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RADIANT REALITY

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*"Every soul
will taste
death."*

(Qur'an, 3: 185)



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EDITORIAL

All thanks for Almighty, the most Merciful and Exalted

Islamic Worldview in 21st Century

Islam is not religion in an ordinary sense of the word. It's also not just a complete code of life. It's a worldview that has its own code of life. And there are dedicated individual Muslims who try to follow this code to its minutest details. It does not reflect their radicalization. It indicates their commitment and dedication to what they believe in. Such a sincere dedication does not make monsters out of them. Such people have always existed in the Islamic history and have always been venerated by one and all. In fact, Muslims believe that it's just their existence which gives a sense of purpose to the whole cosmos out there.

Islam is a proselytizing religion which enjoins upon its followers to invite all not to a particular religion but towards their creator. Such a belief has never made Muslims intolerant of other religious traditions. In fact, Almighty God through his word, the holy Quran, makes it clear that in matters of faith, there is no compulsion and even when people are to be invited, they must be invited with decency and without any kind of force and enticement.

Apart from Islam's ritualistic part, its teachings are universal, without any consideration of religion. Its vision for a just society encompasses all. Its humanistic ideals stand for all. Its principles of universal human teachings are to be observed with all. Its concerns for basic human qual-

ities like, kindness, mercy, modesty, mutual respect, decent behavior and good manners apply to all. In fact, these are the teachings which have all along been responsible for the rapid spread of Islam throughout the world. What makes Islam stand apart from other religions even in these matters is that these qualities are to be inculcated and observed for their own sake without any other consideration. These qualities are not to be developed as mercantile ethics which will win Islam more followers. In fact, an invite to Islam is also an invite to these qualities. That is why those non-Muslims who know Muslims at personal level are never ill-informed about Islam or Muslims. They are never blinded by prejudice and bias. Such people even if they do not believe in Islam respect Islam and its worldview.

However, the full-fledged media houses and research institutes with pre-defined agenda of maligning Islam and Muslims ascribe every bad thing to Islam. They have categorized Muslims as good, bad, radical, moderate, secular etc. A bad human being is a bad human being, irrespective of his being a Muslim or otherwise. But they make it a point to underscore the religious denomination of a Muslim when he is bad and not good, as per their standards. Such attempts seem delib-

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Question Answer

Question.

I took a loan from someone a few years ago. Unfortunately, I cannot locate him now to pay him back the loan. What do I do? Please advise?

Answer.

As a debtor, you should exercise all possible avenues in getting in touch with your creditor.

However, if it is not possible to locate the creditor, you may give the money to the poor and needy as Sadaqah (charity) with the intention that the creditor receives the reward thereof. (Shaami)
If however the creditor claims the debt from you after you had given it in charity, the creditor will have a valid claim against you.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Is it permissible to extend an offer of purchase when another person has already engaged in purchasing the item? Interfere

For example, Zaid is purchasing a property from Ahmad. Yusuf hears about it and offers to purchase the property.

Will the ruling be different in the following two scenarios?

1. Ahmad has already committed to selling the item to Zaid and thereafter, Yusuf

makes an offer.

2. Ahmad and Zaid have only discussed the sale but there is no commitment, promise or steps towards the sale.

Answer.

Consider the following Hadith:

Allah's Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) forbade (1) the meeting (to purchase) of a caravan (of goods) on the way, (2) and that a residing person buys for a bedouin, (3) and that a woman stipulates the divorce of the wife of the would-be husband, (4) and that a man should make an offer (in a transaction) while the offer of his brother is pending (and nearly concluded). He also forbade artificially inflating prices, and that one withholds the milk in the udder of the animal so that he may deceive people on selling it. (Bukhari)

In view of the above Hadith, the Fuqaha and Muhadditheen have ruled out the following:

1. If the purchaser and the seller concluded a deal, it is prohibited for a third person to interfere with the deal by making a counter offer.
2. If the purchaser and seller have not concluded the deal but there is an inclination in concluding the deal, then in this case as well, it is not permissible for a third party to interfere and make a counter offer.
3. However, if a purchaser and seller

did not conclude the deal, nor was there any inclination or interest towards concluding the deal, then it will be permissible for a third party to make a counter offer.

