



**“Do ye Remember Me; I will Remember You”**

## Making the Time to Pray

I feel stressed about my upcoming biology exam. I'm saddened by the death of my friend's mother. My grandparents' declining health worries me. I'm overjoyed by my recent academic accomplishment. The injustices in the world pain me. I'm hurt, I'm happy, I'm angered and betrayed, I'm confused and in need of help and guidance. What do I do in all of these situations? I calm myself, take a deep breath and I pray.

It's remarkable how much of my life revolves around the act of Prayer, or *Salaah* in Arabic. As a Muslim, I'm required to pray five times daily at fixed times: before sunrise, between midday and afternoon, between late afternoon and sunset, after sunset and



"Prayer serves as a constant and regular reminder of my relationship with God, my place in the scheme of things, my responsibilities, and my ultimate purpose in life."

at night. That's a lot, you might say, but actually, each prayer is about 10-15 minutes long and consists in reciting verses from the Quran, and bowing and prostrating in the direction of Makkah. In total, prayer time amounts to about an hour a day; time otherwise easily spent watching TV or surfing the Net. The challenge then lies not in the amount of time required (continued on page 3)

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## Restorative Justice and Genocide? Stretching a Concept to the Limit

It's November and Restorative Justice Week draws near. It provides an opportunity to reflect on responses to crime that focus less on punishment and more on healing and offender accountability. In Canada, restorative models include victim-offender mediation, sentencing circles and family group conferences, and are often confined to minor crimes and first time and aboriginal offenders. This summer, however, I came across a radical and challenging application of restorative justice addressing the gravest crimes known to humankind — genocide.

My discovery came about in the course of my research as a summer intern in Rwanda on the prosecution of genocide perpetrators. To recap the tragic events of 1994, in just

(Luke 6:36-38)

under 100 days, and with the mass participation of the populace, an estimated one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed. At the end of the war approximately 130,000 people were arrested and

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Do A Mitz-wha?!

There is a lot of talk about mitzvos in Judaism. So what are they and what do they mean to me? The word, *mitzvah* has been interpreted in a number of ways. Sometimes it means a commandment. Often it is considered simply a good deed or an act of kindness. But we can derive a deeper understanding by looking at the Hebrew root, *L'tzavot*, which when translated, means 'to connect'. G-d gave us mitzvos as a way of connecting to Him.

When G-d decided to create the world, He had a purpose in mind. In a nutshell, He wanted a dwelling place in the lower realms. And we, as created beings, are privileged enough to be entrusted in bringing about this divine mission. G-d *needs* our mitzvahs. G-d *needs* us to connect. Our mitzvahs are crucial to bringing about G-d's plan. Each of us has been given his or her own unique job as part of this plan. No one can do someone else's job or rely on someone else to complete their own special part. We all have to fulfill our own role if we want the plan to work.

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incarcerated for crimes of genocide. Six years later, only 2% of the prison population have been brought to trial, either in the domestic courts or before the international tribunal. At the current rate, the prosecutions are expected to last 200 years, leaving Rwanda at a justice impasse.

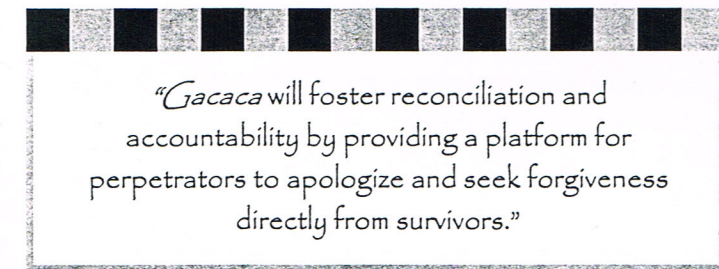
Consequently, in 1999 the government proposed to move away from conventional trials and to bring in a participatory system of Rwandan customary justice known as *gacaca*. Traditionally, *gacaca* consisted of community elders coming together to hear and resolve minor disputes- stolen cattle, etc. In its modern adaptation, *gacaca* 'trials' will take place in localities throughout the country to try the crimes where they were committed, in full view of the community. Everyone is encouraged to participate and to give testimony. The trials will be presided over by lay judges elected by the community. Suspects will have the op-

tion in areas where few Tutsis remain. Other factors include the potential for re-traumatizing survivors, the re-entry of early release genocide perpetrators to the community and the risk of reprisals.

