

Saints and sinners: Downturn might have a silver lining

Will the recession now gathering momentum in America turn out to be good for us? Certainly not if we are among those who have lost their jobs in the economic downturn.

But for someone who has enjoyed all the material things in life and who has never had to do without, a recession can have a salutary effect.

I heard a young mother say the other day that in her family's next house they are not going to have an electronic dishwasher as they have now because her children are missing out on "the wonderful experience of doing dishes."

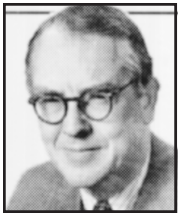
While a child is likely to consider it a chore and even grumble about it, doing dishes with someone else (in my case, it was my sister) can be fun and enjoyable. The conversation is easy and informal, and in some ways, it is a better

way to bring people — even adults — closer together than sitting around the dining room table.

The recession we are starting to live through will force us to do without more and more things, and there is a good chance that we will be happier for it. There is a self-satisfaction that comes from self-denial that cannot be matched by self-indulgence. Did you ever know anyone prouder than the person who has successfully lost 25 pounds by giving up the foods she or he loves?

Many of us grew up as recession's children, and we enjoy bragging about how hard we had it when we were young. We have carried many of these habits with us through adult years.

There is a story Norman Vincent Peale tells about a train trip he took when he was in his 60s.



george plagenz

• saints & sinners

He was lugging three suitcases off a train while redcaps were standing all around.

He could well have afforded a redcap for each suitcase, and before he left home, his wife had told him explicitly, "Norman, be sure to get a redcap to carry your bags."

He had said he would. So why didn't he?

"Some faint voice from the past," says Peale, "some echo of the rigid economy taught me in

childhood spoke up sternly in the back of my mind, asking whether it were really right to pay for a service you could perform just as well yourself."

In our home today, we are all careful about turning the lights out. That, I am sure, is a throw-back to my childhood days when, every so often, the voice of one of us would ring through the house, "Who left the bathroom light on?"

But many of us have forgotten to teach our children these lessons we learned. "We do too much for them," said Bertrand Russell, the British philosopher.

"The capacity to endure a more or less monotonous life is one which should be acquired in childhood," said Russell. "Modern parents are greatly to blame in this respect. They provide their children with far too many passive

amusements, such as shows and good things to eat.

"They do not realize the importance to a child of having one day like another — except for somewhat rare occasions. Too much travel, too much variety of impressions are not good for the young and cause them to grow up incapable of enduring fruitful monotony.

"Constructive purposes do not easily form themselves in a child's mind if he is living a life of distractions and dissipations, for, in that case, his thoughts will always be directed toward the next pleasure rather than toward the distant achievement."

Well, if we haven't taught these things to our children, maybe they will learn them on their own when "the wonderful world of doing without" will again be the norm.

Yazidis: Followers of obscure religious sect accused of devil worship

By Mariam Fam

Associated Press Writer

YARMOUK COMPOUND, Iraq — Tucked away in a mountainous area in northern Iraq is the Yarmouk Compound, home to followers of an obscure faith derided by some as a religion of devil worship.

Yazidi traditions are so shrouded in secrecy, no outsiders have seen its most important rituals. Few people besides Yazidi religious leaders have copies of the group's holy books.

Living on the margins of this predominantly Islamic country, Yazidis struggle to maintain their traditions, with many settling in the compound's 3,000 squat mud houses at the end of an unpaved three-mile road.

"It's better to live alone so that the morals of our youth wouldn't change," said Rashu Aizdu, a 56-year-old Yazidi school worker.

Yazidis are ethnic Kurds whose religion blends elements of Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and other faiths, researchers say.

Sheik Adi, a Sufi Arab who lived in the 12th century in northern Iraq, is considered the religion's chief saint. Many Yazidi rituals center on the sheik's tomb, north of Mosul, where pilgrims hold festivals that include some ceremonies conducted in secret.

Accusations of satanic worship are rooted in a central figure in the Yazidi tradition called Malak Ta'us, or the Peacock Angel, who many Muslims and other non-Yazidis consider the devil.

Yazidis, however, believe Malak Ta'us fell from grace, then later repented and must be appeased to avert his wrath. Yazidis have a hymn dedicated to Malak Ta'us and often display his peacock image and kiss it as part of their rituals.

"He can kill us, destroy our houses and punish us. We fear him," said Aizdu, sitting on the floor in a bare room where the compound's men gather for coffee and a smoke.

Yazidis have small communities in Syria, Turkey, Iran, Georgia and Armenia, but the majority of the estimated 100,000 followers live in Iraq.

