

reprint

Many Paths

the monthly journal of

CRES promoting understanding among peoples of all faiths

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Volume 19, Number 11; November, 2002

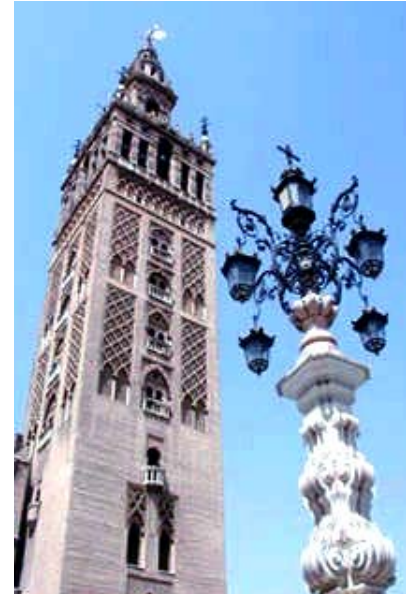
Opening hearts and minds and doors

Many Paths essays introduce readers to aspects of specific faiths, compare and contrast how the various faiths regard particular topics, or present material those of any spiritual path may find helpful.

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ: طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيضَةٌ عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ.

The Holy Prophet has said: "The quest of knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim."

Our Debt to Islam



Kansas City would not be Kansas City without Muhammad.

As the cover to the American Automobile Association map of Kansas City suggests, one of the landmarks of our community is Giralda Tower on the Plaza, where we often bring our friends from out of town as we show them the sights.

Above right is the Giralda — but is it the 1184-96 CE original in Seville, one of our Sister Cities, or is it the miniature replica across from Nichols Fountain in the Country Club Plaza, with the replica of the lantern as well across the street? (ANSWER: THE ORIGINAL.)

Within a single century after Mohammed's death, Islam had spread west and east, from the Iberian peninsula to beyond the Indus River. In Andalusia, the Almohads built this minaret, from which the call to prayer was issued five times each day, like its twins in Marrakech and Rabat. The belfrey was added by Christians in 1565 after destroying the mosque.

But this is just the beginning of our indebtedness to Islam and the cultures which were shaped by it. What do all the items in the blue graphic on the next page have in common? They all come to us through the genius of Islamic development.

A Community Resource for Interfaith Understanding

Inside . . .

- 2 **On the Path:** The CBS-TV special [replaced in reprint]
- 3 CBS TV looks at Kansas City Interfaith Approaches
- 4 Other CRES news; featured Interfaith Council member
- 5 Digest, Comment, Quotation, Humor, Column list
- 6 Thanksgiving Interfaith Ceremonial Meal / Al Brooks
- 7 **CRES Calendar:** Events open to CRES friends
- 8 **Community Calendar:** Events of Interfaith Interest

Reference Supplement Two Essays: "Ramadan" and "Understanding the Metro Diversity Task Force Report"

Next Month

Essay: Christmas Parallels

2002 November Holy Days

- 4 **Hindu Diwali** — Festival of Lights, dedicated to the goddess Kali in Bengal and to Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth, in the rest of India. *Diwali* stories include Vishnu destroying evil.
- 4 **Sikhism Bandi Chhor Divas** — commemorating the return of the sixth Guru, Sri Hargobind Ji, to Amritsar after being jailed at Diwali.
- 4 **Bahá'i Qudrat ("Power")** — the 13th Bahá'i month.
- 6 **Islam Ramadan Begins** — a month of fasting during daylight.
- 6 **Sikhism Installation of the Guru Granth Sahib** — Bikarumi date for celebrating Gionind Singh Ji passing the guruship to the Holy Scriptures.
- 10 **Jainism Jnana Panchmi ("Day of Knowledge")** — celebrating *Jnan*, the divine or transcendent knowledge or wisdom.
- 12 **Bahá'i Birth of Bahá'u'lláh** — founder of the Bahá'i faith.
- 19 **Sikhism Birth of Guru Nanak Devi Ji** — founder of the Sikh faith.
- 20 **Jainism Lokashah Jayanti** — celebration of revered and scholarly persons who opposed temple worship.
- 20 **Buddhism Kathina** — Theravada monks/nuns get new robes.
- 23 **Bahá'i Qawl ("Speech")** — the 14th Bahá'i month.
- 24 **Sikhism Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur** — the ninth Guru defended Sikh and Hindu faith and religious liberty.
- 28 **Bahá'i Ascension of 'Abdul-Bahá** — marks his death.
- 29 **Islam Jum'at al-Wada ("Farewell Friday")** — the last Friday of the month of *Ramadan*.
- 29 **Judaism Eve of Hanukkah** — an eight-day commemoration of the victory of Judah the Maccabee for religious freedom
- 30 **Judaism First Day of Hanukkah.**

