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RADIANT REALITY

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Allaah's Messenger ﷺ said:

There are
2 BLESSINGS
which many people
lose: (They are)

Health



&

free time
**FOR DOING
GOOD.**

(Sahih Al-Bukhari, Vol 8, Book 76, No. 421)

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RADIANT REALITY

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This magazine is dedicated to the greatest and the last Prophet Sayyidna Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) on whom the succession of Prophethood ended and was sealed forever. Let us all follow him with utmost spirit.

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Question Answer

Question

There is a message going around that a wife does not have to cook. A husband must provide three times cooked food for the family. Is this the ideal we ought to be living by? Any examples from the life of Rasulullah (SAWS) and the Sahabah would be valued.

Answer

It is important to draw a distinction between a principal point of view and practical point of view.

A successful and blissful marriage does not come about by insisting on principal issues. In fact often principal issues may not be practical and may lead to a breakdown in a marriage.

It is also important to understand the context of the principals laid down by the fuqaha. If for example, there is a marital dispute and the dispute comes before a judge, and he has to issue a decree, then the principals would be stated to be enforced. Hence the principles are not in an ideal and harmonious marital situation. They are to control an already acrimonious situation.

It would be short sighted for someone to propagate a damage control situation in a normal and untroubled marriage. In fact propagating such rulings have the potential to destabilise a stable marriage. Our learned sisters who study the Aalimah course would have some insight to understand the context of such rulings especially after studying so many Ahadith on making sacrifices in a marriage.

Imagine if we have to propagate a juristic ruling that a woman does not have to cook for her hus-

band and a husband does not have to provide for medical expenses for his wife, what would be the consequences of this?

Fatima (RA) is the beloved daughter of Rasulullah (SAWS). If anyone deserved be honoured by being spared with household chores and cooking, it would be Fatima (RA), the queen of Jannah. However, see the following thought provoking incident and learn a lesson from that. Every woman should ask herself the following question. Do I prefer a measure and standard set by Rasulullah (SAWS) for his daughter or do I prefer not to be like the daughter of Rasulullah (SAWS) with another standard?

“Fatima (RA) complained about the blisters on her hand because of using a mill-stone. She went to ask Rasulullah (SAWS) for a servant, but she did not find him (at home) and had to inform Aisha of her need. When he came, Aisha (RA) informed him about it. Rasulullah (SAWS) came to us when we had gone to our beds. When I was going to get up, he said, “Stay in your places,” and sat between us. Rasulullah (SAWS) then said, “Shall I not tell you of a thing which is better for you than a servant? When you (both) go to your beds, say ‘Allahu Akbar’ thirty-four times, and ‘Subhan Allah’ thirty-three times, ‘Al hamdu ‘illah’ thirty-three times, for that is better for you than a servant.” (Bukhari)

It is clearly understood from this hadith that Fatima (RA) would do the household chores. It is obvious that she would also cook.

The wives of Rasulullah (SAWS) would cook. The wives of Sahabah would cook. Our ideal is to follow the standard and practice of the wives

of Rasulullah (SAWS) and the daughters of Rasulullah (SAWS) and the general womenfolk at the time when Islam was at its glory with such practices.

M. Huzaifah

Question

Is Online CFD trading permissible?

Answer

It is not permissible to trade *Contracts For Differences* online.

What is a CFD?

Contracts For Difference trading can be understood from the following definitions and descriptions:

A CFD, or Contract for Difference, is an agreement between two parties to exchange the difference between the opening price and closing price of a contract.

CFDs are derivatives products that allow you to trade on live market price movements without actually owning the underlying instrument on which your contract is based.

The difference between where a trade is entered and exited is the contract for difference (CFD). A CFD is a tradable instrument that mirrors the movements of the asset underlying it. It allows for profits or losses to be realized when the underlying asset moves in relation to the position taken, but the actual underlying asset is never owned. Essentially, it is a contract between the client and the broker.

Online Contracts for Difference or CFD trading allows you to make profits due to changes in the prices of underlying financial instruments without actually owning them.

The Fiqh:

CFDs are derivative instruments. The value of the contract is derived from another contract. CFDs are merely obligations to exchange certain amounts of money in a future date. The difference between the prices at the time of the con-

tract and at the maturity is debited from party and credited to the other.

CFD's are not permissible due to:

- The absence of a subject matter of sale. The presence of an underlying asset in a contract
- The existence of Riba as the counter-values are of the same genus and exchanged at different times and amounts.
- The presence of Gharar (excessive uncertainty)
- The presence of an element of gambling.

Mufti Faraz Adam

Question

Can an advance rental payment be retaken by the lessee for his needs?

Answer

An advanced rental payment cannot be retaken and nor can it be demanded by the lessee. Such a payment is transferred into the ownership of the lessor. An advanced rental payment can only be claimed in the event of a mutual cancellation prior to the initiation of a lease agreement or when the subject matter of the lease cannot be utilised on account of a deficiency from the lessor.

Mufti Faraz Adam

Question

What is the ruling on purchasing items on an Auction Website that sells products that have been confiscated by Law Enforcing Agencies in the form of forfeiture, seizure and lost items?

In addition, products take the form of items that have been found in Municipalities and on Transit Buses. Only Items on transit buses are given a limited reclaiming period after which the items are considered unclaimed.

Answer

The query in reference is governed by the concept of *Isteela'* - legal authority like in the case of a Government.

Law Enforcing individuals are Government employees and work under the instruction of the Government. Items confiscated by them are in Government control and ownership.

It is permissible to purchase items auctioned by such agencies.

M. Maaz

Question

After conjugal relations or after experiencing a wetdream, a person performs Ghusal. Thereafter, a few drops of semen comes out. Does this mean that the Ghusal has to be repeated?

Answer

In principle, if a person performs Ghusal after having conjugal relations or after experiencing a wet dream (Ihtilaam) and thereafter a few drops of seminal fluid (Mani) came out from the private parts, then if it occurred after walking; or after urinating; or sleeping, it will not be necessary to repeat the Ghusal. In such a case, it will be necessary to repeat the Wudhu.

However, if the few drops of seminal fluid (Mani) came out from the private parts before walking; or before urinating; or sleeping, then it will be necessary to repeat the Ghusal. (Hindiyah 1/14)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

Does taking a blood test break Wudhu and Ghusal?

Answer

In taking a blood test, if the blood extracted is to the extent that if the needle etc. was not there, the blood would have flowed out of the area of extraction, then in such a case, a person's Wudhu will be null and void. However, Ghusal will not be necessary. (Fatawaa Raheemiyah 4/23)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

If a man has taken an oath on the name of Al-

lah not to have intercourse with his for one year. Does this effect his marriage in any way?

Answer

In principle, if a husband takes an oath not to have conjugal relations with his wife for four Months or more (as stated in the above query) and he fulfils his oath by not having conjugal relations with his wife for four Months, then one irrevocable divorce (At-Talaaqul-Bain) will take place. In such a case, if a husband has conjugal relations with his wife during the four Months, then no divorce will take place but the compensations of an oath (Kaffaratul Yameen) will be necessary. (Al Bahrur-Raa'iq 4/68)

However, if a husband stated that he will not have conjugal relations with his wife without taking an oath, no divorce will take place.

(Fathul Qadeer 8/465)

This type of an oath or situation is called Eelaa' and has its own rules and regulations. In such sensitive situations, we advise that cases of this nature should be referred to reliable and competent Ulama or Ulama bodies for their expert advice and observation.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

Is the salaah valid if a person recited the Durood in the second Rakaat of a four Rakaat Fardh Salaah?

Answer

If a person recited the Durood (Allahumma Salli Ala Muhammad till the end) after reciting Tashahhud (At-Tahiyatu Lillahi Wassalaawaat till the end) in the first sitting posture (Qadah-e-Ula) of a four Rakaat Fardh Salaah, then it is Waajib (necessary) to make Sajdah-e-Sahw. (Haashiyatut Tahtaawi Al Maraaqil Falaah (1/342)

The method of Sajdah-e-Sahw is to make one Salaam after reciting the Tashahhud in the last

sitting posture of Salaah (Qadah-e-Akheerah) and thereafter perform two Sajdas. Thereafter, the Tashahhud should be repeated, Durood should be recited, Du'aa should be read and the Salaat should be completed by making Salaam.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

If a wife remarries after the death of her husband and the estate of her husband was not distributed to her, is she still entitled to it? Or she does not qualify for it because she remarried another husband?

Answer

At the time of the death of a deceased person, all the heirs of a deceased person are entitled to their share of inheritance from the deceased's estate, irrespective if the heirs remarry. As such, if a husband is deceased and his wife did not receive her share of inheritance from his estate, she will still be entitled to her share of inheritance from her deceased husband's estate even though she remarried after his demise. (Ahsanul Fataawa 9/302)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

Can steroids be used for medical purposes?

Answer

Yes, if steroids are taken for valid reasons, for e.g. medical reasons then it would be permissible to take it under the supervision of experts in their respective fields. However, it cannot be taken without a valid reason.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

How should a person be buried if he passes away in the state of Ihraam whilst performing Umrah or Hajj? Should he be buried as in the state of Ihraam without covering the head etc.?

Answer

The burial procedures of a person that passes away in the state of Ihraam is the same as a person that passes away out of the state of Ihraam. This is because the conditions of Ihraam remains until a person's death and not after a person's death. In such a case, a person will be buried in accordance to the normal burial rites and not in the condition of Ihraam. (Al-Mabsoot 2/53)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

Does a woman inherit from her husband if her husband passes away before consummating the marriage?

Answer

After the performance of Nikah between husband and wife, the consummation of the Nikah is not necessary for the wife or husband to be entitled to inherit from each other's estate. The performance of Nikah is sufficient for husband and wife to inherit from each other's estate. Accordingly, if husband and wife were married in Nikah and irrespective if the Nikah was consummated or not, the husband or wife will be entitled to the inheritance of their respective spouse in the event of death. (Shaami)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

I am working as an HR at a company. The policy of the company is that if any theft takes place at the company, the employees are responsible for it and the cost of the losses would be deducted from their salaries. I was wondering if this is correct according to Shariah?

Answer

In general, if an employee is employed for specific duties and responsibilities, an employee will be responsible for it. If theft takes place and it was not the fault or responsibility of the employee, the employee will not be responsible for it.

Hence, it is unethical and unjust to include policies and clauses in an employee's contract that make employees responsible for theft that takes place at the company that is not their fault and responsibility. In such cases, the responsibility of theft will be borne by the company or those responsible for it.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

If I lend my car to a friend or family member and he unintentionally damages it in any way, be it an accident or the engine blowing etc, who is liable to fix it or pay for the damages?

Answer

If you had given full permission to your friend or family member to use your car and it incurred damages, then if it was due to the negligence of your friend or family member i.e. exceeding the speed limit and driving irresponsibly etc., he/she will be responsible for the cost of the damages of your car. However, if it was not due to their negligence, they will not be responsible for it. (Hindiyyah 4/363)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

My husband passed away and he had left jewellery in Vaults. We do not have access to it at the moment due to legal issues and procedures. Is Zakaat compulsory on us?

Answer

If the heirs of the deceased do not have access to the jewellery of the deceased in the vault, it will not be compulsory on them to discharge the Zakaat of the jewellery.

Once the heirs have access to the jewellery of the deceased in the vault, Zakaat will be compulsory on the jewellery in accordance to their respective shares. (Badaai-us-Sanaai)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

A mobile network offers airtime on credit. For e.g. if a person asks for R20 of airtime, he will be charged R25 when repaying it. But if he purchases the airtime in cash, he will be charged R20 for it. Is this Riba or is this permissible?

Answer

The transaction in reference is permissible and does not constitute Riba (interest). The price that the mobile network charges for the airtime when purchasing it on credit is higher than the cash price. There is no problem with this type of transaction as long as the cash and credit prices are fixed at the time of the transaction.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

I am experiencing much confusion, I do not feel any bond with Allah and my life is passing by meaninglessly.

Answer

It is not necessary to feel a bond. Rather, it is necessary to have a bond. The sign of this bond will be that you remain far from sins. If you commit an error, you will seek pardon. Such a life is not meaningless but is most valuable.

Question

Tell me how can I establish a bond with Allah? Should I continue living my life like this?

Answer

A special bond with Allah is established through taqwa, i.e. abstention from sins. If you are safeguarding yourself from sins, then this uneasiness is not a proof of any deficiency in your bond with Allah. You should conclude that you are progressing. There is no failure in this path. Those who seek Allah most certainly find Him. (Solutions to Spiritual Maladies for the Lovers of Allah.)

The Definition of Iman

*So, if they believe in the like of what you believe in, they have certainly found the right path.
(2:137)*

This verse defines ‘Iman in a simple and short phrase which is at the same time so comprehensive that all possible details and explanations are inherent in it. It assures the Muslims that the Jews and the Christians can find the guidance only “if they believe just as you believe”, or, in other words, “if they believe in what you believe in.” The immediate addressees of the phrase “you believe” are the Holy Prophet (SAWS) and his blessed Companions. Thus, in doctrinal matters above all, their ‘Iman has been placed before us as a model, and the verse is essentially a divine commandment, laying down the fundamental principle that the only ‘Iman acceptable to Allah is the one which was adopted by the Holy Prophet (SAWS) and his blessed Companions, and that any doctrines or beliefs that deviate from it in the least are neither valid nor acceptable to Allah. That is to say, one should believe in Allah and His attributes, in the angels, in the Books of Allah, in the messengers and prophets of Allah and in their teachings exactly in the same manner as the Holy Prophet (SAWS) and the blessed Companions did, without adding or subtracting anything on one’s own part and without advancing one’s own interpretations or distorting the authentic meanings of the doctrines. Nor is one allowed to assign to the angels or the prophets a station higher or lower than

the one assigned to them by the word or deed of the Holy Prophet (SAWS). Moreover, one is also required to be sincere and pure in one’s faith, for the contrary would amount to hypocrisy (Nifaq).

This explanation helps us to see in its true proportions the situation of the heterodox sects among the Muslims - of those who make tall claims as to the genuineness of their ‘Iman, but do not possess ‘Iman in the full sense of the term. As for that, even the idolators of Arabia used to proclaim the authenticity of their ‘Iman as do the Jews and the Christians even today, and as do even the heretics in every age, but since their faith in Allah, in the prophets and the angels, and in the Day of Judgment etc. did not conform to the ‘Iman of the Holy Prophet (SAWS), it was not acceptable to Allah and was summarily rejected.

