

MEMO

Summer 2019

middle east
media

+ **The Ramadan
Prayer Guide**



*In this
Special issue:*

**The Bible
Project for the
Arab World**

**Breaking
FGM's hold on
generations**

**The Ramadan
Prayer Guide**

Dear Friends,

This is a special edition of our MEMO newsletter as it includes our Ramadan Prayer Guide for 2019. Our hope is that the articles in our newsletter will inspire you about the vital work we're accomplishing across the region and the prayer guide will help to influence your prayers throughout Ramadan.

In this edition we learn about how a partnership with The Bible Project is enabling us to spread their innovative work across the Arab world, I share one of my experiences while visiting our work in North Africa, and we have our new-look Ramadan Prayer Guide that includes recipes to share with your own communities.

I want to thank you for your support and prayers for our crucial work. Lives are being transformed and you are a part of enabling that to happen.

James Baldock

Communications Manager

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Volunteer Opportunities

We are currently looking for the following volunteer positions.

Prayer Distributor - Submitting prayer requests to organisations, prayer apps, and prayer movements. Approx. 5 hrs per month. For more info get in touch with James at comms@mem.org.

Subtitle Editor - Editing and writing the English subtitles of our videos - an understanding of Arabic is advantageous, but not necessary. Approx 3-5 hrs per month. For more info get in touch with Jolita at jolita@mem.org.

We also have multiple volunteer opportunities in North Africa and the Gulf, please get in touch with Jolita at jolita@mem.org if you would be interested in volunteering abroad.

*But God demonstrates His
own love for us in this: While
we were still sinners, Christ
died for us.*

- Romans 5:8



Bringing *The Bible* Project to the Arab world

In recent years MEM have been involved in 5 Bible media projects, such as *Animating the Action Bible* and the first Arabic Bible app. We are honoured to bring the Word of God to Arab children, young people, and adults of all ages. Therefore, we were excited to partner with the organisation called The Bible Project, to bring their innovative animations to the Arab world.

The Bible Project started in 2014 with the vision to help people read through scripture while avoiding common pitfalls and misunderstandings. They combined biblical understanding with visual story-telling and have since created over 130 videos and 200 podcasts. With over 100 million views across all of their media channels in over 200 countries, they are teaching the Bible in a pioneering and attractive way to a new generation of people aged 18 to 45.

In a region where approximately 70% of the population are under 35 years of age, we are very excited to see the impact of these animations across the Arab world through this younger generation. Countries, such as Saudi Arabia, who have over 90% of their population using social media, are becoming more open and seeking answers about God.

In 2014 as The Bible Project was just posting their first videos, our Gulf Ministry Director immediately saw the value of having these videos in Arabic to minister and share the scripture with the Arab World. At that time they were not ready to entertain doing an Arabic language version, however we continued to follow the progress of the project. Last year, as we entered into a partnership with The Bible Project, our teams were very excited & committed to be creating these innovative animations, making them accessible across the Arab world. They help to ignite a passion within Christians and those seeking God across the region to understand and grow in their knowledge of the Word of God.

- Wayne Larson, International Director of MEM

the BIBLE PROJECT



Animation: Arabic version of *The Bible Project* "Philemon".



Animation: Arabic version of *The Bible Project* "Romans Part 1".

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies.

- 1 Corinthians 6:19-20



Breaking FGM's hold on generations

By *James Baldock*

Communications Manager

I was sitting in a meeting talking to the leader of our *Nisaa Women's Project* Asha, when she told me that the writers for our online women's magazine were coming in for a workshop shortly. Asha invited me to attend part of the workshop to get a feel for the work that goes into the project and writing, so I accepted and asked what the focus of the workshop was. I was then told that they were about to go into a campaign about female genital mutilation (FGM) in North African society.

They were putting on the workshop because several of the writers had shared apprehension about writing on this topic and the project leaders wanted to brainstorm with them on how to talk about this sensitive subject. Due to the nature of the workshop and wanting to be sensitive to our female writers, I excused myself and my female colleague Sabra attended on my behalf.

When the workshop had concluded Sabra came to me and said, "Thank goodness you didn't attend! There were tears flowing throughout the workshop. The writer's apprehension was due to over half of them actually having suffered through the ordeal of having FGM done to them when they were younger."

It is shocking to me that even in a city in North Africa, there is such a high percentage of FGM happening to young girls and women. It's not in small villages or exclusive to the uneducated, it is still a deeply held belief that FGM is a good thing for girls across the region.

Continued on next page.

cont.

Sabra continued to tell me about one of the writers who had shared that she had gone through the ordeal of FGM. Moreover, her mother-in-law was pressuring her to get her two daughters circumcised. The writer exclaimed that she didn't want her daughters to have to go through that trauma and have their bodies mutilated, but that her mother-in-law was most insistent. She felt scared for her daughters because she couldn't be with them all the time and there was a possibility that it could happen to them without their mother's knowledge.