Needless to say, the justice response of the country is a critical one. Justice is a necessary part of the peace process and an indispensable condition for national reconciliation and for putting an end to long standing cycles of violence in the country. Although justice alone cannot bring peace, durable peace is not possible without it. Impunity or unsatisfactory responses to crimes of mass atrocity can corrode and eventually destroy the fabric of society and sows the seeds for future violence. On the other hand, *gacaca* challenges the presumption that a satisfying justice requires repressive or retributive sanctions or that deterrence can only be realized through tougher sentences. Moreover, given the political and material constraints facing the country, *gacaca* will permit offenders to be brought to justice within the lifetime of most survivors and reverse the culture of impunity which characterized past responses to these crimes. Thus, *gacaca* may be able to succeed in areas in which the conventional justice system has failed Rwanda.

As the draft bill progresses through parliament, *gacaca* should be watched closely, particularly by other societies emerging from periods of grave human rights violations. If Rwanda succeeds, it could set up a precedent for a new spirit of justice in post conflict societies, one which offers hope for eventual reconciliation and cohabitation.

*Leane Salel is a McGill law student and an active member of the Newman Centre. Restorative Justice Week is from Nov. 12 to 17. For information on activities call McGill Chaplaincy at 398-4104.*



portunity to confess prior to *gacaca*. Those who do will receive reduced sentences, the final half of which can be spent in the community doing work of public benefit known as community service.

The parallels between *gacaca* and restorative justice are striking. *Gacaca*, it is hoped, will foster reconciliation and accountability by providing a platform for perpetrators to apologize and seek forgiveness directly from survivors. Justice is brought down to the local people by engaging survivors as active participants in *gacaca*, thereby enhancing the visibility of justice. They are encouraged to testify, share their sufferings and challenge anyone suspected of lying or insincerity. Similarly, the establishment of truth through testimonies and confessions can contribute to the resumption of normal relations between the survivors/families of victims and perpetrators and their families. Reparative measures include compensation payments by the offender (where feasible) and the state. Community service work can also enable an offender to make moral reparation for his or her crimes through the provision of socially valuable work.

*Gacaca* however, faces many challenges. The extent to which *gacaca* will contribute to reconciliation between genocide perpetrators and survivors will depend on the fairness of the process and the quality and independence of the judges. It will also depend on the willingness of survivors to come forward and denounce their neighbours. Concerns have been voiced about the lack of procedural and human rights safeguards, the potential for intimidation and how the trials will func-

*Whatever living beings there  
are, either feeble or strong,  
all either long or great, mid-  
dle-sized, short, small or  
large, either seen or which  
are not seen, and which live  
far or near, either born or  
seeking birth, may all crea-  
tures be happy-minded*

*~ Gautama Buddha  
Sutra of Mercy*



## Move Over, Here's Another One

Coming to a new university, either from a local CEGEP or from an out of town high school can be quite an adventure. The freedom from parents and the surge of independence can be liberating. But deep down we all want to keep in touch with our spiritual side and have a network of peers to turn to in times of joy and need. McGill prides itself on being an international university and attracts students of many different faiths. As part of its efforts to cater to such a diverse religious community, McGill Chaplaincy has sprouted yet another branch on its ever-growing tree: McGill Sikh Chaplaincy.

Now in its 2nd year, the Sikh Chaplaincy is headed by Sikh Chaplain, Manjit Singh. Its growing membership includes students from both near and far and provides an opportunity to talk to fellow Sikhs, make new friends and to receive guidance.

The focal point of our meetings, held approximately every second or third week in each semester, is our round table discussion. These discussions are held on a variety of topics of interest to both rookies and veterans of the Chaplaincy, ranging from historical perspectives of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib (the holy book), to the modern day dilemma of growing up Sikh in a predominately North American culture. Students from all faith backgrounds are welcome to attend and contribute — and to share in some of the goodies Manjit Singh cooks up!

The McGill Sikh Chaplaincy is an exciting place to meet new people who share your faith and have fun. Coming up is our FOUNDER'S DAY DINNER, on November 10, in celebration of the birth of the first Sikh prophet, Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. It will be a good time to mingle and have some fun... I hope to see you all there! To come to the dinner, e-mail us. For any questions e-mail us at: [sikhchap@hotmail.com](mailto:sikhchap@hotmail.com)

*Hardip Singh Manku is a fourth year psychology student and a veteran member of Sikh Chaplaincy*

(Prayer, continued)

to pray but rather in the *timings* of the prayers. Put simply, I don't pray when I have the time; I make the time to pray.

Prayer allows me to remember God and be closer to Him. God says, "Do ye remember Me; I will remember you" (Quran, 2: 152). Prayer offers me the opportunity to hold a one-to-one conversation with my Creator, to directly communicate my reverence, submission, and gratitude, and to "celebrate the praises of [my] Lord, and be of those who prostrate themselves in adoration" (15: 98). In the midst of my daily activities and preoccupations, Prayer serves as a constant and regular reminder of my relationship with God, my place in the scheme of things, my responsibilities, and my ultimate purpose in life.

