINGS** into your **LIFE**?

**Hanaa Elmi**

# **Mending Hearts**

## **Journey through Surat al-Baqarah**

It was Friday night, and the Breach of Covenant seminar was just beginning. Sheikh Muhammad Alshareef stood before us and stated that this class was going to be class on tazkiya. Gasps and raised eyebrows filled the room.

**“Yes, this is a class which will be a means of purifying the heart,” he said.**

Subhan Allah, as I look back, he couldn't have been more right. This class was a means for us to come closer to Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala through His Book, the Book which was sent as a mercy, a guide and a companion in this life. This class brought a renewed focus to the place of the Qur'an in our lives. Truly, the rightful place of the Qur'an is in our hearts, in our thoughts and on our tongues.

Studying Surat Al-Baqarah took us on a roller-coaster of emotions. We smiled when we heard of the bravery and determination of Prophet Ibrahim alayhi assalam. We wiggled with excitement at the words, “Black Magic.” And our minds focused, alert and fearful, as we heard the many excuses of Bani Israel – how could we avoid their same mistakes?

Over the six days of the class, we transformed. We became stronger, saw things in a new light, and most of all, mended our hearts. This dunya shatters and batters hearts. It spares no one from the misery which it holds. Let us find the shelter we seek from this dunya with Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala and the personal message He has addressed us with.



During class, Sheikh Muhammad quoted Sheikh Yasir Qadhi as saying,

**“We are a nation which has perfected the art of reading without understanding.”**

**(continued)**

That's not a good thing, by the way! So let us truly learn to understand the message of the Qur'an. What we know of Allah's Book barely scratches the surface. The shallowness of our understanding is a deafening reality, but hopefully this class was a stepping stone for us to seek out an understanding of the Qur'an. No matter how far away we've been, it's never too late to try to come closer.

In class, we recited this ayah,

**Then after that your hearts were hardened and became as stones or even worse in hardness. And indeed, there are stones out of which rivers gush forth, and indeed, there are of them (stones) which split asunder so that water flows from them, and indeed, there are of them (stones) which fall down for fear of Allah. And Allah is not unaware of what you do. [2:74]**

Sheikh Muhammad explained that even if your heart is a stone, there are stones that fear Allah, and if water can come from stones then there is still hope for you, so do not despair. Just turn to Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala and seize the moment for what it is: a means for you to repent and return to Allah ta'ala. Never give up on yourself or anyone else.



Even now as I am writing this and recollecting on the class, tears flood my eyes. Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala picked me to be amongst those chosen to take this class. And He, subhanahu wa ta'ala, chose

Ittihaad to have been blessed with this class.

How will I ever begin repay Him? How will we? How will you?

As I wipe my tears, I pray that we are able to implement what we learned. I pray that we are able to teach what knowledge we have gained to someone who didn't have the chance to be there. I pray that the covenant we all swore to abide to doesn't slip through our fingers and become a distant thought. Ameen.

Subhan Allah, Ittihaad, you are my family and I couldn't have imagined taking this class with a more inspiring, amazing group of people. You all have taught me so much and for that I am forever grateful. Whether it was the sisters finally breaking the "Brothers Always Win" trivia record or the entire class reciting Surat Al-Baqarah in unison, I will always have amazing memories from this class.



On behalf of Ittihaad, I just want to say jazakum Allahu khayran Sheikh Muhammad. For what you have done for Ittihaad, words cannot express our gratitude.

And I'll leave you with this question ya Ittihaad:

**Will you keep the Covenant?**

# "A Good Question is Half of Knowledge"



When people ask too many questions – especially the wrong kind of questions – their iman goes down. Here are some examples of questions NOT to ask:

1. When is the Day of Judgment? What is the soul? Excessive questioning about predestiny. These are things Allah kept concealed, and there is nothing for us to learn from asking!
  2. Following the lives and faults of others (much like people do with celebrities in our times).
  3. Don't ask specifically about this group or that group. "Is this group okay? What's wrong with that group?" kind of questions.
  4. Other questions that wouldn't make a difference if you knew the answer or not. Such as: "Did dinosaurs really exist?" How would this knowledge benefit you?
- Another set of questions you should not ask:
5. Questions meant to show off to the person asking.
  6. Questions meant to stump your teacher. Islamically, you are not supposed to do this when learning/asking about sharee'ah.
  7. Questions that lead to a specific agenda (loaded questions). In the US, it's full of people asking loaded questions.
  8. Hypothetical questions, like, "Is it permissible to live on Mars."

Instead, when you are with a person of knowledge, ask:

1. For advice, so that the person of knowledge can benefit you. Like, "Can you give us advice on how to memorize the Qur'an?"
2. If you have fiqhi/fatwah type questions, don't keep asking or discussing these things with people who can't help you and will just go on talking anyway. Instead, write them down – accumulate them. And when you get a chance to sit with a person of knowledge, ask them your questions.