Iraq's government boasts of its tolerance of the Yazidis, but Yazidis are little more than tolerated. Most live in poverty and are the target of contempt.

The government forbids discrimination in hiring or housing, but can't stop other Iraqis from calling Yazidis "devil worshippers" or viewing them as defiled.

Though their beliefs and lifestyle may set Yazidis apart from other Iraqis, they say times of need bring them closer, like in the army.

"We live together, sleep together (in

the army) and fight the enemy together. One gives his blood to the other — his friend, his brother," Aizdu said.

Nelida Fuccaro, a lecturer on modern Middle Eastern history at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies in Exeter, England, said Yazidis were persecuted in colonial Iraq. Now there is no government policy of religious discrimination against them and they are generally better integrated into society, Fuccaro said. Still, social discrimination and prejudice against them continue, said Fuccaro, who wrote a book on Yazidis. Ihsan Mohammed, a sociologist at Baghdad University, agrees.

"The government does not discriminate between one minority and another or between minorities and the larger society" and fights those who do, he said.

Although some Yazidis in Iraq live in areas populated by Muslims or Christians, they generally prefer to live in all-

Yazidi communities like Yarmouk Compound, created in the 1970s.

As little as Yarmouk offers, young Yazidis, like Ta'alo Haidar, refuse to leave, though they say they want a better life. Yazidis say they are particularly destitute, in an economy crippled by more than a decade of economic sanctions, imposed by the United Nations as punishment for Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

"We want development here. We want roads, electricity and phones," said Haidar, a farm worker who lives in the compound.

Vehicles are rare here. Residents peer down from their roofs or peek from behind metal doors on hearing the sound of an approaching car.

Many Yazidis are related in this community near Mosul, some 200 miles north of Baghdad, and virtually everyone knows each other. Most young men

in the compound commute to work on farms in nearby villages and towns.

Today, most speak Kurdish and few understand Arabic — the language of their holy books, called Kitab al-Jilwah, the Book of Emergence or Book of Revelation, and Mashef Rash, the Black Book.

Men are encouraged to leave beards untrimmed, grow their hair and braid it. They prefer to dress in white, since they believe their religion sanctifies the color. Yazidis regard marriage outside their faith as a sin punishable by ostracizing or even death to restore lost honor.

Among their more unusual beliefs is that evil is found in lettuce; therefore, the vegetable should never be eaten. It is one of the traditions Yazidis said they make sure to observe though they don't know their origin.

"We have to follow our traditions," Aizdu said.

Bible Baptist Church

Pastor: Don Crutcher
Fifth & Broadway
899-7368

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Worship Service: 10 am
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Wednesday: Evening Bible Study: 7 pm

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Pastor: Rev. Steve Rains
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401 Caldwell
899-6185

Sunday: Bible Study: 9:45 am
Worship Service: 10:45 am
Evening Service: 6 pm
Wednesday: Bible Study: 7 pm

Church of the Nazarene

Pastor: Matthew Delp
Third & Caldwell
899-2080 or 899-3797

Sunday: Sunday School: 9:45 am
Worship Service: 10:50 am
Evening Service: 6 pm
Wednesday: Evening Service: 7 pm

First Baptist Church

Pastor: Bud Chester
Fifth & Center • 899-3450
Sunday: Sunday School: 9:15 am
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Tuesday: Mens' Prayer Group: 6:00 am
Thursday: Night Bible Study: 7:00 pm

Seventh Day Adventist Church

1160 Cattletrail
Pastor: Arlin Cochran • 785-332-2888
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Worship Service: 11 am



Seventh Day Adventist Church

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Sunday: Sunday School: 9:15 am
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Sonrise Christian Church

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Minister: Tony Kafka
Youth Minister: Doug Bean
Sunday: Worship Service: 9:30 am
Sunday School: 10:45 am
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Junior/Senior High Meeting: 7 pm
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Emmanuel Lutheran Church

13th & Sherman • 899-6161
Pastor: Scott Grimshaw
Sunday: Sunday School: 8:45 am
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Kanorado

United Methodist Church

Pastor: Leonard Cox
399-2468

Sunday: Sunday School: 9 am
Worship Service: 10:15 am

Goodland Bible Church

109 Willow Road • 899-6400

Pastor:
Sunday: Sunday School: 9:45 am
Morning Worship: 11 am
Evening Worship: 6 pm
Wednesday: Call for location

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104 E. Hwy 24 • 899-6423

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Deacon: Gretchen Talitha
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Sunday: Worship Celebration &
Kids' Church: 10:30 am

United Methodist Church

Brewster:

Pastor:

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Sunday School: 9:45 am CST

Winona:

Minister: Rev. Bob Winters
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Sunday School: 10:15 am CST

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