Question Box

How do I get this 12-page publication each month and support interfaith work in the Kansas City area?

Glad you asked. Use the page 2 support form. You can also download much of *Many Paths* in a PDF file from our website. The calendars are also available at www.cres.org.





Take Raphael, the Italian Renaissance painter. “The School of Athens” (1508 CE) uses geometric perspective, with the archways governed by, and the tiles converging toward, a “vanishing point,” a way of presenting a three-dimensional scene on a flat surface with a sense of depth. See the photo below of the Vatican room in which it was painted. How different from Christian medieval art!

Building on the Bagdad astronomer Alkindi (813-880 CE), Alhazen (c 965-1039 CE), working in Cairo, advanced the idea which seems so obvious to us now, that we see because rectilinear light is reflected from objects into our eyes. He used the persistence of retinal images to demolish the earlier notion that seeing is a kind of feeling, that beams emerge from our eyes and grasp the objects we see. He anticipated Newton in discovering the refraction of light into colors. His is the earliest recorded use of the *camera obscura*. He studied lenses — they were prohibited in Western science until the 16th Century, though artists played with them as early as 1280, ten years after his work was translated into Latin. Alhazen’s discoveries led artists like Raphael to develop perspective in painting, without which the Renaissance is unthinkable because it was a new way of looking at the world.



Or take *zero*, a term introduced into Western languages from Arabic (we also get *cipher* — from a different inflection) because the Christian West had no word for place-holder, as in 1040.

If you hate doing your taxes, imagine what it would be like if we still were using *Roman* numerals; we call the ones we use *Arabic*, brought to us from India by Muslim traders.

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John Philip Sousa is easy to explain. The marching band was developed by the Ottoman Empire. Even something as American as “The Stars and Stripes Forever” is at least in part indebted to developments in Islamic culture.

Olé is simply a Spanish way of saying *Allah*, “God,” in Arabic. Perhaps it captures the excitement of knowing God’s presence. At flamenco dances in Spain I have heard it pronounced “All-lay!”

With the concept of one God, an urge in Islam was universal study and integration. The gifts of preservation and innovation began during the Christian “Dark Ages” and continue to this day. Perhaps these few examples will remind us that we have been profoundly influenced by Islam. —VB

On the Path

Dear Reader:

This sheet is an excerpt from our 12-page monthly newsletter. In addition to special features, in each complete edition you will find —

- ▶ Summaries of world and local religious news
- ▶ Comment, quotations, humor, poetry
- ▶ Essays to help us understand and appreciate each other
- ▶ A 4-page reference insert, a valuable aid and “keeper”
- ▶ Calendars of holidays, community and CRES activities.

If you are interested in promoting understanding among peoples of all faiths, please join our network with a contribution and your participation. Thank you.

Uern Barnett

MAIL TO CRES, BOX 45414, Kansas City, MO 64171

Enclosed please find my check to CRES for o \$35 o \$60 o \$100 o \$200 \$_____ to register my support for interfaith work. I will be pleased to receive *Many Paths* for the next 12 months.

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Ole!

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