According to the Shari’ah, it is, of course, obligatory for every Muslim to respect and love the Holy Prophet (SAWS), and if one lacks in this respect and love, one cannot be said to possess ‘Iman in the true sense of the term; all the same, let it be clearly understood that it is misguidance and association (Shirk) to make him the equal of Allah with respect to an attribute like knowledge or power. For, according to the Holy Qur’an, the essence of Shirk lies in mak-

ing someone other than Allah the equal of Allah with respect to a divine attribute, as is indicated by this verse: "And when we used to make you equal of the Lord of the worlds." (26:98) There are some Muslims who consider the Holy Prophet (SAWS), to be omniscient and omnipresent like Allah Himself, and, in doing so, congratulate themselves upon showing the respect and love which is required of a Muslim, while they are only disobeying the Holy Prophet (SAWS) and going against his teachings. They should learn from this verse that the respect and love for the Holy Prophet (SAWS); which Allah demands from a Muslim is only that kind of respect and love which his blessed Companions had for him - neither more nor less than this, for either would be a deviation and a sin.

*Adopted from:
Ma'ariful Qur'an
Maulana Muhammad Shafi
(ra)*

Intelligent Fool

An Atheist will reject the existence of Allah by saying, "I cannot see Allah, so I do not believe there is an Allah." Using this incorrect reasoning, we will ask him, "Do you have intelligence?" He will proudly reply, "Yes, I do have intelligence." We will then ask him, "Have you seen your intelligence?" He will arrogantly defend himself by saying, "Come on! You cannot be such a fool. My meaningful speech and actions are clear indications that I am not a mad-man. I am full of intelligence." We will then explain to him, "Meaningful speech and actions are only signs of intelligence. It is not intelligence itself. So you believe you have intelligence and we believe in Allah as our creator by seeing the signs of His creation."

Thereafter we will kindly ask the Atheist, "Tell me! If we were all travelling together through a quiet desert and we suddenly were to come across a heap of camel dung, out of complete non-existence, that just fell from the sky. Will you believe such a statement?" The answer will be a definite, "No!". Now let us reflect for a moment. Our intelligence refuses to accept that a small insignificant heap of camel dung can fall out of nowhere, then how can that same intelligence ever accept the lie that this huge universe with all its perfect running systems just came into existence and thereafter continued to function on its very own? If our intelligence could allow us to believe that it had to be a camel that dropped the dung, then why does it refuse to believe that there has to be a Creator behind all of the creation we see?

The fact of the matter is, the Atheist knows very well that if he were to accept that there is a Creator, then it will follow that he will have to accept the laws of the Creator, whereas he is quite comfortable following the dictates of his carnal desires. He does not wish to worship a Creator. Rather, he enjoys bowing down to his lustful yearnings. He is too used to the "freedom" of doing what he wishes and thus finds it impossible to surrender himself to the will of a Creator. Thus an Atheist foolishly passes his life thinking himself to be very intelligent, whereas if he had only an atom's worth of intelligence, he would indeed realize what a fool he is.

Lessons from Sahih Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

Chapter 9 : Praying in a shirt, trousers, knee-length shorts and qaba' (outer garment with long sleeves).

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

In earlier chapters it was stressed that covering the private parts is obligatory. Now, in this chapter it is being mentioned that neither a particular number nor any particular type of clothes are important for Satr-ul-Awrah; all that one needs is to cover what is required whether by wearing shirt, trousers, leg-sheet, blanket etc., all are permissible. Allaama Ayni says:

“At-Tubbaan is a short trouser equal to one hand which covers main private parts as used by boatmen”.

Hadith No. 357

Narrated by Sayyiduna Abu Huraira

A man stood up and asked the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) about praying in a single garment. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: “Has every one of you two garments?” A man put a similar question to Umar on which he replied: “When Allah makes you wealthier, then you should clothe yourself properly during prayers, otherwise one can pray with a wrapper and a wrap on covering the upper part of the body. A wrapper and

a shirt, a wrapper and out garment, trousers and a garment, trousers and a shirt and an out garment. Tubbaan and an outer garment or Tubbaan and a shirt”. (The narrator added: “I think that he also said a Tubbaan and a garment”).

Comments

Sayyiduna Abu Huraira mentions that a person asked Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) - whether Salaah is permissible in a single garment? In response Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) asked, “Has everyone of you two garments?”, propounding thereby the permissibility of performing Salaah in a single garment. Allaama Ayni and Ibn Hajr have quoted that during Sayyiduna Umar's period, Abdullah bin Mas'ood and Ubai bin Ka'b differed on the issue whether the Salaah offered in a single garment is disliked or disagreed upon. One of them, as per Ibn Hajr - it was Ibn Mas'ood - and as per Allaama Ayni it was either of the two, who asked Sayyiduna Umar about it. Ibn Mas'ood believed that there existed disagreement on the issue of offering Salaah in a single garment, however, Ubai Ibn Ka'b disagreed with this view. Sayyiduna Umar in a Khutbah supported the view of Ubai Ibn Ka'b, arguing that if Allah has provided someone with suffi-

cient clothes he should express this bounty by donning them. He further said that though it is permissible to offer Salaah wearing a single garment but having two on is preferable. In this respect the desirable combinations in order of preference are trouser and blanket, trouser and shirt, trouser and Qaba, leg-sheet and Qaba, and lastly leg-sheet and shirt.

In short, the first important thing is to achieve Satr-ul-Awrah, and the second that, when available, one should dress in a nicely and not remain shabby.

Has Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) sported Saraaweel (trousers)?

It has been narrated that Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) liked trouser and considered it a better choice than a leg-sheet to achieve Satr-ul-Awrah. It is also quoted in some narrations that Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) bought trousers; whether he wore it or not is not clear. (Eidhahul Bukhari)

Hadith No. 358

Narrated Ibn Umar

A person asked Allah's Apostle, "What should a Muhrim wear?" He replied, "He should not wear shirts, trousers, a burnus (a hooded cloak), or clothes which are stained with saffron or Wars (a kind of perfume). Whoever does not find a sandal to wear can wear Khuffs, but these should be cut short so as not to cover the ankles.

Comments

In this Hadith it is said that a Muhrim (a person while in the state of Ihram during Haj or Umrah) should not wear shirt, trousers, burnus (a hooded cloak) or clothes which are stained with Safron or Wars (a kind of perfume). Imam Bukhari has quoted this Hadith here as a proof

to the title of this chapter thereby establishing that a Muhrim is not allowed to wear stitched clothes.

Chapter 10 : Which part of the body is to be covered compulsorily.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

The learned scholars have debated this issue whether Imam Bukhari here means Satr-ul-Awrah during Salaah or elsewhere as well; Alaama Ayni says that it includes both. According to Ibn Hajr, the mention of 'cover' here is related to elsewhere state and not during Salaah because the word 'Ihtiba' mentioned in the Hadith below is related to elsewhere state and not Salaah.

Hadith No. 359

Narrated Abu Sa'eed Al-Khudri

Allah's Apostle forbade Ishtimaal-us-Sammaa' (wrapping one's body with a garment so that one cannot raise its end or take one's hand out of it). He also forbade Al-Ihtiba' (sitting on buttocks with knees close to abdomen and feet apart with the hands circling the knees) while wrapping oneself with a single garment, without having a part of it over the private parts.

Comments

As-Sammaa' means to wrap a blanket around one's body in such a way that both his hands remain covered within it and it becomes difficult for him to take them out, and if he tries to do so might end up exposing his private parts. Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has forbidden to use a blanket like this.

'Ihtiba'

It means sitting on one's buttocks with knees raised and close to abdomen and feet apart with hands circling the knees. Rasulull-

ah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has forbidden to sit in such a posture if one is wrapped in a single cloth and nothing is covering his private parts; the reason being the possibility of exposing one's private parts in this position.

The limits of obligatory Satr-ul-Awrah as per four juristic schools of thought

1. As per the Hanafite school, the obligatory Satr-ul-Awrah for males is from (but excluding) the navel to and including the knees.

For a free woman the obligatory Satr-ul-Awrah includes her whole body except her face, hands and feet, during Salaah and elsewhere. She can expose her head and forearms before her Mahram (the one with whom marriage is not permitted) e.g., father, brother, grandfather etc., but during Salaah she has to cover them also.

2. As per the Shafaite school of thought, for males, the Satr-ul-Awrah is from navel to knees, however, as per another statement it excludes navel and knees. The Hambalite school also concurs with this.

3. As per Imam Dawood Zahiri, only the private parts (front as well as back) are included in obligatory Satr-ul-Awrah and not the rest of the body. Same has been quoted from Imam Ahmad and Imam Malik in one narration. Imam Bukhari also seems to be holding this view as is evident from the following words:

*“No part of it (the cloth) is on private parts”
(Nasrul Baari)*

Hadith No. 360

Narrated Abu Huraira

The Prophet forbade two kinds of sales i.e. Al-Limas and An-Nibadh (the former is a kind of sale in which the deal is completed if the buyer touches a thing, without seeing or checking it properly and the latter is a kind of a sale

in which the deal is completed when the seller throws a thing towards the buyer giving him no opportunity to see, touch or check it) and (the Prophet forbade) also Ishtimaal-As-Samma' and Al-Ihtiba' in a single garment.

Comments

The Islamic Shariah has forbidden the two types of sale and purchase viz., limaas or Mulaamasa and Nibaaz or Munaabaza.

Limaas and Mulaamasa

In Arabia, during the days of ignorance (Jahiliyyah), there existed a way of purchasing wherein a customer interested in purchasing a cloth material from a merchant would first fix up a price, then closing his eyes he would lay his hand on whichever cloth and that would be his on the already fixed price. Since it was not a definite and well-defined way, it was banned. Islam does not approve any such deal wherein there is slightest confusion or ambiguity.

Nibaaz and Munaabaza

In this method the customer and the merchant would fix up the price first, the merchant would then close his eyes and throw any bundle of cloth towards the customer. Since this method resembles gambling, Islam banned this as well.

Cont'd from page 37

questions the Roman Emperor asked was whether Muhammad was accused of lying to them before he claimed Prophethood and they answered no. He asked if he ever betrayed his trust before he claimed Prophet hood and they answered no. This was a witness given by one of his arch enemies at the time. We find numerous examples that the enemies before the friends and companions could not admit that he was not absolutely honest and truthful.

Religion and Religiosity

An Ailment or Medicine?!

Dr. Ahmed al-Raissouni

There are those who are preoccupied with Islam, and work on Islam, but are ignorant of it and wasteful of its essence, thus damaging it when their intention was to serve and support it.

Religion today, especially Islam, preoccupies people more than any other previous time. Islam preoccupied people when it appeared, to such an extent that Arabs from different tribes used to counsel one another and say, "Beware from the young man from Quraysh so that he doesn't test you." After that it was Arab neighbours who became preoccupied, including the Persians and the Romans, until it became a big deal. Then it was Europe when Islam crossed the sea and the crescent started to appear in its horizon.

But today it preoccupies people in a way that has no precedence. It preoccupies those afar and those in proximity in the same way, just as it does its followers and its enemies, those who are afraid of it and afraid for it, the preachers and the rulers, as well as students and researchers in history, anthropology, sociology, Islamic studies, and others. It also preoccupies, as you know, security and legal agencies, the media, and even political parties.

A few decades ago the jurist Abdul Qadir Odah wrote a short book titled *Islam between the Ignorance of its Children and Ineptitude of its Scholars*, a title that remains relevant in

describing the preoccupation with Islam today, even if in a general way. There are those who are preoccupied with Islam, and work on Islam, but are ignorant of it and wasteful of its essence, thus damaging it when their intention was to serve and support it.

From among the children of Islam and Muslims are ones who believe in Islam and accept being Muslims, but they do not want Islam to interfere in their lives or freedoms. They see that religious ones have a type of exaggeration in religious observance, and therefore feel a bit of unease and malaise from this strict Islam. Although this concern with exaggeration in itself is not free from its own exaggeration and could even be considered a type of exaggeration in its own way, it yet contains some elements of reality and truth.

There are some religious people and preachers who turned religion into a heavy, burdensome, and even embarrassing thing where they do not waste an opportunity to make something either prohibited or more strict. In fact, there are some among the people of religion who do not see in religion anything else other than obligation and compulsion upon others, where they see in making people undertake detestable things to them and the constriction of their lives a form of worship and a getting nearer to God the Exalted. In other words, they see in religion a difficulty in this life for a reward in the next

life, and that is all there is to it.

On the other hand, there are those who do not see in religion and its people anything other than a political competitor and an ideological foe. Therefore, they see no other alternative but opposing solutions that target its roots at the political, cultural, and intellectual fronts. From this arose the irreligious genius that dries the source in order to uproot the tradition.

To the right of those – or to their left as it does not really make a difference – are those who do not see in religious observance and its people and preachers anything other than a security problem either currently happening or expected to happen. Egyptian police has a known vision on this matter, which is that every appearance of religiosity greater than normal, and every popular appeal that a religious organization or preacher gains, is indicative of a “pregnancy”, where the newborn will inevitably be an extremist movement and a security threat. From this perspective [the Egyptian government] suspended one preacher and expelled the other, despite their belief that they reduce popular anger and extremism, while presenting a soft, gentle, and easy Islam.

Upon this methodology appeared the theory promoted by some Western politicians and pundits that states: Every Muslim is an Islamist project, and every Islamist is an extremist project, and every extremist is a terrorist project. Hence, if you want to fight terrorists, fight extremists; if you want to fight extremists, then fight all Islamists; if you want to fight Islamists, then fight Muslims, especially the religious ones; if you want to fight religious Muslims, then fight Islam itself; and if you want to fight Islam, begin with the Quran.

Faced with these images and conceptions [one has to ask] what is the essence of Islam? And what is the essence of religion and religiosity? Is religion a curse or a blessing? Is religion a problem or a solution to a problem? Is religion security and serenity, or a security problem? Is

religion an ailment or medicine?

If we are tasked with specifying the message of religion, its essence, and reality, and are charged with correcting its image and conceptualization, then this will not be acceptable or definitive except by directly relying on what the religion has said about itself. Therefore, I will limit myself to presenting the religion’s texts to the observers. The Quran is the culmination of religions and the seal of messages, and only a few of its statements expressing the message of God the Exalted, His purpose, and intention from revealing His religion and setting His path will suffice us. So let us stop upon and at them, for they are enough of a healing answer.

Religion is a guidance and light

The first reason messengers were sent and scriptures were revealed is so that people are upon clear insight, guidance, and light from their Lord to know the great Truths related to their creation, the purpose of their existence and life, and what is to come after their life and death. This is the ultimate and primary purpose for revealing the Torah, the Gospel, the Quran, and everything God revealed to His servants.

We revealed the Torah with guidance and light [5:44]

We sent Jesus, son of Mary, in their footsteps, to confirm the Torah that had been sent before him: We gave him the Gospel with guidance, light, and confirmation of the Torah already revealed – a guide and lesson for those who take heed of God {5:46}

God: there is no god but Him, the Ever Living, the Ever Watchful. Step by step, He has sent the Scripture down to you with the Truth, confirming what went before: He sent down the Torah and the Gospel earlier as a guide for people and He sent down the Criterion [3:2-4] A light has now come to you from God, and a Scripture making things clear, with which God guides to the ways of peace those who follow

what pleases Him, bringing them from darkness to light, by His will, and guiding them to a straight path [5:15-16]

People, a teaching from your Lord has come to you, a healing for what is in your hearts, and guidance and mercy for the believers [10:57]

Religion is purification and uprightness

Guidance leads to uprightness, and knowledge of Truth calls to following it. The coming of light is so that it is used for illumination, and it is only to gain insight and thoughtfulness. Here comes the second component of what makes up religion and its message: uprightness and elevation, purification and growth, righteousness and reformation. This is what messengers were sent to do, and this is what the scriptures were made to speak of.