Other good questions to ask:

3. Questions of current situations – situations that are current and relative to you.
4. Advice for situations that you might be in.
5. Questions from a student of knowledge, generally trying to get knowledge (even if the application may not be immediate to their lives).

Asking is an important part of learning. It's just a matter of proper etiquette and picking the right ways and things to ask about.

So out into the world, brave student of knowledge -- ask and learn, and may Allah make things easy for you!



A security camera is mounted on a black pole against a bright blue sky with wispy white clouds. The camera is a boxy, black model with a lens and a microphone. A black cable runs down the pole, and a metal chain is attached to the camera's mounting bracket. The overall scene is a low-angle shot looking up at the camera.

**Hey you.**

**Yes, you.**

**Look behind you.**

**Is that a camera?**

**Is someone watching you?!**

**Taqwah.**

**It's that shift**

**in your heart**

**the moment you realize**

**You are being  
watched.**

**Remember,**

**Allah 'azza wa jall**

**is watching you.**

**Have taqwah.**

## An Invitation to Divine Guidance

Imagine being invited to one of the greatest events of your life. An event so much more than the Oscars or Grammys or anything Hollywood can come up with. An event only the most noble and honored guests will attend. And imagine having the opportunity to join them.

**Now what if I told you that instead, you have been given an invitation to divine guidance? You have been invited to study the longest and most vast surah of the Qur'an: Surat al-Baqarah, the guidance for the Mutaq'een. Would you attend?**

Alhumdulillah, I was invited to such an event. I was invited to the AlMaghrib class, the Breach of Covenant, and I accepted the invitation, along with many other fortunate people. I can honestly say that I learned so much from this class and it pushed me to continue learning about the blessed Qur'an.

Studying Surat al-Baqarah was an amazing eye-opener. Sheikh Muhammad Alshareef's style transported us, taking us to roots of ayahs and explaining stories surrounding revelation. Every sentence was a new thing to learn, and a proof I did not know enough about my own religion. The class encompassed so many stories and themes explained in the Qur'an.

And class wasn't just an opportunity to learn, but a chance to make new friends, meet old ones and for myself, experience an

overdue iman rush. It's no secret that our iman fluctuates, sometimes at a high, but often at a low. The class gave me the boost of iman I needed to get back on track.

One of the things that really stuck with me was a story sheikh Muhammad Alshareef told the class on the very first day. He told us about a time when he asked parents what their goals were for their children. Many replied with the usual answers, such as the child getting a good education or becoming a doctor. But one parent had a wish most people do not think about: she wanted her child to reach jannah. This story reminded me that we were only put on this earth to worship Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala, and that our ultimate goal should be to enter paradise.

Learning Surat al-Baqarah was a great step towards achieving that goal. Needless to say, I came out of class wanting to be a better Muslim, and wanting to share my experience with everyone.

**So next time you get a knock on the door or a letter in the mail, inviting you to the blessing of Islam and giving you an opportunity to increase your iman, do not turn away. It's one invitation you don't want to miss out on.**

May we be given many more opportunities to learn and follow the path of the righteous.

# To the Way of Your Lord

Invite to the way of your Lord  
with wisdom and good  
instruction, and argue with them  
in a way that is best. [16:125]

The missing link in our da'wah today is our detachment from the Qur'an. Search the Qur'an for oft-repeated topics and you'll find the most important things to talk about in your daw'ah, to both Muslims, and non-Muslims.

Da'wah in the time of the Prophet *salla Allahu alayhi wasallam* wasn't done through pamphlets and Da'wah tables. It was through interaction with people, through social services.

The analogy of a da'ee (a caller to Allah) is often that of a single man building a wall while a group of people on the other side is tearing the bricks down. It doesn't matter if the whole world is on the other side – if Allah wills for the wall to be built, then it will be built. Don't let other people bring you down!

With any type of good where will always be the group of people who say, 'Don't bother, it won't help anyway.' Just ignore them and keep doing the good.

Islam is not praying in a closet or having a halaqa behind closed doors. The message is not for a "gang" of people, it's for everyone. When is your next open-air khutbah going to be?

Imagine sitting on a drowning boat. You are the only Muslim on the boat, the rest are kuffar. To save yourself, you must rally everyone together in order to stop the boat from drowning. You cannot save yourself without saving everyone else with you. The same thing applies to life. You cannot live your life ignoring all the ignorance and kufr around you, or you'll end up drowning in it, too.

# Trade at Sea

In Surat al-Baqarah we see many recurring themes, one of which is the topic of transactions. To most people, the word "transaction" brings to mind the exchange of money or goods. They think of the word purely in economic terms.