Prayer also helps me develop discipline and value punctuality. Knowing that my prayers are to be performed at certain times means that I try my best to pray on time. A typical day on campus thus always includes a pit stop at the Muslim Students' Prayer Room in the Shatner building in order to fulfill my prayer requirements. My neighbour once argued that he didn't see the point in waking up before sunrise to pray when I could easily do so at a more comfortable hour in the morning. I told him that just as it's important for me to respect the fixed timings of other aspects of my life, such as work, school, meeting a deadline, or making an appointment, so too it is equally, in fact more, important for me to be punctual for my time with God.

My time with God, my time to express my joy, voice my gratitude, reveal my fears, seek forgiveness, appeal for guidance—that's what prayer represents for me. It pains me to see how often the media juxtaposes reports on religious extremism with the graceful image of people bowed in prostration. Performing my prayers does not make me an extremist; it simply allows me to fulfill a religious obligation all the while obtaining inner peace and tranquility.

*Memuna A. Jamal, MSA Exec.*

(Mitzvah, continued)

There are 613 mitzvahs in Judaism. They encompass such a broad spectrum of acts that many of us may be performing a variety of mitzvot daily without even realizing it. Simple deeds like helping out a friend who may be going through a rough time or visiting someone who is sick can often be among those mitzvot of the highest stature. It is said that the demonstration of charity alone hastens the arrival of Moshiach (the Messiah). In fact, every given moment is a potential opportunity for one to do a mitzvah.

To perform a mitzvah a physical object is required. The objects aren't necessarily the things that surround us. For example, your brain or heart would be considered the physical object involved in mitzvahs where thoughts or emotions are concerned. By performing a mitzvah with a prescribed physical object, this object becomes elevated and as such is able to connect back to its source — G-d. This is how G-dliness is revealed on earth and how His desire for a dwelling place is actualized.

Moshiach (or, the messianic age) is this actualization. The messianic age will not be the cessation of physical existence. On the contrary, it will be of the ultimate physicality as it was meant to be all along. It will be a place where truth and ultimate reality are self-evident one and for all. Mitzvos are the means by which we will arrive at this goal.

*Sarede Switzer is an active member of Chabad House*





Restoring Right Relations  
with First Nations

## Residential Schools and

## The Church

Bishop Gordon Beardy,  
A member of the Cree Nation and  
The Anglican Church of Canada



Moot Court in Chancellor Day Hall  
3644 Peel St.  
Friday, November 3  
7 pm

Sponsored by SCM

## Meditation Mornings

Buddhist Chaplain, Richard Hayes  
leads us in a few moments of  
quiet meditation before the hus-  
tle and bustle of daily life. Come  
join us for a time of peace.

Birks University Chapel  
Monday to Friday ~ 7 am  
And Fridays at noon

(for those of us non-morning  
people!)

In collaboration with the Ecu-  
menical Chaplain, Gwenda Wells

## Stay-Up 2000

Thursday, November 16,  
2000

9 pm — 2 am

*The ultimate Jewish learn-  
ing experience with guest  
speakers, educators and  
rabbis. Location to be de-  
termined.*

For more info, call Hillel  
at 845-9171

## A Night at the Movies!

EVERYONE is invited to meet in the Shatner lobby  
Thursday, November 9th at 6:30 pm

We will head to the Egyptian Theatre to see **The Colour of Paradise**, an Iranian movie about  
a young blind boy who sees more of God's earth than can his sighted father. A Winner at the Cannes Film  
Festival.

An opportunity to meet at mingle with students of other religious faiths  
Call 398-4104 to confirm

## Founder's Day Dinner

Friday, November 10, 2000

Join us as we celebrate the birth of the first Sikh prophet,,  
Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji  
For details and to reserve, e-mail  
sikhchap@hotmail.com

## New Earth Voices,

McGill's only sacred-music choir, is pleased to announce its fall  
term concert. Reflecting on the Advent season, the pro-  
gramme will include traditional Christmas carols, French noels,  
and international folk music. Refresh your soul with some  
great music before studying for exams!

Sunday, December 3rd, 2000  
Diocesan Theological College, 3473 University Street  
(just below the corner of Milton)

See you there!

## Help international students survive the cold!

Winter coats, hats and gloves suitable for university  
students are being collected. Men's jackets are  
particularly needed. (Thanks but no indoor cloth-  
ing.)

Collection at McGill Chaplaincy,  
Brown Student Services, Suite 4400  
between 1—5 pm daily. For more info, contact  
Gwenda Wells, 398-4104

The Prayer and Meditation Room  
is now available for quiet individual use.  
Take a few moments before you rush off to class  
In Suite 4400, Brown Student Services