Prosperous are those who purify themselves, remember the name of their Lord, and pray.

Yet you prefer the life of this world, even though the Hereafter is better and more lasting. All this is in the earlier scriptures, the scriptures of Abraham and Moses [87:14-19]
The one who purifies his soul succeeds, and the one who corrupts fails [91:9-10]

It is He who raised a messenger, among the people who had no Scripture, to recite His revelations to them, to make them grow spiritually and teach them the Scripture and wisdom [62:2]

This Quran does show the straightest way [17:9]

They said, 'Our people, we have been listening to a Scripture that came after Moses, confirming previous scriptures, giving guidance to the truth and the straight path [46:30]

For those who say, 'Our lord is God,' and then follow the straight path there is no fear, nor shall they grieve [46:13]

Say, "I am only a mortal like you, but it has been revealed to me that your God is One.

Take the straight path to Him and seek His forgiveness. Woe to the idolaters [41:6]

Religion is mercy, benefit, and felicity

God the Exalted is not in need of His servants or the rest of His creation. He is not in need of their belief, worship, or actions. He is neither benefited by obedience nor harmed by disobedience. All He wants by His religion and path is for people to be upon that which is more exalted and purified, as well as that which is better for them and more merciful, bringing them felicity and tranquility. Therefore, praised be He does not want difficulty for them or hardship. Rather, he wants the complete opposite of that.

It was only as a mercy that We sent you to all people [21:107]

A Messenger has come to you from among yourselves. Your suffering distresses him: he is deeply concerned for you and full of kindness and mercy towards the believers. If they turn away, say, 'God is enough for me: there is no god but Him; I put my trust in Him; He is the Lord of the Mighty Throne [9:128-129]

Ta Ha. It was not to distress you that We sent down the Quran to you [20:1-2]

Whoever follows My guidance, when it comes to you, will not go astray nor fall into misery, but whoever turns away from it will have a life of great hardship. We shall bring him blind to the Assembly on the Day of Resurrection [20:123-124]

Who follow the Messenger – the unlettered prophet they find described in the Torah that is with them, and in the Gospel – who commands them to do right and forbids them to do wrong, who makes good things lawful to them and bad things unlawful, and relieves them of their burdens, and the iron collars that were on them [7:157]

We sent Our messengers with clear signs, the Scripture and the Balance, so that people could uphold justice [57:25]

Limits of Reason

*Mufti Muhammad Taqi
Usmani*

Why Islamisation?

A question arises as to why we want to adopt the Islamic way of life and want to mould the man-made laws into the Islamic pattern when the Islamic teachings go back to a period fourteen centuries back or Allah has granted us Intellect.

In this connection a relevant question arises. How should a secular state or a state not based on any religious principles conduct its affairs? This question is replied to by saying that we do possess intellect, we have also the facilities of observation and experience which may help us decide as to what are our needs and the demands of life in the present conditions of the world by meeting which we can make the wheels of government revolve peacefully and safely. We may indeed have to effect changes and amendments in the system of government, as and when needed. Thus can we follow the path of peace and prosperity.

Is intellect the last standard?

In a secular system of government Intellect, Observation and Experience have been taken as the final standard to rely upon. But, if this standard is really so efficient. Can this standard be so effective and efficient as to guide humanity till the Day of Judgment? Can this so-called standard based on intellect, observation and experience alone, prove sufficient and effective for human life?

Sources of Knowledge

In order to find out an answer to this question we must realize the truth that no system of life can work successfully, unless it has at its back a treasure of knowledge to propel it onwards. It should also be noted at this stage that Almighty Allah has bestowed on man certain sources of knowledge, each source possessing a specific jurisdiction beyond which it becomes ineffective.

The Jurisdiction of the Five Senses

It may be mentioned, as an example, that the first of these sources for acquiring knowledge are the five senses, viz., the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, etc. Man is able to acquire knowledge about many things by using

his eyesight, by tasting things with the tongue, by smelling things with the nose, by hearing words with the ears and by touching objects with his hands. However, each of these sources of knowledge which fall within the jurisdiction of observation has a limit of its own beyond which it can do nothing. For example, the eye can see but it cannot hear; the ear can hear but it cannot see; the nose can smell but it cannot see. If a man wishes to use each of these organs for a function for which it has not been created by Allah, he will simply be considered a fool.

The second source of knowledge is the Intellect. As already mentioned, the working limits of the five senses reach a boundary which they cannot cross. At this stage, neither of these senses is effective. This is the stage at which, knowledge of things cannot be acquired through observation. To meet this challenge, Almighty Allah has bestowed upon us another source of knowledge and that is the Intellect which helps man to acquire knowledge where the Five Senses become ineffective and helpless. For example, there is a table lying before us. We can know its colour with the help of our eyes. We can know, by touching it with our hands, that it is made of hardwood and is covered with Formica. Yet, none of these senses help us to know how this table came into existence, because the process of its manufacture did not take place before us. In such a situation our Intellect guides us by suggesting that such a finely finished object cannot come into existence by itself, but that an expert carpenter has made it. It is our Intellect that teaches us that the table is made by a carpenter. Thus it is our Intellect that helps us where our Five Senses cease to render any help.

The Jurisdiction of Intellect

It should however, be noted that just as the Jurisdiction of the Five senses is limited, the same way the jurisdiction of Intellect is also limited. Intellect too, helps man to a certain limit, beyond which it is unable to provide any guidance to man.

Divine Revelation

Almighty Allah has granted man another source of knowledge to help and guide him where all his sources leave him helpless, and that source is Divine Revelation - the provision of knowledge to man by Allah through heavenly revelation. This source of knowledge starts way above from the place where the jurisdiction of Intellect fails. Thus trying to use Intellect in the presence of Divine Revelation is to make an effort to see things with the help of ears. It does not, however, mean that Intellect is a useless faculty. No, it is highly serviceable, rather indispensable to man but within its jurisdiction and not beyond that.

Islam and Secularism

The difference between Islamic and secular system of life is that in the secular system the process of knowledge comes to an end after reaching the limits of the first two sources, viz. the Five senses and the Intellect as there is no third source of knowledge available to propel the secular system onwards. As against this, Islam claims that there exists another source of knowledge which is the Divine Revelation.

The need for Divine Revelation

We have to see how far this claim of Islam holds good in our contemporary world that Intellect cannot guide man to acquire unlimited knowledge and guidance in all circumstances, but that the world stands in need of Prophets and Messengers of Allah and Revealed Books.

Intellect - a Deceptive Faculty

Nowadays much emphasis is being laid on the Intellectual Faculty (or Rationalism) and it is said that every decision should be taken after considering pros and cons of every problem in the light of Rationalism. However, Rationalism does not possess a set formula or fixed principles to provide universal truths, acceptable to all men, to serve as an infallible standard to judge what is right and what is wrong, what is to be

adopted and what is to be rejected. If we leave this decision to the dictates of Intellect we are liable to commit devastating results. Just turn the pages of history to find out yourself how grievously and fatally the faculty of Intellect has misguided humanity into destruction and deluge. I cite below a few instances from the pages of history.

Not Against Intellect

About eight hundred years ago a sect sprang up in the Islamic World under the name of the 'Batini' or the "Qaramitia" sect. Ubaidullah Bin Hasan Qirwani was one of its renowned leaders. He wrote an interesting letter to his followers about how they should lead their lives. He writes:

The People have in their households a beautiful and well-behaved girl in the person of a sister who is well acquainted with the temperament and psychology of her brother, but this fool gives her hand in marriage to a stranger, without knowing whether or not the couple would pull on with each other peacefully and willingly. As for himself, he brings a wife who is much inferior to his sister in beauty, behaviour, adaptability and considerateness. I fail to understand why one should hand over the wealth of one's own household to a stranger and bring for himself a girl who cannot provide her mate with the desired peace and comfort. This is a sheer folly. This is against wisdom. I therefore, advise my followers to shun this folly and preserve the wealth of their our household.

(AJ-farq lil-haghdadie, p.297 and Bayanul-ma-za hib al-Batinya, lil Dalimi p.81)

At another place the Ubaidullah Bin Hasan Qirwani conveys the following message to his followers on the basis of his intellect:

"When a sister can prepare food for her brother, satisfy his hunger, wash his clothes, arrange his bedding and provide him with other comforts, why can't she satisfy his sexual urge? What is the reason? This is simply against intellect."

Inability of Answer based on Intellect

However, vehemently you may curse this man, you will not be able to repudiate his arguments with pure intellect that is devoid of Divine Revelation.

If someone says that this is grossly immoral and grievously disgusting. He can easily be repudiated by replying that this feeling of immorality and disgust is the result of the prevailing social trends and customs. You have been born and are living in a society where this is considered as something very repulsive and hateful, otherwise in the eyes of Intellect this is not at all disgusting.

If it is said that this is medically harmful, because research has established that the system of incest is medically harmful.

But, are you aware that in the Western world today it is being published that incest is a part of natural human urge; and it is not correct to consider it harmful. Not only is this an echo of the same slogan which Ubaidullah bin Hasan Qairwani had raised eight hundred years ago, but it is now being actually practiced in the western countries.

Result of Opposing Divine Revelation

The reason why all this happening is because we are trying to use Intellect in matters which lie beyond its jurisdiction, and wherein only the Divine Revelation can provide guidance. One result of letting go the Intellect from the grip of the Divine Revelation may be seen in the fact that the British Parliament has passed the law of legalizig homosexuality under the thump of clapping.

And now this vice has become a regular science. Once when I happened to visit a library in New York, I found a separate section devoted to literature on the subject, "Gay style of life" there. A number of books have been published on this subject and many associations are working for this under the auspices of persons holding high positions. The then Mayor of New York was also a Gay.

An Example

The well known historian and philosopher, Allama Ibn-e-Khaldoon has written that Intellect which Almighty Allah has bestowed upon man is indeed very useful and valuable but this is subject to the condition that it is utilised within its jurisdiction. It may be compared to a delicate scale used to weigh gold. If anyone uses it to weigh a large block of stone, it will easily break. Now, if a person says that the scale is useless for it failed to weigh the block of stone, he will be declared a fool. The fact however remains that the scale was manufactured for something else.

Islam and Secularism - Difference

The basic difference between Islam and secularism is that Islam recommends the use of the Intellect strictly within its jurisdiction and not beyond that. If it is pressed into service beyond that, not only will it cease to function but it will also furnish wrong answers. If you ask a computer to yield results against the data not fed into it, it will furnish you no or misleading results.

In the same way, this computer of the human intellect will give either no or misleading reply about something which has not been fed into it and that something is indeed the information that is preserved in the Divine Revelation. It will be absurd to utilise Intellect and expect from it information which can only be had from the Divine Revelation. That is why Almighty Allah, from time to time, sent to this world Prophets and Messengers with Divine Scriptures, the last of them being the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) who came to this world with the last of the Revealed Books viz., the Holy Qur'an. There is a verse in the Holy Qur'an, saying:

We have indeed revealed to you the Book with the truth, so that you may judge between mankind (4:105)

This Revealed Book, the Qur'an, will tell you what is true and what is false, what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is bad - things which cannot be known from any other source.

How Low Can We Stoop?

'Isa (AS) had received the divine revelation of the Injeel. The Prophet (SAWS) had received the divine revelation of the Qur'an. With the revelation of the Qur'an which is the final book of Allah, the Injeel was abrogated. Thus as Muslims we have been prohibited from following the teachings of 'Isa (AS) which have not been endorsed by Islam. Hence the question to ask ourselves is: If it is not permissible to follow those teachings of the Injeel which were abrogated by the Qur'an, how can it ever be permissible to follow the whims and desires of those who claim to follow the Injeel? Can we stoop so low? We have made the desires of a lost nation, which has no direction, the goal of our life, whereas we have with us divine revelations in the form of the teachings of the Prophet (SAWS). How can we allow man-made trends and fashions to substitute the divine way of Allah?

May Allah protect us all, aameen.

Denouncing Evil

Dr. Muhammad Ali Hashimi

Many texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah indicate that it is obligatory to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil in the Muslim society that acknowledges the sovereignty of Allah and refers to His shari'ah for judgment no matter how tyrannical the rulers may be at times, and no matter how widespread sin may be at times. Thus it will indeed become a society that enjoins what is good and forbids what is evil.

But if the Muslim society is faced with the abolition of shari'ah and the Muslims are forced to refer for judgement to man-made systems, in this case it is essential to enjoin the greater good, which is acknowledgement of the sovereignty of Allah and the authority of His shari'ah in this life, and to forbid the greater evil which is rejection of the divinity of Allah and of His shari'ah.

The Messenger (SAWS) said:

“Whoever among you sees an evil action, let him change it with his hand (by taking action); if he cannot, then with his tongue (by speaking out); and if he cannot, then with his heart (by hating it and feeling that it is wrong) — and that is the weakest of faith.”

But there may come a time when the Muslims cannot change evil with their hands or with their tongues, so they will be left with no option but to change it with their hearts. This is some-

thing which no one can stop them from doing.

Changing evil with one's heart is the weakest of faith, as it says in the hadith. At first glance it may seem that this is a negative action that no one resorts to except the one who is incapable of changing evil with his hand or his tongue.

But in fact the sincere Muslim who has no option but to denounce evil in his heart is not unaware that denouncing it with his heart is a way of changing it, as the Messenger (SAWS) said. The fact that the Messenger said this indicates that it is a positive action, because denouncing evil in you, heart means that you are reminding yourself of your stance towards this evil, and that you denounce it and hate it and will not accept it.

If hearts denounce something, this is a positive force, the first step towards denouncing this evil and establishing what is right at the first available opportunity. It means that one is watching and waiting for that opportunity, and all of this is undoubtedly positive action aimed at change.

It is true that this is the weakest of faith, as the Prophet (SAWS) said, but if this is the weakest positive faith, at least it means that the Muslim still has faith, albeit weak. But if he loses faith completely and accepts the evil because this is reality and he cannot change it, or he ac-

cepts it because of intense pressure, this is something that no believer living in a Muslim society could suggest, otherwise he and his society will deserve the curse of Allah that the Children of Israel deserved because they submitted to evil and accepted it, and did not forbid one another to do that, as Allah says:

Those among the Children of Israel who disbelieved were

cursed by the tongue of Dawood [David] and 'Eesa [Jesus], son of Maryam [Mary]. That was because they disobeyed [Allah and the Messengers] and were ever transgressing beyond bounds. They used not to forbid one another from al-Munkar [wrong, evildoing, sins] which they committed.