Personally, before studying Surat al-Baqarah, I never realized there are transactions we make in life outside these daily economic ones - transactions which have infinitely greater importance. For example, Allah says:

**"These are they who have bartered guidance for error: But their traffic is profitless, and they have lost true direction." [2:16]**

Allah says regarding such transactions:

**"These are the people who buy the life of this world at the price of the Hereafter: their penalty shall not be lightened nor shall they be helped." [2:86]**

And He also says, subhanahu wa ta'ala:

**"Miserable is the price for which they have sold their souls, in that they deny (the revelation) which Allah has sent down, in insolent envy that Allah of His Grace should send it to any of His servants He pleases: Thus have they drawn on themselves Wrath upon Wrath. And humiliating is the punishment of those who reject Faith." [2:90]**

All these ayahs have something in common: the fact that these people have all bartered something good for something worse. In one case, guidance has been exchanged for error. In another case, the dunya has been bought at the price of the hereafter. And in the third case souls have been sold at a "miserable price". Each ayah has its own story which can and should be studied, but in the end, they point to transactions that lead to the loss of guidance

and the hereafter.

After studying the stories of these people and the transactions they made, I now view my life through a different lens. Thinking of this dunya and what we invest into it - our money, our efforts and most importantly, our time - I wonder, at what price are we doing so?

It's like the analogy of a man taking a journey across a sea. He has a room on a ship which he will inhabit for a mere week. But once on the ship, the man forgets that his journey is just that - a journey. So he begins to use all his time and resources to lavishly decorate the room.

When completed, he rests comfortably in his expensively furnished room, but as soon as he's done furnishing, as soon as he thinks it's time to relax, it's over. The ship reaches its destination and docks. Getting off the ship, the man realizes he used all his time and resources decorating his room on the ship. He has nothing left for this new land. And the ship sails away, carrying all his wealth and efforts, and the man is left alone to face his new life... with nothing...

**Don't be that man. Don't buy this dunya at the price of your hereafter.**

# Hello There, Sunshine

Iman is outward **ACTIONS** testifying to what is in the **HEART!**

During the **BATTLE** of Yamamah, the slogan of the Muslims was: "Ya as-haab Surat al-Baqarah!" They would constantly **REMINDE** themselves that they were the **CARRIERS** of this Surah.

Whenever there is **CONFUSION** between inward and outward, the **RESULT** is depression and sadness.

Determining where you **WANT** to go in the hereafter is what determines how you **LIVE** in the dunya. Make jannah your **GOAL**, and then base all your decisions to **REACH** it. And know that everything good from the dunyah comes **RUSHING** towards the one who **SEEKS** the akhirah.

If someone turns their back on Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala consistently, they have **CHOSEN** to have a sickness in their hearts, and so their sickness is **INCREASED**.

It might take you a **LIFETIME** to be able to have complete **FEAR** of Allah ta'ala alone. But once you have **MASTERED** it, you become a **LEADER**.

**NOTHING** in this world could be worth going to jahannam for **ETERNITY**.

When you find yourself "not feeling" your salah, make **TAWBAH** to Allah 'azza wa jal. It may be that a **SIN** you have committed is preventing you from feeling the **TRANQUILITY** and **HUMBLENESS** of your prayer.

Your greatest **WEAKNESS** lies in accepting an **EXCUSE** for yourself.

Doing **GOOD** deeds shows as **BEAUTY** on the face, while **SINS** will **DARKEN** it.

Your life can either be a **LESSON** for other people to learn from (your mistakes), or it can be an **EXAMPLE** for people to emulate.

# Message from the Ameerah

Beloved Ittihaad,

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullah wa Barakatuh,

First and foremost, I am thankful to Allah – alhamdulillah – that He has enabled us to come this far in the path of seeking His pleasure and the knowledge of His deen. I then thank and make du'aa for all those who have been making this possible by the will of Allah azza wa jal. Those who stayed up late, woke up early, and spent countless hours looking for smiles on people's faces. Those who don't let a day go by without thinking purple... enough said there!

Breach of Covenant was the first class I got a chance to see what happens behind the scenes. And alhamdulillah, I have never seen such dedication and commitment! It was an enriching experience like none other. Looking back at Ittihaad's first class, History of Khulafaa', I can only imagine what kind of amazing teamwork and leadership were required to bring this Qabeelah to its 15th class. Although we're not at the stage of claiming the Liwaa', alhamdulillah, we are on our way. I believe each member of Ittihaad brings forth a unique talent, which, when joined together, can create an invincible force, bi ithnillah ta'ala.

As the first Friday of BOC came along, I could not help but smile when I saw the number of students sitting on the floor, wishing they had come earlier to claim their seats. Throughout the seminar, emphasis on study groups and preparation for the exam was phenomenal, alhamdulillah. I don't think I have ever seen people so excited to take an exam. I have to say Ittihaad has shown a lot of creativity this past seminar, from the posters decorating the walls, to the Somali's heaven breakfast (banana lovers). Eventually, I became so attached to the room we studied in, I hardly wanted to leave it.