Having a daughter myself, I couldn't imagine what she was going through on a daily basis. Any parent wants the best for their children, but in this culture there is a generationally held belief that FGM is vital for all girls. It was explained to me that it wasn't necessarily carried out with evil intentions, but rather through the wrongly held beliefs of parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. Unfortunately, it's not going to be a quick fix to stop this from happening as it is ingrained on the culture of the region.

Thankfully, after the workshop the writers were full of passion and vision for the possibilities that were in front of them. By writing articles about FGM, explaining the misconceptions, exploring the science, and talking about the generationally held beliefs, they have a way to fight this issue and educate people across the Arab world. It was incredibly inspirational to hear that these women were going to take a traumatic experience that they had gone through and use that experience to educate others to stop the practice of FGM.

FGM Statistics

- » It is estimated that more than 200 million girls and women alive today have undergone FGM.
- » 3 million girls are at risk of undergoing FGM every year.
- » The majority of girls are cut before they turn 15 years old.

Statistics taken from World Health Organisation.

Our *Nisa'a Women's project* has over 550,000 readers of their online magazine and have had over 1.2 million people engage with their social media pages over the last twelve months. With that many readers and impact on culture, we have such an opportunity to use that influence to start lowering the numbers of those who have to go through this trauma and see more young women flourish into their futures.

Media itself has an important role to play in transforming the ideas and beliefs of society, which subsequently can lead to transforming lives for the better and preparing people to understand and accept a loving God. I hope that you will join with me in praying for these brave women who, over the coming weeks and months, will write about their experiences and knowledge of FGM to fight against this major issue across the Arab world.

*Names in this article were changed for security reasons.



Prayer Points

- » Pray for the writers of our online magazine, thank God for their bravery in approaching this topic, and ask God to guide and heal them as they write these important articles.
- » Pray that the 200 million girls and women who have undergone FGM would be able to find emotional and psychological healing for their ordeal.
- » Pray that God would guide people across the Arab world to end this practice and that we would see a miraculous decrease in the number of girls who are going through this.

Booking Speakers for 2020

We speak at conferences and churches across the country to inspire and encourage people with the news of what God is doing across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). People come away filled with excitement and hope, while also being challenged about their part to play in reaching the region, as well as their Muslim neighbours.

If you would like to book someone to come and speak, we are currently booking speaking opportunities for late 2019 and throughout 2020. We have speakers available to speak on a variety of topics, including: global missions, the church in the MENA region, digital evangelism, and the work of MEM.

We can speak at services on a Sunday, church conferences, weekends away or retreats, and mission Sundays. This year we are at ONE Event in Lincoln, UK and New Wine in Peterborough, UK. If you're attending either of these, please come and say hello at our stand. If you would like to enquire about booking one of our speakers please e-mail Jolita at jolita@mem.org.

Ramadan Prayer Guide

5th May - 4th June



Ramadan is the holiest month of the Islamic year, during which over a billion Muslims from around the world fast from sunrise to sunset. As well as providing guidance for you to pray through Ramadan this year, we are also encouraging you to embrace the community aspect of sharing food. As such, we have included several recipes for Middle Eastern food that would be perfect to share with your Muslim neighbours, church group, or family.

We hope that this guide will equip you and your churches as you intercede for the Muslims in your community, the Middle East, and across the world.

Days of Mercy

5th May - 14th May

Ramadan can be divided into three 'ashras' (the Arabic word for ten), which each have a different spiritual focus. The exact dates are uncertain as the month begins with the first sighting of the crescent moon, but we have started our guide on the probable first day of Ramadan, 5th May.

Significant Dates

5th - 14th May - The first ten days are the days of mercy and heavenly rewards, during which Muslims seek Allah's mercy and endeavour to show mercy to others.

Prayer Points

- As Muslims confess their sins and reflect on their lives in the first few days, pray that they would encounter God during this time and question their traditions..
- Muslims believe that fasting and giving charitably during these days of mercy will help to redeem themselves. Pray that they would encounter and start to understand God's grace for them.
- While Muslims spend time in reflection and prayer, ask the Holy Spirit to draw near to them and reveal the truth of who God is; their loving heavenly Father.
- As Muslims spend time in reflection and prayer, ask the Holy Spirit to draw near to them and reveal the truth of who God is.

Community

As you pray throughout the days of mercy, why not cook some delicious Kanafeh for your church or small group, and pray with them for Muslims across the Middle East and North Africa, as well as Muslims in your own community?

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. - Hebrews 4:16

Kanafeh

Prep: 25min > Cook: 35min > Ready in: 1 hr

A delicious Middle Eastern desert with shredded filo pastry, creamy cheese, and drenched in a rose water syrup.