Vile indeed was what they used to do. (5:78,79)

Qadha Salaah

Qadha Salaah is the performance of obligatory Salaah that were not performed at their appointed times. It is compulsory to compensate missed Salaah by making Qadha of them unless the Salaah was missed due to insanity or an extended loss of consciousness like a person in a coma.

This ruling only applies to obligatory Salaah and not to Sunnah and Nafil Salaah. Hence for Fajr Salaah, the Qadha will be 2 Rakaats Fardh; for Zuhr it will be 4 Rakaats Fardh; for Asr it will be 4 Rakaats Fardh; for Maghrib it will be 3 Rakaats Fardh and for Esha it will be 4 Rakaats Fardh with the additional 3 Rakaats Witr Waajib.

In completing Qadha Salaah, preference will be given to performing Qadha Salaah over Nafil Salaah. Hence during the times allocated for Nafil Salaah, Qadha Salaah should be performed. This is because there is no accountability for the non-performance of Nafil, unlike Qadha for which a person is accountable.

It is important to draw up a schedule for completing missed Salaah so that its performance may be completed systematically. If a person was genuinely unable to perform the Qadha Salaah during their lifetime, they may bequeath up to 1/3rd of their estate towards paying Fidyah (monetary compensation) for the missed Salaah. This is not a substitute for Qadha Salaah but it is hoped that the Fidyah will serve as an atonement for the same.

It's Okey...Really?

Sobia Asrar

Welcome to the New World Psyche.

And what is that? Well, it's that it's okay. You're okay. Whatever you feel, whatever you do. It's free. It's normal.

If you feel like you want to divorce your parents because they don't seem to understand you, that's okay because what do they know about what you want. If you feel like you're in love with someone of the same gender as yours, it is okay, you don't have to be embarrassed about it. If you want to get intimate with your boyfriend to see if he's really the one, it's okay so that you'll be able to understand him better. If you want to be able to sit in that inviting bar and gulp down a few of that bartender's specials, it's okay, because a little alcohol doesn't do much harm now, does it?

So, here we are today. When everything's suddenly become okay and we've got nothing to be ashamed of. It's when we can take pride in doing what we want, what our lusts crave for and then know for certain, that somewhere out in this world, there will be at least that one person who will definitely support you. Maybe not follow you, but support you, and that's for sure.

So now, it's all become too easy. Get what you want. Do whatever you like.

Because that shrink or protege will tell you that it's okay, you're ok. Feel like taking advantage of that interest-laid savings plan at the new bank? Walking around with a scarf pinned to just let your newly trimmed bangs peek out and show off your tight tee with those hip-hug-

ging pants? Watching movies that border pornography? Smoking a cigarette pack or two? Dancing away with someone? Hey, it's all cool.

It's okay to feel that way, to want it.

But is it really?

Because, you know what, it is not okay. Was and will never be okay. True we're not angels who unlike us were created without whims and desires. But Allah, out of his mercy, has granted the capability to choose right and wrong. We can form opinions and choose to do what we like. So if everything was okay and we weren't expected to use our free will, why do we have it? It's too easy to do wrong; that's what we innately want to do.

"We have certainly created man in toil. Does he think none will, overcome him? He says (boastfully): I have spent wealth in abundance.' Does he think that none sees him? Have We not made for him two eyes? And a tongue and two lips? And have shown him the two ways (of good and evil)?" [90:4-20]

Don't fool yourself that it's okay to cheat on that exam or smoke just one joint. We all have some evil in us. It's not okay for us to just accept it and live life. We need to realize that. Because if you don't, you'll go about wandering aimlessly in life like some drunk man passed out on the sidewalk. He may have gotten his fun, his rush, but that hangover in the morning will leave him unfulfilled, angry and self-hating.

That's when he'll know it wasn't okay for him to do what he'd done the previous night.

And, he'll always regret it. But, if he doesn't know any better, a few nights later, you'll see him in that same place crumpled in a heap all over again. This however shouldn't be you. You're a Muslim. And you know that it's not okay. It's not free if your mind is going somewhere it shouldn't or your hormones are in overdrive or your body is doing the wrong thing.

Accept that. Take responsibility.

Then, do something about it.

"Except him who has done wrong and afterwards has changed evil for good; then surely I am Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

[27:11]

Don't be tempted by the idea that there is no good versus bad; that it's all some huge blurry area in between where you can only be. Just because people's perceptions may change, it doesn't alter the fact that what Allah made halal and lawful (okay) will always continue to be halal, and what Allah made haram and unlawful will always be just that--not okay. Now unless we admit to our illnesses, we will never find the remedy. So, forget about that 'blow to your self-esteem' advice from the shrink. Look into your heart. Hold your hands up to the sky. Let your eyes shed tears. Admit that it's not okay. Ask Allah for forgiveness. Resolve to change yourself. Do what is right.

Then, when you do reach the threshold of Paradise? Remember, that is when it will really be all okay.

Money Matters

1. It is important that the owner of every item in the home be clearly identified and recorded. Exactly what belongs to the husband should be known and exactly what belongs to the wife should likewise be known. If it is not specified and recorded, winding up the estate in the event of one of the spouses passing away will become very difficult and complicated. Nobody will be able to identify the belongings of the deceased partner with certainty.

2. It is not permissible to use the next person's belongings without their consent and happiness. Failing to specify who the owners of various items are often leads to these items being used without the owner's permission, thus causing the user to fall into sin.

3. It is important to know that the money which the husband gives to his wife for the running of the home does not belong to her but is rather a trust which should only be used for household expenses. Over and above this, the husband should, on a monthly basis, give his wife some money (based on his income) which she may spend on her personal needs etc.

4. It is advisable for the wife to consult her husband even when spending her personal money. This will increase the unity in their marriage.

New Men

Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (ra)

A New Ummah

It was the most stupendous change in human history that was brought about. The Prophet (SAWS) had uncovered rich treasures of human material that had been lying dormant under the mass of Ignorance since the beginning of creation and imparted to them the light of genius which was to hold the world spell-bound through ages to come. He had made into men what till then were mere herds of dumb driven cattle. He had aroused their innate possibilities; he had released the fountains of their real life and elevated them to be the standard-bearers of light and learning and Faith and culture in the world. Within a short span of time the desert of Arabia threw up mighty personalities whose names illumine the pages of history to this day.

'Abdullah bin 'Umar (RA) who used to graze his father's camels rose all of a sudden to dazzle the world with the sublimity of his character and grandeur of his achievements. He humbles the might of Caesar and Chosroes and perfects the foundations of a dominion which spreads itself over the empires of both and is vastly superior to them in governance and organization. Nothing needs to be said of his high moral sense, justice and righteousness which have become proverbial.

And then there is Khalid (RA) - the son of Walid and enterprising young Quraishite, who, having earned some renown in local feuds is held in esteem by the tribal war-lords, but enjoys no distinction in the peninsula, for he has

no great achievements to his credit. But after embracing Islam he shone in the world as the Sword of Allah. This Sword fell upon Rome like lightning and leaves brilliant achievement to be recorded in history.

And then there is benevolent and trustworthy Abu 'Ubaidah (RA), who commanded small detachments of the Muslims in the early wars. He assumed supreme command of the Islamic forces and ejected Heraclius for ever from the fair land of Syria. Poor Heraclius casts a parting glance at it and says, "Adieu, Syria, we shall not meet again."

'Amr bin al-'As (RA), noted among the Quraish for his sagacity, who went all the way to Abyssinia to plead with the Negus for handing back the Muslim emigrants to their tormentors, but fails. He is now the conqueror of Egypt.

And this is Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas, unknown as a soldier before he became a Muslim. See him now as he captures the keys of Mada'in, annexes Iran and Iraq to the Islamic Dominion and goes down in history as the conqueror of 'Ajam.'

This is Salman the Persian, the son of a village priest, who left his home and underwent all sorts of tribulations, exchanging one servility for another, till he reached Medina and embraced Islam. He has now returned to the country of his birth as its Governor. But this high honour makes no difference to the simplicity of his nature. He still lives in a modest cottage and is often seen carrying loads on his head.

There is Bilal, the Abyssinian slave, who has acquired such eminence that even the Caliph ‘Umar the Great, address him as his Master.

Here is Zaid bin Haritha commanding the Muslim army in the battle of Muta. The army includes men of the merit and valour of Jafar bin Abi Talib and Khalid bin Walid. His son leads another army which has in it such outstanding personages as Abu Bakr and ‘Umar.

Here are Abu Zarr, Miqdad, Abu Darda, ‘Ammar bin Yasir, Mu’az bin Jabl and Ubaiy bin ka’b. The spring-breeze of Islam gives them a caress and they blossom up into renowned ascetics and profound scholars.

And here are ‘Ali bin Abi Talib, ‘Aisha, Abdullah bin Mas’ud, Zaid bin Thabit and ‘Abdullah bin ‘Abbas, who have ascended to the highest pinnacle in the world of learning through sitting at the feet of the Prophet (SAWS) who had not been tutored by any mortal. They become fountainheads of knowledge and wisdom. The world is all ears to these “sons of the desert.”

A well-blended Body of Men

Never before, indeed, had a more harmonious body of men appeared on the stage Of history. It was equipped with every requisite of success in both the worlds. It made out the blueprints of a culture and a Dominion which, within a remarkably short time, rose to hold sway over three large continents. It was a veritable mine of talent which sent forth what seemed to

be an endless stream of men of quality and ability including wise rullers, honest administrators, impartial judges, prayerful leaders, pious army commanders and God-fearing scientists.

Owing to the peculiar mental upbringing of the Muslims and the ceaseless propagation of the Islamic ideals among them, the Islamic commonwealth remained steadily supplied with earnest and God-fearing servants. The responsibilities of the government were vested in those who preferred the dissemination of Truth to the collection of revenue, and who possessed a correct understanding of the organic relationship between religion and life and knew how to co-ordinate the world or faith with the world of practical affairs in such a way as to make life full and righteous. Under the stewardship of these men the civilization of Islam unfolded itself in its full majesty and the blessings of the Faith Sprang into life in a manner never heard of before.

The Holy Prophet (SAWS) had applied the key of Apostleship to the lock of human personality and it opened up, laying before the world all the rich treasures with which God had endowed man.

He cut asunder the mainsprings of ignorance and brought its power to dust. He forced, with Divine power, the then benighted world to march on a new highway of life. He inaugurated a fresh era in the annals of mankind - the Islamic era which will shine forever in human history.

The Need to Progress

There is no stagnation in Deen. One is either progressing or retrogressing. If a person does not strive and make effort in Deen, his spiritual condition will gradually begin to weaken. To understand this concept, consider the example of a garden. When the water and air are favourable, the lushness and fertility of the garden improves. However, when the weather is unfavourable and the water insufficient, you do not find the previous lushness and fertility remaining. Rather, the condition of the garden immediately begins to deteriorate. Similar is the condition of one's Deen.

(Hazrat Moulana Muhammad Ilyas (ra))

Do You Know

Sufis in Yemen drank al-qahwa for the same reasons we do today, to stay awake. It helped them to concentrate during late night Thikr (prayers in remembrance of Allah). Coffee was spread to the rest of the Muslim world by travelers, pilgrims, and traders, reaching Mecca and Turkey in the late 15th century and Cairo in the 16th century.

It was a Turkish merchant named Pasqua Rosee who first brought coffee to England in 1650, selling it in a coffeehouse in Georgeyard, Lombard Street, London. Eight years later, another coffeehouse called Sultaness Head was opened in Cornhill.

Lloyd's of London, today a famous insurance company, was originally a coffee shop called Edward Lloyd's Coffee House. By 1700, there were about 500 coffeehouses in London, and nearly 3,000 in the whole of England. They were known as "penny universities" because you could listen and talk with the great minds of the day for the price of a coffee.

The consumption of coffee in Europe was largely based on the traditional Muslim preparation of the drink. This entailed boiling the mixture of coffee powder, sugar, and water together, which left a coffee residue in the cup because it was not filtered. However, in 1683, a new way of preparing and drinking coffee was discovered, and it became a coffeehouse favorite.

Notable Quotations

Beware of regarding any Muslim as low. For indeed the lowest ranking of Muslims is great in Allah's Sight. Sayyidna Abu Bakr Siddiq (RA)

There is no goodness in people who don't give advice, and there is no goodness in people who don't like to be advised. Sayyidna Umar (RA)

Whoever thinks that falsehood overcomes righteousness, they don't have full trust in Allah. Imam Ibnul-Qayyim (ra)

This world is no more than an optical illusion, very much like the mirage in the desert (Fake glitter). Imam Shafee (ra)

Lustful glances is a "foolish" sin, because you get nothing except pain & yearning, for nothing in return..." Maulana Thanwi (ra)

A believer is tireless and unflinching in rendering justice to others. Imam Hasan al-Basri (ra)

Ijtihad

Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah

This principle imparts life and stability to Islamic law while always avail of it in the hour of need. Any neutral observer would say that it is primarily on this account that Islamic law has been operating for 1400 years and still retains the capacity to grow and develop. It is quite possible that some people who could not derive the desired conclusions from the Qur'an and the Hadith felt perplexed on occasions. We cite an example which relates to Abh Hanifah. The purpose is not to praise his intelligence but to suggest how some people can perceive an issue while others might fail to do so.

An anecdote has been related that one day a quarrel arose between a man and his wife. At night the husband swore by God and said to his wife that unless she talked to him before dawn she should consider herself as divorced. The Wife was fed up. She also swore by God and said that she would not talk to him before dawn. Both then remained silent until dawn. The mu'adhdhin called the faithful to prayer. The husband went to pray in the mosque and then went to see Ibn Sirin, a famous jurist. He ruled that the divorce had come into effect and that the husband was to blame for it for he had laid down the condition about breaking the silence before dawn. Since the wife had not complied with it, divorce had become effective.

Deeply depressed the husband went to Abh Hanifah and narrated to him the details of the

incident. "It does not matter", said Abu Hanifah. "You can go back to your wife for divorce has not taken place". The husband was a bit perplexed. He went back to Ibn Sirin and told him about the ruling given by Abii Hanifah.

He too was surprised to hear of the conclusion drawn by Abu Hanifah and went to see him along with that man, He discussed the case and argued that divorce had in fact taken place in law and that the husband would be guilty of adultery if he went back to his wife; and that the responsibility for this would rest on Abu Hanifah who had, so to say, misguided that man. Abu Hanifah turned to the husband and asked him to repeat the story. The husband repeated the account. Abu Hanifah reiterated his ruling that divorce had not taken place because the husband had not specified the nature of the conversation. The wife, in reply to husband said that she too would not talk to him, by doing so she had already spoken and the condition that the man would divorce the wife in case she did not speak to him before dawn did not apply to the case.

This shows how two persons interpret the same incident differently. One perceives a subtle point which eludes the other.

If ijihad had not been permitted, Islamic law would have remained confined to the Qur'an and the Hadith. It was quite possible that on occasions even the greatest of scholars and

jurists might have failed to discover the relevant law appropriate to meet a new situation. You would recall that once, when ‘Ali drew ‘Umar’s attention to one of his decisions, ‘Umar exclaimed spontaneously:

“But for ‘Ali, ‘Umar would have been ruined’.