Painting a beautiful picture starts off with a few strokes. With commitment and creativity, the painter creates an inspiring masterpiece. As we

continue to grow stronger, let's make du'aa for commitment to our goals. Being granted the gift of knowledge, having been promised 8 classes a year, brings forth an exciting challenge to all of us. It may not be easy, one thing is for sure – it's the perfect opportunity to gain infinite ajeer!

I look forward to seeing this Qabeelah reach new heights here in Windsor and across the border in Michigan. I've been dreaming of a day when we will make everlasting changes in our respected communities so we may benefit ourselves and others. Sheikh Muhammad Alshareef once said on the forums: "I think if everyone just focused on what they were good at, the Ummah as a whole would be much stronger." Keeping this in mind, let's all strive to improve our talents, focus on what we're good at, and put our best work forward to help in spreading this knowledge and taking this Qabeelah to the next level.

Jazakum Allahu khairan for all your hard work. May Allah keep us steadfast on the right path and help us along the way. Let's make du'aa for our fellow students of knowledge and forgive each other for our shortcomings.

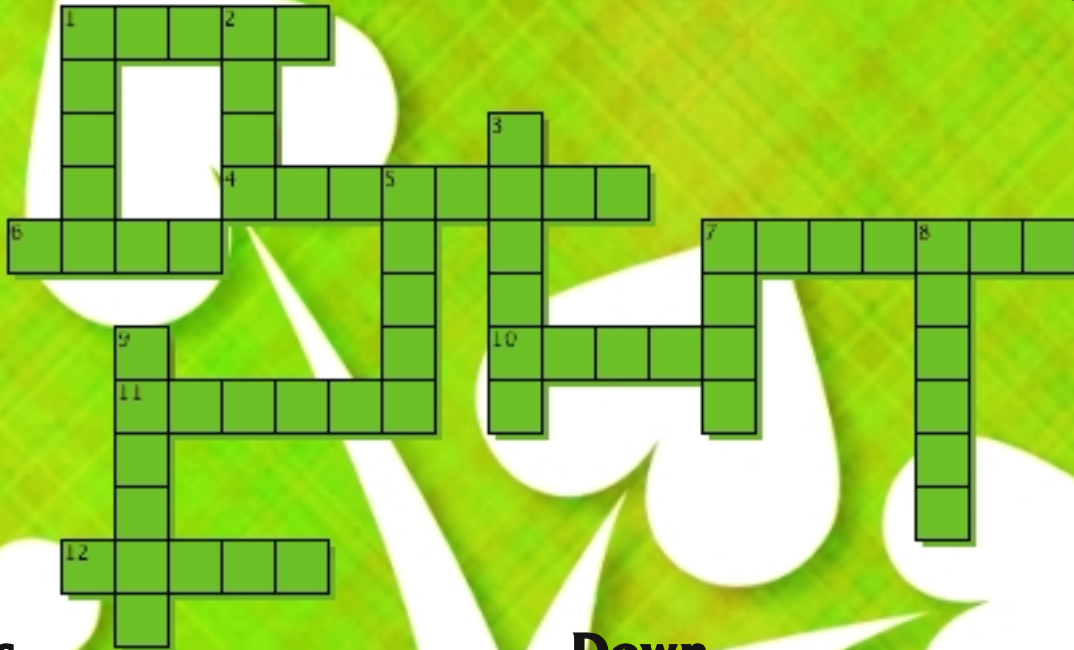
See you all at Rays of Faith, inshaAllah ta'ala!

Wassalamu Alaikum,

Sireen Chaker



# Crossword Puzzle



## Across

- 1- The Book that Bani Israel was given
- 4- Anaology of a small creature used in al-Baqarah
- 6- "Children of"
- 7 - One who lives a double life
- 10- Enemy of the Believers
- 11- Belief in Allah, angels, jinn, Prophets, Paradise, Hell, Fate and the Day of Judgment
- 12- Who was Isreal the name of?

## Down

- 1- Allah-conciousness
- 2- Father of the Prophets
- 3- Angel that brings down the rain
- 5- The Book that was revealed to the Prophet, salla Allahu alayhi wasallam
- 7- A Prophet who was sent to Bani Israel
- 8- The tyrant who tortured Bani Israel
- 9- Disbelievers (in Arabic)

**Possible Answers:**

Adam, Bani, Firawn, Iblis, Kuffar, Mikail, Mosquito, Munafiq, Musa, Quran, Taqwa, Torah, Unseen, Yaqub

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- \* Sheikh **Muhammad Alshareef** for sharing his knowledge and wisdom with us\*

**"And the last of our prayers  
is that all praise  
is due to Allah,  
Lord of all the Worlds!"**