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 200 C or Gas 6.
2. Use a food processor to finely chop the frozen, shredded filo dough. The strands should be about the size of a grain of rice. Pour the dough into a large mixing bowl. In a separate bowl, mix together the ricotta, mozzarella and 5 tablespoons sugar.
3. Place the butter in a large liquid measuring cup or bowl with a spout. Heat the butter in a microwave until completely melted and let it sit for several minutes until a thick white foam has formed on top. Clarify the butter by using a spoon to skim off the foam.
4. Carefully pour the butter into the bowl of filo dough. Avoid pouring in the white milk solids at the bottom of the clarified butter. Use your hands to mix the butter and dough together. Make sure that the butter is absorbed by taking handfuls of the dough and rubbing it between your palms.
5. Evenly spread the buttered filo dough into a 20x30cm tin and firmly press it into the bottom and edges. Spread the cheese mixture onto the dough, avoiding the edges of the tin.
6. Bake in preheated oven until the cheese is slightly golden and the edges of dough are brown and bubbly, 30 to 35 minutes.
7. While the Kanafeh is baking, prepare the syrup. Combine the water and 100g sugar in a small saucepan. Bring the mixture to the boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to medium and stir in the lemon juice. Simmer, stirring constantly, until the sugar is dissolved and the mixture is thickened, 5 to 7 minutes. (Do not let the mixture turn golden and caramelize.) Remove from heat and add the rose water; set aside.
8. Remove the Kanafeh from the oven. Place a large plate or baking tray over the baking dish. Using oven mitts, carefully invert the baking dish onto the plate so the filo is on top.
9. Pour the syrup over the Kanafeh and then sprinkle the chopped pistachios on top. Cut into pieces and serve while hot.

Ingredients

450g shredded filo dough
425g ricotta cheese
120g grated mozzarella cheese
5 tablespoons caster sugar
340g unsalted butter
1 cup chopped pistachios

For the syrup

200g caster sugar
125ml water
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1/8 teaspoon rose water

Days of Forgiveness

15th May - 24th May

The second ashra of Ramadan is forgiveness. Over these ten days, please join us in praying that Muslims will learn about the true forgiveness that they can have in Jesus.

Significant Dates

15th - 24th May - The second ten days are the days of forgiveness. This is the time to repent of sins, as well as forgive fellow Muslims. It is said that during this time, Allah's forgiveness is at its peak.

21st May - Many Muslims aim to read the whole Quran during Ramadan, by day 16 many will be reading Surah 19, which tells the story of Jesus' birth and life.

Prayer Points

- This is a time where Muslims repent of their sins and forgive other Muslims, as they believe at this time Allah's forgiveness is at its peak. Pray that during this time, many Muslims would come to know God's unchanging forgiveness and love for them.
- As Muslims read about Jesus during this time, pray that they would be inspired to know more about His life, death, and resurrection.
- Pray for believers from a Muslim background (BMBs) today. As they gather with family, pray there would be forgiveness and reconciliation.
- Pray for protection of BMBs and Christians across the region, as Ramadan can be a time of persecution for them.

Community

As you pray throughout the days of forgiveness, why not cook some fattoush for your family, talk about what true forgiveness and reconciliation means, and pray for Muslims across the world?

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other just as in Christ God forgave you. - Ephesians 4:31-32

Fattoush



Prep: 15min > Cook: 20min > Ready in: 35min

A Lebanese bread salad that is traditionally customised with whichever salad ingredients are in season.

Instructions

1. Tear the bread into pieces, approximately 1 inch-squared. Heat the vegetable oil over medium heat, and fry the bread bits until nicely browned and crisp, then set aside to drain on a plate lined with paper towels; or you can toast the pita instead of frying.
2. Combine vegetables, lettuce, parsley, and bread pieces in a large bowl, and toss well.
3. Whisk olive oil and lemon juice, and mix in garlic, sumac, mint, and salt and pepper to taste.
4. Pour dressing over salad and toss thoroughly.

photo: from my point of view/shutterstock.com

Ingredients

- 3 small pita breads
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 2 diced tomatoes
- 1 large diced cucumber
- 1 cup chopped scallions
- 1 cup diced green bell pepper
- 3 sliced radishes
- 1 chopped romaine lettuce head
- 3/4 cup chopped parsley
- 1 & 1/2 cups olive oil
- 1 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 6 crushed garlic cloves
- 1/2 cup sumac
- 1 cup chopped fresh mint
- salt and pepper as desired

"I know Christians who do Ramadan like Muslims, they feast and pray to God for their Muslim brothers. I believe that God will send His Spirit to them (Muslims) and lead them to Jesus."

- Mark, Head of Video Production at MEM.

Days of Refuge

25th May - 4th June

The last tens days of Ramadan are believed to be the most blessed days of the entire Muslim calendar.