The permission given to Mu’ghdh ibn Jabal to exert his own reasoning has provided us with a principle which has helped meet many a difficult situation.

During the days of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs collective deliberation was occasionally resorted to for solving a given problem. Discussion and debate took place among the people. If a person expressed an opinion, the other criticised it and advanced his own views on the issue. Eventually after having discussed the pros and cons of a problem people arrived at a conclusion. The process of discussion proved very useful because until then the statements and decisions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) had not been collected. People preserved in their memory what was later recorded in writing by such traditionalists as Bukhari, Muslim, etc. Whenever they gathered they recalled the relevant sayings of the Prophet (SAWS) on an issue. This is how information relevant to law in the Hadith came to be collected and the era of deducing legal verdicts from the sources was ushered in

Say what Needs to be Said

Often children approach their parents to complain about their married life! “I am being treated terribly and spoken to harshly! I cannot take it anymore! I wish I could just end this marriage!” are some of the endless complaints we probably hear. When faced with these complaints, how do we respond and react?

In a situation where they are jumping at the first convenient opportunity to bail out of the marriage and have not already tried their best to make it work, the correct response is, “My son! Go and make your marriage work! There is no way I am going to let you allow this marriage to fail!” or “My daughter! You need to make your home as there is no way that you will be coming back here!”

In essence, our sons and daughters need to be told what they **need** to hear, not what they **want** to hear. As parents, we need to remind ourselves that we also go through the same ups and downs and will sometimes have similar complaints in our marriages. Our children complain to us hoping that we will blindly believe them and justify their complaints for them. If we do this, they will regard themselves to be completely innocent and will place the entire blame for the failed marriage on their spouse. As parents, we will definitely be emotionally affected by the complaints of our beloved children. However, we cannot allow ourselves to be governed by these emotions as this will lead us to blindly siding with our child after only hearing one side of the story.

Always remember that in marriage, the winners are not the parents who proved their child to be right. Rather, the winners are those parents who save the marriages of their children.

The Alchemy of Happiness

Uwaymir Anjum

Imam al-Ghazali begins his famous treatise on the nature of happiness, 'The Alchemy of Happiness,' by citing the profound adage that "whoever knows himself, knows God." (This is not a hadeeth, but was mistakenly cited by al-Ghazali as such. Nonetheless, it contains a profound truth.) The ultimate bliss, he says, comes by seeking four kinds of knowledge: the knowledge of self, God, the reality of this world, and the reality of the next world. Al-Ghazali uses profound allegories and parables to explain the reality of the spiritual world. Most instructive in this treatise is the elaboration of the nature of human soul. It should be noted that he uses the terms heart (qalb) and soul (rooh) interchangeably. What follows is a summary of some of his insights about the nature of the soul and the spiritual existence.

1. The 'heart' (or soul) refers to a spiritual entity governs all other human faculties, and belongs to a spiritual world, and it cannot be satisfied except when filled with knowledge and love of Allah.

"The first step to self-knowledge is to know that thou art composed of an outward shape, called the body, and an inward entity called the heart. By "Heart" I do not mean the piece of flesh situated in the left of our bodies, but that which uses all other faculties as its instruments and servants. In truth it does not belong to the visible world, but to the invisible, and has come into

this world as a traveller visits a foreign country for the sake of merchandise, and will presently return to its native land. It is the knowledge of this entity and its attributes which is the key to the knowledge of Allah:

2. A parable. "For the carrying on of this spiritual warfare by which the knowledge of oneself and of Allah is to be obtained, the body may be figured as a kingdom, the heart/soul as its king, and the different senses and faculties as constituting an army. Reason may be called the vizier, or prime minister, passion (nafs) the revenue-collector, and anger the police officer. Under the guise of collecting revenue, passion is continually prone to plunder on its own account, while resentment is always inclined to harshness and extreme severity. Both of these, the revenue-collector and the police officer, have to be kept in due subordination to the king, but not killed or expelled, as they have their own proper functions to fulfill. But if passion and anger master reason, the ruin of the soul infallibly ensues.... The aim of moral discipline is to purify the heart from the rust of passion and anger, till, like a clear mirror, it reflects the light of Allah."

3. The knowledge of the spiritual realities is acquired progressively through worship and discipline.

"An exact philosophical knowledge of the soul is not required to begin walking in the path of religion, but comes rather as the result of

self-discipline and perseverance in that path, as it is said in the Qur'an:

"Those who strive in Our way, verily We will guide them to Our paths." (29:69)

4. The hearts are like mirrors that reflect the light of God, unless they are befouled by the rust of desires (shahawat) of the nafs.

"Every human being has in the depths of his consciousness heard the question "Am I not your Lord?" and answered "Yes" to it. But some hearts are like mirrors so befouled with rust and dirt that they give no clear reflections, while those of the prophets and pious people, though they are men with passions like us, are extremely sensitive to all divine impressions." This parable reminds one of the verse of the Qur'an.

"Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth; a likeness of His light is as a niche in which is a lamp, the lamp is in a glass (and) the glass is as it were a brightly shining star, lit from a blessed olive-tree, neither eastern nor western, the oil whereof almost gives light though fire touch it not--light upon light--Allah guides to His light whom He pleases, and Allah sets forth parables for men, and Allah is Cognizant of all things."

[24: 35] Ubay ibn Ka'b, one of the foremost companions of the Messenger in the knowledge of the Qur'an, interpreted the locus of this light of Allah to be the heart of a true believer (Ibn Kathir).

5. The ultimate bliss of our heart or soul is in the knowledge and love of Allah.

"Any one who will look into the matter will see that happiness is necessarily linked with the knowledge of God. Each faculty of ours delights in that for which it was created: lust delights in accomplishing desire, anger in taking vengeance, the eye in seeing beautiful objects, and the ear in hearing harmonious sounds. the highest function of the soul of man "is the perception of truth; in this accordingly it finds its special delight. Even in trifling matters, such, as learning chess, this holds, good, and the higher the

subject-matter, of the knowledge obtained the greater the delight, An astronomer who can, by his knowledge, map the stars and describe their courses derives more pleasure from that knowledge than the chess-player from his. Seeing, then, that nothing is higher than Allah, how great must be the delight which springs from the true knowledge of Him.

A Donkey Carcass

The Prophet (SAWS) said: "When any group of people rise from a gathering wherein they did not engage in the remembrance of Allah, they stand up from the likeness of the carcass of a donkey, and it will be a source of remorse for them."

(Abu Dawood)

The existence and continuity of this entire world depends on the name of Allah. As long as there is a single believer taking the name of Allah, this entire world will continue to exist. With the passing away of the last believer, this entire world will come to an end.

In the same way, the blessed name of Allah brings life to a gathering and causes the gathering to become a means of reward for us. On the contrary, a gathering which is devoid of the remembrance of Allah is a "dead" gathering which, instead of earning us reward, becomes a means of grief and regret for us in the Hereafter.

Chance or Design

V. A. Muhammad Ashrof

Somewhere along the process of the so-called civilization, we have ceased to contemplate on the awe and splendour of creation with a sense of wonder. We have no time to stand and stare at the stars. We have no time to reflect on the amazing 'planning' and 'anticipation' in creation as expounded by the Qur'an (21:37, 75:20, 17:11, 76:27).

It is hard to imagine a scientist who does not see order in the universe, a harmony of the various forces that permit a continuous existence of the world and a pattern involving regularity of phenomenon and a generality of laws. The more we know about the universe, the more elegant and wonderfully well ordered it appears. We can observe, for example, the amazing regularity with which the celestial bodies follow their precise orbits, and marvel at the way in which water from the seas is brought to the land by wind-driven clouds, which are in turn formed by the evaporation of water; without this replenishment, life would be impossible.

The earth viewed from space looks like a single cell and in fact functions very much like a unicellular organism. It is a living system, an immense organism, still developing, regulating itself, making its own oxygen, maintaining its own temperature keeping all its infinite living parts connected and interdependent including us. Scientists are exploring new horizons of a universe finely tuned to be hospitable to life, and a biosphere saturated with coded information. The carbon based life in our universe has been possible only because the fundamental physical

fabric (as specified by the character and intrinsic strengths of the forces of nature) takes a very precise, 'finely tuned' form. This information is precisely what modern cosmology had brought to our attention in what it termed 'Anthropic Cosmological Principle'. Patrick Glynn has outlined the identification of this principle and its revolution in the theistic/atheistic controversy thus: 'The Anthropic Principle does not settle the question; it is not a proof of God. But it alters the presumption; it shifts the burden of proof?' How did the equilibrium, harmony, and order of this universe develop? How is it that this earth is such an ideal shelter for us to live in? The plan, the harmony and the balance in the plan of God loudly announce to everyone willing to hear that there is a Supreme Power, the Lord of the universe, who governs the universe according to a pre-set scheme (Qur'an 13:2, 67:36). Who set the sun in its specific place? Who set our planet earth at an appropriate distance from the sun? These questions acquire more force when considered in a universal scenario.

The earth spins on its 'axis' 1600 km an hour; had the speed been 160 km an hour, our nights and days would have been 10 times long and the now, and the hot sun would then burn up our Vegetation each long day, while in the long nights any surviving sprouts would freeze. The earth while orbiting the sun departs from a straight line by only one-ninth of an inch every 18 miles - a very straight line in human terms! If the earth changed by one-tenth of an inch every 18 miles, our orbit would be vastly large and we

would all freeze to death! The sun is perhaps the most important of all the heavenly bodies: 'Most surely in the variation of the night and the day, and what God has created in the heavens and the earth, there are signs for the people who guard (against evil)'(10:6). The sun, the major source of our life, has a surface temperature of 12000 degrees F, and our earth is just far enough away so that this 'eternal fire' warms us just enough and not too much. If the sun gave off only one half of its present radiation We Would be freezed, and if it gave half as much more we would be roasted.

For the sustenance of life certain conditions are necessary to met: the planet must be of suitable size, at a minimum distance from the star, and it has to be of a composition which mixes the elements in the right proportions to permit the prevalence of life. The suitable size is necessary because the force of its gravity conditions the atmosphere of the planet. The medium distance is also a necessary condition because the planets, which are near to the star, are so hot that nothing can solidify on them, and those that are far from the star are so cold that nothing on them can have any measure of elasticity. The right composition of elements is necessary because such a composition in the right proportion is a must for the growth of vegetation, which is, in turn, essential for the sustenance of life. The Qur'an points out how the night is suitable for rest and the day for activity (78:10). Life would be very difficult for men if the whole of time were day or the whole of it night (28:71-73). Likewise, sunlight is sent in due proportion. Botanists explain that there is a close relation between sunlight and the growth of flowering plants, for flowering requires a certain indispensable amount of light. Claiming that this perfect pattern springs from mere coincidence, contradicts with scientific principles.

The diameter of the earth is approximately 8000 miles. This means that if you were able to bore a hole in it 8000 miles deep, the auger would

emerge from the other side; but why 8000 miles? Why not, say, 9500 miles? Because adding even 1000 miles to the diameter of the earth would be disastrous. The weight of the air would double, as would the amount of oxygen. This would result in such an increase in the amount of water that the earth would be inundated! Suppose, on the other hand, the earth were lighter than it is. This would so decrease its gravitational pull that it would retain less air than is necessary. The lighter gases would escape, leaving only the heavier ones, such as carbon dioxide. This, in turn, would affect the volume of the atmospheric density, making organic life impossible. But suppose the earth were similar in diameter that it is, say, 7200 miles instead of 8000. Due to the lessening of the atmospheric mantle, our globe would be reduced to an ice-cold waste. In fact, if the earth's size varied either way as much as 10 percent, all life would cease to exist.

The atmosphere is made up of 78-percent nitrogen, 21 percent oxygen, with smaller percentages of argon, carbon dioxide, and several other gases. Suppose our atmosphere contained, say, 50 percent oxygen instead of 21. Every combustible substance on earth would become highly inflammable. If a bolt of lightning struck a tree, the whole forest would ignite; in fact, it would explode like a bomb. If our atmosphere had been much thinner, some of the meteors, now being burned out in space by the million each day, would be striking all parts of the earth, setting fires everywhere. The slant of the earth tilted at an angle of 23 degrees, gives us our seasons; if it had not been so tilted, vapours from the ocean would move north and south piling up continents of ice. If the moon were, say, only 80000 km away instead of its actual distance, the tides would be so enormous that twice a day all continents would be submerged; even the mountains would have been eroded away.

What of the perfect fit of the moon's disc over the sun? The sun's diameter is 400 times greater than the moon's, but it is 400 times farther away

- just a coincidence? There are over 60 known moons orbiting the planets in our solar system, but from no other planets could a perfect fit of a moon over the solar disc be observed! The earth must be just so far from the sun to achieve the optimum temperature; the atmosphere must be just the right combination of breathable gases; the crust of the earth must be just so thick; the ratio between land and water must be just right, and so on. Because of these and a host of other examples, there is not one chance in a million that life on our planet is an accident. Fred Hoyle, the great theoretical physicist, has stated that believing the first cell originated by chance is like believing that a tornado ripping through a junkyard full of Boeing 747 airplane parts dismembered and in disarray could produce a 747.

Trees can withstand winds that topple power poles and rip houses apart. Woodpeckers bore into wood and subject their heads to forces that would turn an ordinary brain to pulp. Over the past several years (1960 onwards), major leaps in technology have given scientists powerful new tools to use in studying the secrets behind these designs, most of which are hidden deep within the living cell. On this microscopical scale, the quality of design is truly breathtaking and staggering in complexity. So promising is this field of study that it has led to the creation of a new science called 'Biomimetics' (Imitation of Life). The sobering implications behind the word 'design' are now so clear! The level of sophistication of God's organizational set-up and the machinery that runs the whole universe is beyond human imagination and perception.

Take another example. Scientists have long envied the lowly silkworm's ability to spin the strongest natural fibre known to man. Now they are one step closer to understanding just how the creature manages the feat, according to a report from scientificamerican.com (August 28, 2003). Researchers have discovered that silkworms use complex chemistry to control the water content of their silk glands to prevent

their silk-producing mechanism from solidifying 'with potentially fatal results'. Scientist David J. Kaplan commented, "This finding could lead to the development of processing methods resulting in new high-strength and high-performance materials used for biomedical applications, and protective apparel for military and police forces". How awe-inspiring is the designer who produced plants and animals when not even the idea was there before. Imagine what an achievement it was to produce rocks and minerals, the gas and contents, earth's atmosphere and weather patterns. These were not merely clever ideas but also great gifts meant to sustain the lives of the organisms here on this planet.

The Qur'an proclaims that it is sufficient to reflect on and examine one's own self or body in order to be guided to the eternal and infinite source that is free of all need, has unlimited knowledge, skill and power, and a feeble reflection of which is manifest in one's being (51:20-21). The human body is truly a wondrous masterpiece of construction. Our body is more complex than any computer ever invented. The design and balance of the body, its mechanics and its chemistry, and the amazing hook-up of nerves, mind and senses, are without parallel in human scientific achievement. It is staggering to think how the 206 bones, the more than 600 muscles, the 60,000 miles of blood vessels, and a network of nerve systems that can relay impulses to and from the brain at a speed of 350 feet a second, plus all the other organs and parts of the human organism. Despite its billions of cells, the body is a unit. With no conscious thought on our part, it digests food and converts it into energy. Reflect on those 10 marvelously designed levers, the human fingers. Even the smartest engineer could never have thought out, manufactured, anything so beautifully utilitarian.

Reflect, too, that no human production on this earth, from a tiny transistor to a mighty ocean liner, could have been constructed without the skillful manipulation of those Godgiven

fingers. Coincidence cannot create a universe with knowledge, wisdom and perfection (32:7).

Consider the division of sexes. In the mammals it all starts with a living germ settling in a womb, a sperm that unites with the egg cell. Discovery of the operative factors does not make the matter different. How do the male factors exist in one type and the female ones in the other? What makes the end product, i.e., division of the species into two sexes, so fitting with the course of life as a whole and a guarantee of its continuity through procreation? The only explanation is that there is a controller in charge Who creates the male and female according to a carefully worked-out plan, which has a definite objective (Qur'an 92:3). There is no room for chance in the order of this universe. When the two genders of the human species, a male and a female, bring their love to consummation millions of sperms swim helter-skelter as larvae in a cesspool and this knowledge spurs the door of a single ovum open and lead into it a chosen sperm to begin the phenomenal growth of the most advanced organism. Even the man and woman, blinded by their orgasmic ecstasy, have not the least idea of this grand Manipulator who is causing the beginning of a new beginning in a dark recess, nurtured in a dark womb. Like a mathematical genius, the same knowledge computerizes the duplication and replication of the cell with such ingenuity and skill that out of an amorphous mucus emerges an ugly-looking fetus which will become a blue-eyed or dark-eyed child soon to be as dear to his parents as a priceless treasure (Qur'an 32:8, 76:2, 23:12-14, 75:37-39).

Now consider the process of human conception. Marvelous processes are at work to ensure the fetus stay in the womb. The body normally rejects foreign tissue; the womb makes an exception for a fertilized egg. Instead of rejecting the growing embryo as foreign tissues, it nourishes and protects it until it is ready to emerge as a baby. Scientists are still puzzled about why

mother's body did not consider the fertilized egg as a foreign intruder. There are organs like genitals, which would evolve in both sexes simultaneously, and corresponding to each other. Similarly, the evolution of necessary organs such as womb in the female anticipating the arrival of male gametes, its fusion with egg to form zygote and the processes that lead to the development of the organism, could not have been the result of accidents (Qur'an 82:7-8, 98:1-2, 86:5-7, 39:9).

The Qur'an repeatedly draws attention to man's indifference to see the things, which are quite obvious for him, and to reflect. The vast panorama of nature, the beautiful constellation moving in the heavens, giving to earth its alternation of day and night, its light and darkness, the roaming clouds that send down rain from the sky to water the earth, the tiny seed that man sows therein shooting out a luxuriant crop affording him his sustenance and host of similar objects, all must suggest to him that some benevolent law holds together all that he sees or feels through his senses (3:191). There is no blindness blinder than willful-blindness. If one does not want to see the signs of firm beliefs around and within, then none can get him insight. In fact, we observe perfect unity in the laws of the cosmos; through the spectrum of life and non-life ranging from the microcosmic and subatomic particles to the macrocosmic expanse of the universe itself, integration is manifest on every level. Reflections may lead us to pertinent questions: could such encompassing order have arisen purely by unintentional accident? Or, could there be an Intelligent Originator to this spectacular array of living and nonliving forms?

“Whoever acts without knowledge, harms more than benefits.”

Umar Ibn 'Abd al-Aziz

Absence of Personal Motives

Dr. Jamal Badawi

Host: Can we examine the historical record that would show us that the Prophet did not aspire to leadership, power and authority?

Jamal Badawi:

Historically the Prophet began his career as a Prophet at the age of 40. If there were any aspirations to power from birth to the age of 40. The question here is if he did in fact prepare himself to be a leader. Usually people who have that desire would address that desire to the people closest to them for example his beloved wife Khadijah whom he lived with for a quarter century. If the person was looking for leadership and power they should go about it the right way. For example nowadays if the person wants to pursue a position of power or leadership he has to get into the political process, get nominated and show his ability so that down the line people would appreciate that he is a good politician and deserves that leadership. In the time of the Prophet the leading tribe of Qurishe had a place called dar al nadwa which is was a meeting place for the leaders of their people. There is no record that the Prophet used to go there and sit and discuss his ability, he shunned that and instead he would go to the mountain, isolated, in order to contemplate, think and pray that he would be guided to the path of truth. If he was seeking political power he was going about it the wrong way.

There is another logical reason that he never as-

pired for that. It is known that when the first revelation came to him while contemplating and meditating in the cave of hira outside of Mecca he came down trembling and very afraid which was reported by many including his wife. If a person aspired and expected to be a Prophet or leader he would have been very happy and proud that his hopes had finally been achieved. Why however was he afraid? He was afraid because he didn't have any expectation that he would be in that position and would play such an important role in human history. Even after this initial experience of the first revelation, when the revelation came again on a very cold day many companions who had seen it first hand say that even though it was very cold that he was very tense and was sweating. A person who is looking for power would be composed and would not show emotion and lack of control but would stand strong, comfortable and composed and would talk to people. Both of these assumptions of the Prophet looking for material benefit or power can not stand firm because without the agony that he went through, hardship, risk to his life and the difficulty he and his companions went through he could have easily attained all kinds of wealth and power without these sacrifices.

Host: How could he have achieved power and material power if he had wished?

Jamal Badawi:

Historically speaking we know that the Proph-

et and his companions went through all kinds of suffering because of their mission and belief. They were mocked, persecuted, tortured, some were killed under torture and he was hurt a great deal when he went to Al Taif and threw stones at him and his feet were bleeding, their lives and livelihoods were threatened and in the midsts of all of these difficulties when there was no hope that he would succeed victoriously over his adversaries he received a very interesting offer. A representative from the pagans by the name of Ukbah Ibn Rabia came to him and he said "Listen, you have divided our people, caused so much dissension. Let me talk to you about something: you may accept some of my suggestions. He said "If you are doing this because you want wealth, stop and we will collect enough money for you so that you are the richest from among all of us. If you are doing this in order to attain leadership we are willing to appoint you as our leader and we will never decide on any matter without your approval. If you want to be a king we will crown you king. If what comes to you and claims to be revelation from God is some kind of evil visions we are willing to collect money so that you can seek a cure for you. But please, I plead with you to accept." If the Prophet was a seeker of power, ego or leadership he would have accepted. The price was for him to stop attacking the wrong beliefs that they had or the idol worship and to accept the legitimacy of their worship and for him to worship Allah as he wished. All they wanted was that he would stop trying to convince people of his belief. His answer was in Surah 41 in the first 38 verses. He replied from the word of God and that it says that this Quran has been sent to people carrying or bringing glad tidings or warning to those who reject but many of them turned away as if they don't hear and they said our hearts are concealing from hearing what you have to say and so on. It went on pointing out that his missions was not money or ego and that he was only bringing the message of God to

them in order to open their hearts, minds and their eyes to the truth.

This was not the only incident. After it failed they didn't send him one person but they sent a deputation of the most noble representatives of his people to plead with him again. They basically made the same offer: money, leadership etc. And again his answer was the same and he said "Listen, I did not come up with this message on my own. Nor do I do it in the pursuit of your money, respect, leadership or to become a king. It is God who sent me as a messenger to you and He has given me a book, the Quran, so I am only and simply communicating and conveying the message of my lord and advising you. If you accept my advice this would be your luck and share in this life and in the Hereafter. If you reject it I will be patient until Allah decides between you and me." Prior to these two incidents they tried to use psychological pressure by sending him his most beloved uncle Abu Talib. He loved the Prophet so much and the Prophet loved him too. Abu Talib used to be a protector of the Prophet by pressing the pagans not to hurt him. He came to the Prophet and told him that he is causing them so many problems and tried to plead with him to ease up a little bit and the Prophet's answer was exemplary. As narrated in Ibn Hisham a biography about the Prophet he said "Oh my uncle if they put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand in order for me to give up this mission of mine, I will never do it till I die in defense of that truth or God decides whatever He pleases." This was his attitude, certitude and fortitude in terms of patience and perseverance in terms of carrying his mission. If the Prophet were an imposture or a person who is seeking material benefit or power he could have lived as a king. He did not have to worship idols, he could have worshiped as he wished but all he had to do was accept the legitimacy of the wrong beliefs that they had. This shows that his intentions were more noble than these perishable benefits.

Host: How would you react to the Prophet's motive being to reform people of his time?

Jamal Badawi:

To reform people from darkness to light is a very noble objective. This noble objective must be sought through noble means. One can not achieve a noble objective through fabrication, forgery or lying. If this assumption were true, why didn't he claim that everything that he said was divine revelation too. As we mentioned in the introduction, even though the Quran was uttered through the tongue of the Prophet which is totally different than Hadith which is not directly communicated to him through Gabriel. These two sources are totally separate. If his motive was to influence people he could have claimed that everything that he said was dictated to him by Gabriel. Third people loved and trusted him so much to the point that they would have followed him even if he said it was his own saying. Why did he make such a meticulous distinction between what he said and what he actually received in dictation. How could he have possibly claim that the Quran comes from God if he was really the author of the Quran while in day and night recited to the people from that same Quran that the most abominable crime against God is to create a lie against God or to say that God said something He did not.

Host: What does the Quran mention about lying?

Jamal Badawi:

In (6:93) it says "Who can be more wicked than one who inventeth a lie against Allah, or saith, "I have received inspiration," when he hath received none, or (again) who saith, "I can reveal the like of what Allah hath revealed"? If thou couldst but see how the wicked (do fare) in the flood of confusion at death! - the angels stretch forth their hands, (saying),"Yield up your souls: this day shall ye receive your reward,- a penalty of shame, for that ye used to tell lies against Allah, and scornfully to reject of His signs!" The

verse goes on to describe the bad news these people will get when the time of death comes and when they receive the bad news that they will be punished eternally. In another passage in the Quran (69:44-47) it says "And if the apostle were to invent any sayings in Our name, We should certainly seize him by his right hand, And We should certainly then cut off the artery of his heart: Nor could any of you withhold him (from Our wrath)." The threat is made that any Prophet making this false claim would immediately punished. In another citation in (42:24) it says "What! Do they say, "He has forged a falsehood against Allah.? But if Allah willed, He could seal up thy heart. And Allah blots out Vanity, and proves the Truth by His Words. For He knows well the secrets of all hearts." We have to remember that nothing good and noble comes through some thing that is wicked and false. Falsehood doesn't emanate from a person who's character is like that of Prophet Muhammad. This is expressed very nicely in the Quran in (16:105) "It is those who believe not in the Signs of Allah, that forge falsehood: it is they who lie!" A person who's fundamentals are based on the belief in one God and all the moral teachings that one could think of could not achieve this noble objective by committing the worst of all crimes: lying against God, claiming Prophethood or forging a claim that the Quran came from God.

Host: In your answer you indicated that the character of the Prophet negates the quality of forgery: how widely was his honesty, integrity and so on recognized by his contemporaries?

Jamal Badawi:

His reputation was beyond reproach. We will look at his life form birth till the time he began his mission as a Prophet at the age of 40. For 40 years he was well known for his truthfulness, honesty with his chastity to the point that he was given the title Alameen, the trustworthy. This was given to him by all the people. It was used as a nickname for him. When God

ordained him to declare the mission of Islam, because in the initial period it remained secret till he convinced those immediately around him. When he received the command to go public to with Islam he gathered and called on the different tribes, then he stood among them and he said: "If I were to tell you that behind that hill there are horses (an army) that are going to invade you would you believe me?" The all responded "We never experienced a lie from you." Which means that they would believe anything you say. He replied "I am a warner to you before a sever punishment will come unto you (on the Day of Judgement). I warn you to give up idol worship and believe in the one true God and worship him alone." The interesting part of this was the response of all of his people when they said "We never experienced a lie from you." Is it reasonable to assume that a person with this character for his whole life, with not a single lie, to suddenly become, at the age of 40, such a forger that he lies in the name of God and claims falsely that he received revelation.

When the first group of Muslims migrated under persecution to Abyssinia, now Ethiopia, to a kind and fair king the pagans got angry and sent some of their representatives to retrieve them in order to take them back and persecute them. They were afraid that their belief might grow and they might attract others. The King of Abyssinia asked the Muslims to explain what kind of person Prophet Muhammad was and what he taught their spokes person Jaafar the son of Abi Talib answered that they were living in darkness and he mentioned some of the evil that they did before he came with is message. He said this man came to us, we knew everything about him, his lineage and his truthfulness, honesty and chastity so he taught us and ordered us to worship the one true God alone and to give up idol worship. He taught us to be truthful in what we say, honest in our dealings and to be kind to our relatives. Again we find biographies about the Prophet like Ibn Hisham

we are shown that these characteristics were the brightest points that attracted all of those who had good will and the intention to follow the truth.

Host: From some of the passages it seems that some people accused him of fabricating his claim about the source of the Quran, could you explain that?

Jamal Badawi:

That is natural, as there are always enemies of truth. They always try to resist the truth and suppress it. When they lack concrete evidence they start throwing accusations like that. It happened in the life of all Prophets which includes Moses who was accused of many things by Pharaoh, it happened to Jesus who was accused by the Israelites. They couldn't drive people away from any truthful and good Prophet. But in all cases we find that non of the accusers could give any concrete evidence logically or historically. Historical references do not show any instant where a Prophet lied, but they say that it is not possible for the person to have received revelation so he must be lying, a magician etc. These people were just throwing accusations without justification. An interesting thing that gives us a look into the attitude of his enemies is that the night when the Prophet secretly migrated from Mecca to Medina, because they were about to kill him, and before he left his cousin Ali and told him "After I leave please make sure to return these things to the non Muslims." What does this signify? This means that his own persecutors trusted him so much that they chose him to keep their deposits with him. And even though the Prophet was leaving, he wanted to make sure they would get their deposits back. Another interesting example that was mentioned in both Bukhari and Muslim is that when Qurish tried to suppress him and they couldn't they went to Hercules the Byzantine emperor with Abu Sughian in order to seek his help against the Prophet and Muslims. One of the

Cont'd on page 11

Dressing and Grooming

S. Abdul Fattah

Islam advocates this etiquette and stresses it so as to perfect the Muslim personality and to bring about harmony among people. There is no doubt that embodying such manners and virtues enhances personal style and qualities, refines personality, and brings us closer to the hearts and minds of others. The forthcoming manners and etiquette are central to Islam, its purposes and its aims. Calling it “etiquette” by no means implies that it is marginal to life and social behavior. It does not mean Muslims have the option of ignoring this code of behavior, or that it is merely preferable to adhere to it.