Significant Dates

25th May - 4th June - These are “Days of Refuge”, where Muslims seek Allah's blessing and ask for safety from hell, as Muslims have no guarantee of going to heaven.

1st June - This night is the holiest night of the year, Laylat al-Qadr, when the gates of heaven open and forgiveness is poured down.

3rd June - On the 29th day of Ramadan, after sunset, people go outside and look for a new crescent moon. If sighted, the end of Ramadan and Eid are declared.

Prayer Points

- Pray that many Muslims would have revelations about Jesus during Laylat al-Qadr, and that they would have the courage to become a follower of Jesus whatever the cost.
- Pray that God would reveal to Muslims that they can only find assurance of salvation in Him.
- This is a special time for families as they celebrate together. Pray for families who might have lost loved ones recently - may they know the comfort and refuge they have in God.
- God is love. As you pray, thank God for His love for each and every person across the Middle East and North Africa.
- Pray that BMBs would find refuge in the midst of difficult circumstances.

Community

As you pray throughout the days of refuge, why not invite some close friends around, cook some harira soup and pray for Muslims to find salvation through Jesus Christ?

I will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!" - Psalm 91:2

Harira Soup



photo: nito/shutterstock.com

Prep: 10min > Cook: 45min > Ready in: 55min

A vegetarian Moroccan soup that is healthy and nourishing, plus it's low in fat and calories.

Instructions

1. Heat some olive oil in a pot over medium heat. Add the onion, stirring continuously until they soften, start to caramelize but don't let them turn golden.
2. Add the ginger. Let them cook together for a few minutes, until the aroma starts to fill the kitchen. Add the garlic and sauté for just 1 minute more because the garlic can burn easily.
3. Add the tomato paste and sauté for 1 minute. Add the lentils and carrots and mix to combine everything. Season with salt and pepper. Add the cumin, paprika, oriental spice mix, black pepper, and saffron. Mix thoroughly and let it simmer for a few minutes.
4. Add the stock. There should be enough liquid to cover the vegetables. Cover the pot and allow the food to simmer for 20 minutes.
5. While the soup is cooking, finely chop the chervil and parsley. Set aside some chervil for the garnish. Juice 2 lemons and add the juice to the soup.
6. Cut the third lemon into thin slices and set that aside also for garnish.
7. Puree the soup in a blender until smooth and creamy.
8. The soup should not be too thick. This can be adjusted by adding as much stock or water as necessary to get the consistency just right.
9. Pour the soup back into the pot and put back on heat. Add the chervil, parsley, chickpeas, and a large pinch of salt.
10. Let the soup simmer gently for another 10-15 minutes. Add the lemon juice. Stir and taste, checking to see if anything is missing. Adjust accordingly.
11. Ladle soup into bowls and sprinkle with the remaining chervil.
12. Serve with lemon slices and bread.

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 1 tbsp. fresh ginger, peeled and sliced
- 1 tbsp. tomato paste
- 4 carrots, finely chopped
- 3 tbsps. red lentils
- 1 tsp. cumin powder
- 1/2 tsp. sweet paprika powder
- 1/2 tsp. Oriental spice mix
- salt
- black pepper
- 2 pinches saffron
- 1 bunch of chervil
- parsley leaves
- 250ml chicken or meat stock
- 400g boiled chickpeas
- 3 lemons



Show *Mercy*
Explain *Forgiveness*
Give *Refuge*

Help us reach Muslims in the Middle East and North Africa

Muslims across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are devoting this time to pray and seek God. They ask questions of Islam and can find themselves searching for truth in a society that forbids questioning.

These Muslims have misconceptions about Christianity and have been taught that the Christian faith is false. Many of them turn to the internet and television to find the truth, but are often confronted by confusing messages.

The best people to reach them are believers from a Muslim background (BMBs) as they understand their experiences and can share the truth of Jesus with them. We partner with these individuals to tell their stories through short videos sharing testimony, scriptures, and culturally sensitive presentations.

These videos are then published across the internet, satellite television, and used by organisations in the region. They help to clarify misconceptions and share the goodness of God with Muslims across the region.

Images from videos produced by BMBs to reach their own people:



This year we want to create 23 short videos for Muslim children

We are working with the children of BMBs to create short videos that will reach Muslim children with messages of God's mercy, forgiveness, and refuge. This is a part of a bigger campaign to reach Muslims of all ages in the Gulf and these will compliment the 52 videos already created for adults.

[Would you help us make this a reality and reach Muslims by giving towards this powerful work and filling out the giving form, which came with this newsletter, or go to \[mem.org/give\]\(http://mem.org/give\)](#)

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news blog
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advocacy page
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Thank You

Your giving, prayers, and advocacy for MEM, are what
make it possible for us to do our vital work across the
Middle East and North Africa.

Sowing seeds of transformation

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