In pointing out that manners rank higher than deeds, Imam Al-Qarafi in his book *Al-Furuq* said, “Learn that a little etiquette is better than a lot of good actions.”

Ruwaim, the righteous scholar, told his son, “Oh my son, make your deeds salt, and your manners flour.”

Many good manners with few good deeds are better than many good deeds with few good manners. Even if some of these rules appear to be simple common courtesy, it is important to highlight their significance. Many Muslims commit errors which blemish the Islamic personality, whose purpose is meant to be unique in its beauty, perfection, and traits.

Our master, the Messenger of Allah *sallallahu (SAWS)* directed the blessed Companions by saying:

“You are on your way to meet your brothers, wear handsome garb and make right your riding so you appear distinct among people as a fleck [on a beautiful face]. Allah does not like roughness nor rough manners.”

When the Prophet (SAWS) said: “No one will enter Paradise if they have at heart a grain of arrogance.”

A man asked: “A man may like his garb and his shoes to be seemly.”

The Prophet *sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam* answered, “Allah is beautiful and likes beauty. Arrogance is to deny rights and look down at people.”

Shaikh Ibn Taymiyyah said that the beauty that Allah likes includes seemly clothing. Hence it could be said that Allah likes all beautiful things. Therefore, a Muslim ought to be recognized by neat dress, cleanliness, and graceful appearance.

Cleanliness And Washing

The Sunnah is to keep perfume and to use it regularly on oneself. Al-Bukhari narrated that Salman Al-Farsi (RA) said: the Prophet (SAWS) said,

Allah will forgive the sins of the past week for he who on Friday will take a bath, cleanse himself, put on his [regular] perfume or any perfume available in house. Then, he goes out [to Jumu'ah prayer] and does not try to sep-

arate two friends. Then he prays wherever he could and listens to the Imam.”

If the body became odorous a day or two before Friday, one should not wait till Friday to cleanse the body. We should wash our bodies as soon as it require washing to keep ourselves clean and fresh.

To take a bath on Friday is specifically required since a large number of people will be gathering at mosques. However, if our body became dirty or we sweat on a particular day, then, we should take a bath at the end of that day or the next morning. This is indicated by a Hadith narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim that Abu Huraira (RA) said, the Prophet sallallahu (SAWS) , said,

“It is the duty of every Muslim to have a bath once every week to wash his head and body.”

Arriving From A Journey

If you are traveling to visit someone or if you are about to receive guests, whether those in question are your parents, relatives, peers, or friends of a different age, make sure that your hands, feet, and socks are clean, and your appearance and clothing is neat. Never neglect or underestimate the importance of your look, for that would certainly mar the pleasure of the meeting, while dulling the enjoyment of those you meet. In this regard, the Prophet (SAWS) directed his Companions upon returning from a journey:

“You are returning to your brethren, dress well, and sort out your rides so that you may become a beauty mark among people, for Allah does not like sloppiness or acting in a sloppy way.”

Try to bring some gifts to those receiving you, and likewise present your guests with a present. Always be prepared to reciprocate with a suitable gift. The subtle joy of seeing your beloved ones will be vividly remembered for many years. A gift, however symbolic, will greatly enhance the pleasure of such a meeting. The

Prophet (SAWS) as reported by Bukhari, said: “Exchange gifts; exchange love.”

Our Muslim predecessors used to leave their host with a present which could be as symbolic as an Arak stick.

Proper Dressing

Dress well, even among friends and relatives. Dress properly when visiting your parents, a pious person, an elder, or even a relative or a friend. Your attire should be clean and elegant, not ugly or unsightly. We are attracted or repulsed by what we see. If you look good in comely clothing, and are pleasant smelling, you will be pleasing to look at and people will be attracted to you and enjoy your presence. If you were the opposite, people will look down on you even if you were a relative or friend. To look good while visiting or being visited is an instinctive trait in addition to being an Islamic manner. Do not ignore this aspect because you consider yourself to be close to your hosts or guests.

Imam Bukhari in his book, Al-Adab Al-Mufrad reported that the great follower Abi Al-'Alia Al-Riahi Al-Basri said, “Muslims were at their best when visiting each other.”

Al-Hafez Al-Haithami in Majmu' Al-Zawa'id (1:169) reported that Thabet Al-Banani , the student of Imam Anas bin Malik (RA) said, “When I used to visit Anas (RA) , he would call for a perfume and run it along his cheeks.”

Accordingly, if you were visited at home while dressed very casually, as it sometimes happens, you should change for your visitor. This will enhance his respect for you and will complement your hospitality. It is, after all, the manners of the early Muslims.

“The brake of the remembrance of death restrains the vehicle of life from the accidents of sin.”

Shaykh Yunus Patel

Pseudo-Scholars & Half-Baked Knowledge!

Bushra Zaiback

In some of the manuals written to help train Muslim scholars, teachers and students of Sacred Law, it cautions to beware of becoming an Abu Shibr (lit. “Father of a Span”). It’s said that: ‘Knowledge has three spans [or stretches]: Whomsoever enters the first stretch becomes puffed up with pride; whoever enters the second is humbled; while whoever enters the third realises they know nothing.’¹ An Abu Shibr is someone who gets stuck in the first stretch. Having dipped his toe in the ocean of learning; having only drunk shallow drafts, Abu Shibr is intoxicated, loses sight of his fledgling level, and acts as if he is seasoned in sacred knowledge.

Of course, not everyone who enters the first stretch of learning becomes intoxicated. Those who receive knowledge at the hands of wise, cultivating scholars are less likely to labour under such a delusion (and if some do slide into the Abu Shibr persona, the experienced shaykh is likely able to treat the disease with an effective cure). Rather, it’s those whose knowledge comes only by way of a few books or surfing the Net that are most at risk. And like an alcoholic in denial, Abu Shibr is a problem to himself as well as to others.

As for the second and third spans, or stretches, of knowledge, then as the months and years pass, the one seeking it appreciates, at first hand, just how vast and complex the ocean of sacred knowledge is. The seeker becomes aware, even via one single religious issue, the linguistic and

juristic nuances entailed in deriving a ruling for it; the highly elaborate legal theory that underpins it; and the intricate scholarly conversations that surround it. This is very humbling, making one acutely aware of their own level. With further learning and engagement with knowledge, one is led to the stark realisation of just how little they truly know – in comparison to the great masters and experts of this blessed tradition.

Nowadays, online forums and chat rooms are awash with pseudo-scholars audaciously speaking about things they have no knowledge of. Ibn Taymiyyah wrote: ‘Whosoever speaks about the religion without knowledge is a liar, even if he didn’t intend to lie!’² Such pretenders might know something about the subject they are discussing, but do not know enough for a God-pleasing, objective discussion. They know a thing or two on the matter, but are ignorant of ten other things about it: and all too often they are ignorant of their own ignorance! This is due to a diseased heart and diminished piety, so the ego pushes them into false pretence, denial, haughtiness, conceit and being too full of themselves – wa’l-‘iyazubi’Llah.

Al-Khalil b. Ahmad remarked: ‘There are four types of people: (1) One who knows and knows he knows; he is learned, so follow him! (2) One who knows and knows not that he knows; he is asleep, so wake him! (3) One who knows not and knows he knows not; he seeks to learn, so teach him! (4) One who knows not

and knows not that he knows not; he is a fool, so shun him!³

Our 'ulema explain that there are two types of ignorance (jahl): simple ignorance (jahl basit), and compounded ignorance (jahl murakab). Simple ignorance is, to a degree, a minor problem, in that it is easily remedied by the simple act of asking. Ask the people of knowledge if you do not know, orders the Qur'an [16:43] One hadith states: 'The cure for ignorance is to ask (*innama shifa'u'l-'iyy al-su'ul*).⁴ Simple ignorance is where one is aware that one doesn't know; in other words, one realises their state of ignorance. As such, there is a sense of humbleness that accompanies simple ignorance.

Not so compounded ignorance which, Islamically speaking, is a far more pernicious problem. For the person wallowing in this ignorance is convinced he knows what he doesn't know. He thinks he has knowledge of the issue, while in reality he knows next to nothing about it. Much of the Islamic postings on the Internet are characterised by such ignorance upon ignorance, or half-baked knowledge, as they pass themselves off as the real McCoy. But what causes a person to pant like a dog on heat, insisting: 'I do know, I do know', while the reality is very different? And what are the telltale signs of being soiled by such ignorance?

As noted earlier, the ego is all too often the culprit in such matters. In his censure of half-baked knowledge and pseudo-scholarship, the great Muslim polymath, Ibn Hazm wrote:

'Some people – who are overcome by ignorance, whose intellects are weak and whose nature is corrupt – think they are from the learned, but they aren't. There is no harm greater to knowledge or the learned than from the likes of such people. For they took a meagre part of some of the sciences, while missing a much larger portion than what they had grasped. Moreover, their seeking knowledge was not a search for knowledge of Allah; exalted is He, nor was their aim to escape the darkness of ignorance.

Instead, it was to be one-up on people through showing-off and self-importance, or to attract attention by being cantankerous and stirring-up controversy, or to shamelessly boast about being from the scholars when in reality they are not.⁵

A telltale sign that one is afflicted with such a disease includes: An eagerness to poke one's nose into difficult religious issues that are well above one's proverbial pay grade, so as to offer their tuppence worth on the matter. The Arab proverb likely fits such a person: *laysa hadha bi'ushshik fadruji* – 'This isn't your nest, so hop along.'

Another telltale sign is: being obnoxiously adamant that one's own opinion is correct, and that everyone else is off. All too often this leads Abu Shibr to take this differing to the next level. His half-baked knowledge doesn't allow him to realise that there may be more than one valid take on the issue, and that his mightn't even be the soundest. But by this time it's already too late, Abu Shibr has already made a mountain out of a molehill. In his hubris, he thinks that he alone is on haqq and the others are on batil. Such delusions of grandeur lead him to demean, defame and even boycott and warn against those who differ with him. In the bigotry and blind-following of his desires, Abu Shibr unwittingly does the devil's work, becoming an active agent in destroying unity and brotherhood among the believers – and we seek refuge in Allah from such mischief and misguidance.

Another sign is: hiding behind phrases like, 'I've got a brain to think for myself.' But I suggest that this is to draw from the phrase more than is warranted. Whilst it's a fact we've each been endowed with some level of intelligence or reason, it's also a fact that some are more intelligent than others. Moreover, a person who can reason well in one topic or area of life, may be unfit to do so in another. Surely, true intelligence should lead us to acknowledge that some disciplines of life and learning require an immense amount of study and specialisation. Such is the case for

the intricacies of Islamic law and theology. Yet some will casually dismiss the verdicts of highly qualified scholars, not upon a detailed evidence-based critique, but upon a vainglorious whim. 'I've got a brain' demands that we engage the evidences and legal rationals of the experts before dismissing their conclusions, or humbly defer to their authority. Anything else would make intellects look suspect; or even down right stupid! The Qur'an says:

Yet among people are those who argue about Allah without knowledge, guidance, or an illuminating Book. [31:20]

Compounded ignorance; this Abu Shibr syndrome, is extremely difficult to cure. For the one afflicted with it doesn't see the deficiency in himself. As far as he's concerned, he knows; and that's that! To reveal to him that he is ignorant of his own ignorance is nigh on impossible. And yet it's because the Abu Shibrs of this world are least likely to recognise their inadequacies, and because the Abu Shibr syndrome can be contagious, that we need to be alert to the following shari'ah cautions:

Firstly, that speaking about Allah, His religion, or its rulings, without due knowledge, is a heinous crime and amounts to lying against Allah and the religion of Islam: And utter not lies in what your tongues allege [saying]: 'This is lawful, and this is forbidden,' so as to forge a lie against Allah. Those who forge lies against Allah will never prosper. [16:116] Such a crime against Allah requires an immediate handbrake turn to tawbah.

Secondly, to reign-in our soul from its egotism, exhibitionism and from seeking to be a wannabe. The Prophet (SAWS) said:

*'Whoever does deeds in order to be heard of, Allah will make him heard of; and whoever does deeds to show-off, Allah will make a show of him.'*⁶

That sincerity to Allah and sound intention are key, is vividly demonstrated in the next hadith too:

42. *Radiant Reality*

*'Whoever seeks knowledge so as to vie with the scholars, or to argue with the foolish, or to attract peoples' attention, then Allah shall enter him into Hell.'*⁷

As can be seen, Islam doesn't do ego. Those who are eager for it to be otherwise have possibly got the wrong religion and way of life.

Thirdly, that one of the best defences against getting intoxicated on shallow draughts of knowledge is: learning to say, 'I don't know'. In fact, Ibn 'Abbas (RA) said: *la adri nisf al-'ilm* – 'To say: "I don't know" is half of knowledge.'⁸ One of the scholars said: 'Realise, that to reply with, "I don't know" doesn't diminish one's status; as some of the ignoramuses imagine. Instead, it elevates it. For it is a splendid proof of his lofty rank, strength of his religion, his fear of his Lord, and the purity of his heart.'⁹

Fourthly, ask, inquire, learn, study, discuss, and grow in Islamic knowledge – but let us do so with humility and with being aware of our own levels. In this respect, let's take our queue from how the Angels extolled Allah:

'Glory be to You! We have no knowledge save what You have taught us. Indeed, You alone are the Knowing, the Wise.' [2:32]

That a little knowledge can be a dangerous thing is only when intentions are corrupt, or if we lose sight of our own levels. We all have half-baked knowledge about many matters. In some of those matters, our half-baked knowledge will mature and become seasoned knowledge. In some, it may improve but never fully ripen. In other cases, it may always remain half-baked. But that needn't be a problem, so long as we are aware that we don't know; that we don't act like Abu Shibr; and that, if required or wanted, we are open to learning. In this regard it's been wisely said that: 'A half-baked idea is okay as long as it's in the oven.'

Hear, hear!

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1. Consult: Bakr Abu Zayd, 'Hilyat Talib al-'Ilm', in *Majmu'at al-'Ilmiyyah (Riyadh: Dar al-'Asimah, 1997)*,

198.

2. *Majmu' Fatawa (Riyadh: Dar 'Alam al-Kutub, 1991), 10:449.*

3. *Cited in Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, Jami' Bayan al-'Ilm (Saudi Arabia: Dar Ibn al-Jawzi, 1994), no.1538.*

4. *Abu Dawud, Sunan, nos.336-7. The hadith says: During the time of the Prophet (SAWS) a man suffered a serious head wound. Later he had a nocturnal emission and inquired from some companions if he was allowed to perform dry ablution (tayammum)? They said that they didn't think it was permissible. So he took a full bath (ghusl), because of which he died. When the Prophet (SAWS) came to learn of this, he said: 'They have killed him; may Allah kill them! Why didn't they ask, if they did not know. Indeed the cure for ignorance*

is to ask.'

5. *Ibn Hazm, 'Maratib al-'Ulum' in Rasa'il Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi (Beirut: al-Mu'assasah al-'Arabiyyah, 1983), 4:86.*

6. *Al-Bukhari, no.6499; Muslim, no.2986. The meaning of: 'Allah will make him heard of' is: Allah will publicly expose and humiliate him on the Day of Judgement – as said by al-Nawawi, Riyadh al-Salihin (Dammam: Dar Ibn al-Jawzi, 1990), no.1626.*

7. *Al-Tirmidhi, Sunan, no.2654. The hadith is hasan, as per al-Albani, Sahih al-Jami' al-Saghir (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami, 1986), no.6382.*

8. *Al-Bayhaqi, al-Madkhal, no.713.*

9. *Ibn Jama'ah, Tadhkirat al-Sami' wa'l-Mutakallim (Beirut: Dar al-Basha'ir, 2013), 68*

Valentines of Heartbreak & Lies!

Every February, the media goes into overdrive promoting love and affection in the form of Valentines. Valentines, like other events that are hyped up by the media, are money-making tools, clever marketing that manipulates your emotions to get into your wallet.

Yet with all this supposed romance in the air, statistics show that instead of Valentines being the day of love, there are more break-ups and divorces at this time in the western world than at any other time of the year.

The media thrives on peddling fantasy as reality and if we buy into their hype, we feel quite bitter when these fantasies do not materialise. For the many whose Valentine's fantasy are not realized or who do not receive a valentines, this period can be one of the most depressing times in the year. This does not affect adults only, kids in school are more affected due to their relatively fragile emotions.

We need to take a hard look at our lives and see the direction that we are heading into and the challenges that face our children. Take notice of your own feelings and special notice of your children on the 14th of February and gauge the affect this day has in our lives. It is impossible to embrace a un-Islamic lifestyle and not be affected by its highs and lows. If we truly wish happiness in our lives, then it will only come when we put Allah and His Rasool (SAWS) first and choose Islam as our way of life.

Submission to God

Alija Izetbegovic

Nature has determinism, man has destiny. The acceptance of this destiny is the supreme and final idea of Islam.

Destiny--does it exist and what form does it take? Let us look at our own lives and see what has remained of our most precious plans and the dreams of our youth? Do we not come helplessly into the world faced with our own personality, with higher or lower intelligence, with attractive or repulsive looks, with an athletic or dwarfish stature, in a king's place or in a beggar's hut, in a tumultuous or peaceful time, under the reign of a tyrant or a noble prince, and generally in geographical and historical circumstances about which we have not been consulted? How limited is what we call our will, how tremendous and unlimited is our destiny!

Man has been cast down upon this world and made dependent on many facts over which he has no power. His life is influenced by both very remote and very near factors. During the Allied invasion of Europe in 1944, there was, for a moment, a general disturbance in radio communications which could have been fatal for the operation under way. Many years later, the disturbance was explained as a huge explosion in the Andromeda constellation, several million light years away from our planet. One type of catastrophic earthquake on the earth is due to changes on the sun's surface. As our knowledge of the world grows, so does our realisation that we will never be complete masters of our fate.

Even supposing the greatest possible progress of science, the amount of factors under our control will always be insignificant compared to the amount of those beyond it. Man is not proportional to the world. He and his lifetime are not the measuring units of the pace of things. This is the cause of man's eternal insecurity, which is psychologically reflected in pessimism, revolt, despair, apathy, or in submission to God's will.

Islam arranges the world by means of upbringing, education, and laws. That is its narrower scope; submission to God is the broader one.

Individual justice can never be fully satisfied within the condition of existence. We can follow all Islamic rules which, in their ultimate result, should provide us with the happiness in both worlds; moreover, we can follow all other norms, medical, social and moral but, because of the terrific entanglement of destinies, desires and accidents, we can still suffer in body and soul. What can console a mother who has lost her only son? Is there any solace for a man who has been disabled in an accident?

We ought to become conscious of our human condition. We are immersed in situation. I can work to change my situation, but there are situations which are essentially unchangeable, even when their appearance takes a new look, and when their victorious power is veiled: I must die; I must suffer; I must fight; I am a victim of chance; I get inevitably entangled in guilt. These

basic conditions of our existence are referred to as “the border situations.”(Karl Jaspers) Sure, “man is bound to improve everything that can be improved in this world. After that, children will still go on dying unjustly even in the most perfect of societies. Man, at best, can only give himself the task of reducing arithmetically the sufferings of this world. Still,, injustice and pain will continue and, however limited, they will never cease to be blasphemy.” (Albert Camus)

Submission to God or revolt--these are two different answers to the same dilemma.

In submission to God, there is some of every (human) wisdom except one: shallow optimism. Submission is the story of human destiny, and that is why it is inevitably permeated with pessimism: for “every destiny is tragic and dramatic if we come down to its bottom.” (Gasset)

Recognition of destiny is a moving reply to the great human theme of inevitable suffering. It is the recognition of life as it is and a conscious decision to bear and to endure. In this point, Islam differs radically from the superficial idealism and optimism of European philosophy and its naive story about “the best of all possible worlds.” Submission to God is a mellow light coming from beyond pessimism.

As a result of one’s recognition of his impotence and insecurity, submission to God itself becomes a new potency and a new security. Belief in God and His providence offers a feeling of security which cannot be made up for with anything else.

Submission to God does not imply passivity

as many people wrongly believe. In fact, “all heroic races have believed in destiny.” Obedience to God excludes obedience to man. It is a new relation between man and God and, therefore, between man and man.

It is also a freedom which is attained by following through with one’s own destiny. Our involvement and our struggle are human and reasonable and have the token of moderation and serenity only through the belief that the ultimate result is not in our hands. It is up to us to work, the rest is in the hands of God.

Therefore, to properly understand our position in the world means to submit to God, to find peace, not to start making a more positive effort to encompass and to overcome everything, but rather a negative effort to accept the place and the time of our birth, the place and the time that are our destiny and God’s will. Submission to God is the only human and dignified way out of the unsolvable senselessness of life, a way out without revolt, despair, nihilism, or suicide. It is a heroic feeling not of a hero, but of an ordinary man who has done his duty and accepted his destiny.

Islam does not get its name from its laws, orders, or prohibition nor from the efforts of the body and soul it claims, but from something that encompasses and surmounts all that: from a moment of cognition, from the strength of the soul to face the times, from the readiness to endure everything that an existence can offer, from the truth of submission to God. Submission to God, thy name is Islam!

The Basis of Allah’s Mercy

How can the advice of a spiritual mentor benefit the one who has no interest or desire to change his life? The people who paid the most attention to the reformation of the people were the Prophets (AS). However, despite receiving the attention and advice of the Prophet, those who had no desire to change remained unaffected. The basis for Allah blessing a person is the level of desire and thirst within the person to change and reform his ways. Without this desire, absolutely nothing can be achieved. This is the system of Allah.

(Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi (ra))

Continuity in Deeds

Allama Shibli Nomani (ra)

One of the most important aspect of one's character is that should do an act so constantly that it becomes one's second nature.

With the exception of man everything in the world is bound by its nature to do the same work. The sun gives light; it cannot spread darkness; similarly, the night spreads darkness and not light. Trees blossom and bear fruits in their particular season and the flowers bloom only in spdng. Animals cannot transgress beyond their natural limits but man has been given full liberty and power to act as he likes and light and darkness are under his control. The tree of his excellence blossoms in every season and the flowers of his good morals always bloom. Unlike an animal his action and behaviour is not restricted to a particular mode of life. This liberty has been granted to man on account of his being more responsible and careful but the main point is that when a person begins a good act he should do it continuously and should not get tired of it despite the freedom so that the people should know that he cannot do otherwise just as light cannot be separated from the sun nor fruits from trees and fragrance from flowers. This is in the true sense constancy of actions.

The Holy Prophet (SAWS) used to observe this principle in all his actions. Whenever he performed an act, he did it constantly, strictly observing the mode and time of its first performance. The word Sunnah of the Shari'ah is based on this principle. The Sunnah means that act of the Holy Prophet (SAWS) which he did constantly and did not forsake it without any

special reason. Therefore, the Sunnahs are undeniable proofs of the continuity and constancy of the Prophet's (SAWS) actions.

His daily routine of life shows the firmness and stability of his character. Even the slightest deviation did not occur in them during his whole life. Once a person asked 'A'isha (RA): How did the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) act? Did he choose a particular act for a particular day? She said: No, his act was continuous and who amongst you is capable of doing what he did? There is another Hadith: Whenever the Holy Prophet (SAWS) did an act, he did it continuously.

The Holy Prophet (SAWS) said: The acts most pleasing to Allah are those done continuously.

Hadrat 'A'isha (RA) said: The Holy Prophet (SAWS) did not forsake nafl and Tahajjud Prayers and other acts of devotion during the night. Of course, if he was ill or tired he would observe them sitting.

Jarir b' Abdullah a companion of the Holy Prophet (SAWS), said: Whenever I visited Allah's Messenger (SAWS) he did not see me but with a smile on his face.

He used to do all his works at the fixed time. He observed the times of the prayer, the number of supererogatory prayers (nawafil), the time for sleeping and waking and the times and etiquettes of visiting the people. Now all these activities have become the code of life for the Muslims.

Recite Even if You Don't Understand

There was once a grandfather who had great love for the Qur'an. Every night without fail, he would make wudhu, apply 'itr, remove his beloved Quraan from its velvet cover and sit with utmost respect reciting the word of Allah in a most melodious tone. As he would recite, however, his young grandson would stare at him in bemusement and scratch his head in confusion. One day, his grandson came up to him and asked, "Dada, you recite the Qur'an EVERY night but you don't even know Arabic! You read so much but you don't even understand what you're reading! What a waste of time!" His grandfather looked at him, smiled and said, "My child, do you see the coal basket in the corner? Good! Empty out the coal, take the basket to the stream, fill it with water and rush back as quickly as your little legs can carry you." The young boy ran off on his "mission", heading towards the stream. He filled the basket, turned, and ran straight back to the house. "Dada!" he complained, "The water doesn't stay in the basket because of all the holes! I think I'm wasting my time!" "I think you need to run faster." suggested Dada. And so off he went again, running even faster than before. When he returned this time, there were at least a few drops of water at the bottom of the basket but even those dripped out before he could put the basket down. "One more time! Run your absolute fastest now!" urged Dada before the child could again complain. Now when the child returned, huffing and puffing from the exertion, there was

at least a small puddle – but even that rapidly drained out before their eyes. "I give up Dada!" he exclaimed, "And I've wasted my time!" "Hold it! Not so hasty my child." responded Dada. "Why don't you examine the basket and tell me what you see?" he prompted. The child turned the basket in his hands, looking first at the inside and then turned it the other way, looking at the outside. "It looks brand new!" he marvelled. "It's all shiny again! All the soot has been washed off!" he said. "Exactly!" replied Dada. "The basket is perhaps unable to hold the water, but that doesn't mean the water doesn't affect it in any way. Rather the water cleanses and polishes it, removing all the dirt and grime. That, my child, is exactly what happens when we read the Qur'an without understanding the meaning. Allah not only gives us great reward but also cleanses our hearts through our recitation" he explained. "Wow! Will you teach me to read too Dada?" he asked. "Definitely!" replied Dada.

Our Nabi (SAWS) said, "Indeed these hearts rust just as iron rusts when wet with water." A Sahaabi (RA) asked, "O Rasul of Allah (SAWS)! What is its polish?" "Abundant remembrance of death and the recitation of the Qur'an." answered Nabi (SAWS). (Shu'abul Imaan)

A person suffering from a splitting headache, despite not knowing the pharmacological effect, group schedule or origin of paracetamol, won't think twice before swallowing the tablet. He understands that this lack of knowledge and understanding in no way hinders or obstructs

the tablet benefitting him by alleviating his pain. Similarly, when a person recites the Qur'an with dedication and devotion, it serves to cleanse his heart of the layers of muck and grime that engulf his heart by him sinning. This is regardless of whether or not he understands the meaning of the Qur'an.

The Qur'an was revealed in Arabic and the people to whom it was directly revealed were Arabs who spoke the most eloquent form and dialect of the language. Despite them being completely conversant and fluent in the language, Nabi (SAWS) was tasked with a separate responsibility in his capacity as the Nabi – the responsibility to teach them the RECITATION of the Qur'an.

Allah mentions in Surah Aal 'Imraan (v164):
“Indeed Allah had favored the believers when He sent in their midst a messenger from among them who recites to them His verses, purifies them and teaches them the book and wisdom and they were before in clear misguidance”

The recitation of the Qur'an holds such a degree of importance that teaching the recitation alone formed a separate department from the other departments of deen. Allah not only showed its importance but even expressed it to be a great favour on the Ummah that they learn to recite the Qur'an. This is because the recitation of the words of the Qur'an is an irreplaceable 'ibaadah that plays an extremely important role in the life of a Muslim.

Imaam Ahmad bin Hambal (ra) once saw Allah in a dream and asked, “O my Rabb! What is the best way for the person seeking your proximity to gain your nearness?” “Through my speech (the Qur'an)” replied Allah. “With or without understanding?” Imaam Ahmad next asked. “With understanding and without understanding.” answered Allah. (Ithaafus Saadatil Muttaqeen)

Some Muslims are misled by the idea that reciting the Qur'an without any idea of the

meaning is a “waste of time” as it is merely reading in a “parrot fashion”. Hence they abandon reading the Qur'an. Such people in reality are doing themselves a great disservice and depriving themselves of the abundant reward Allah has offered.

Nabi (SAWS) said, “Whoever recites one “harf” (letter) of the Kitaab of Allah will receive a reward in return and one reward is multiplied by ten. I do not say that “alif laam meem” is a harf. Rather “alif” is a harf, “laam” is a harf and “meem” is a harf.” (Tirmizi)

If a person recites just the three letters “alif laam meem” (at the beginning of Surah Baqarah) and nothing else, Nabi (SAWS) has promised this person a minimum of 30 rewards! This is despite the fact that the Ummah of Nabi (SAWS) does not know the meaning of these three letters with certainty. This proves without a doubt that recitation of the Qur'an – although the meaning is not known to the reciter – guarantees immense reward. Are we, as Muslims, willing to deny this reward and thus challenge the promise of our Nabi (SAWS)?

To understand the meaning of the Qur'an is indeed very important and striving to learn it at the hands of a true 'Aalim of deen is a praiseworthy effort. In the event of not knowing the meaning, however, the RECITATION should never be abandoned. We face a dark future if we begin to distance ourselves from the Qur'an, the word of our Allah, due to not understanding its meaning. Will we allow the day to come when we abandon even salaah due to not understanding Arabic?

(Source al-Haadi)

“Fiery lust is not diminished by indulging it, but inevitably by leaving it ungratified...”

Mawlānā Jalāl ad-Dīn Rūmī