Accordingly, in query number one, Yusuf cannot make a counter offer. In query number two, there is no prohibition and Yusuf is at liberty to make a counter offer.

M. Abdul Mannan

Question.

Is it permissible to sell or purchase cameras, or camera phones?

Answer.

In principle, it is permissible to sell or purchase an item that can be used in a permissible way.

As such, it will be permissible to sell or purchase a camera or camera phone as it can be used in a permissible way to take pictures of inanimate pictures, objects etc. which is permissible in Shari'ah.

However, if the seller or purchaser abuses the camera or camera phone by taking pictures of animate objects etc., he/she will be sinful. (Shaami)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Are we allowed to listen to the Tilaawat of Quran whilst cooking in the kitchen or whilst studying?

Answer.

When the Quraan is being recited, it is Waajib (compulsory) to listen attentively to the recitation of the Quran. Attentive listening refers to the undivided attention given to the recitation of the Quran.

When one is busy in the kitchen (cooking, baking etc.) and the Quran is being recited through any medium, radio, cd

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etc., one should consider the attention given. If the activity does not interfere with the attention given to the Quran, then such listening is permissible.

On the other hand, if the Quran is being recited whilst studying, then attentive listening is not found, as in studying the mind is consumed in reading and understanding. In that case, one cannot give undivided attention to the reciting of the Quran and it will not be permissible to listen to Quran at that time.

Also keep in mind that it is disrespectful to listen to the Quran as simply a past time or as a background sound.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Is it permissible to purchase an item and hoard it with a motive of selling it later on at a higher price to maximize on profit?

Answer.

To purchase an item which is a basic need and hoard it with the intention of reselling it at a higher price is called *Idhtikhaar*. To do so is a sin. Rasulullah Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam said: "He who hoards has sinned." (Muslim)

The reason for this prohibition is because by hoarding ones wealth when there is a need for it, is simply causing harm to humanity which is against the temperament of Shariah. This prohibition is only when there is a need for such wealth in the market place. In the absence of such need, this prohibition will not apply. (Shaami)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

What is the Shariah ruling of keep-

ing a dog/puppy as a pet as I have witnessed many Muslims keeping dogs/puppies as pets? Kindly advise?

Answer.

It is not permissible to keep dogs/puppies as pets. In doing so, one's household will be deprived of the Mercy and blessings of Allah Ta'ala. Rasulullah Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam said: "Angels do not enter a house wherein there is a dog or an animate picture" (Bukhari)

However, if a dog is kept for a valid reason, for e.g. a dog is kept for security, farming and hunting purposes, it will be permissible to kept a dog under certain limitations and restrictions. (Shaami)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Should a wife make Hijaab from her brother-in-law/s?

Answer.

One of the misconceptions that is present in Muslim societies in general is the laxity towards relations with a brother-in-law. However, when we look at the teachings of Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wa Sallam we find that we should be very careful because that laxity can easily lead to sin. Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wa Sallam said: "The brother-in-law is death." (Bukhari)

More so, the wife is considered to be a non-Mahram (stranger) to the brother-in-law and should practice Hijab with such non-Mahrams (strangers).

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

When should one have a Walimah? Before the consummation or after the con-

summation of the marriage? Also, how does one consummate a marriage?

Answer.

The Walimahs of Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasilla were immediately after the consummation of marriage. Hence the Sunnah method of Walimah is after the consummation of marriage.

A Walima after the Nikah and before the consummation will also be valid. (Kifaayatul Mufti)

The consummation of a marriage refers to a time of privacy between the husband and wife where they are able to have conjugal relations, irrespective of whether they have conjugal relations at that time or not. Thus if this moment of privacy is attained, the marriage is considered to be consummated.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

I am currently employed as a doctor at a private hospital. My working hours are from 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM. If I finish my work early, can I leave before 4:00 PM?

Answer.

In an Ijaarah contract (employment contract), an employee is employed in accordance to the terms and conditions of the contract. Hence, if the terms and conditions of the contract as a doctor was to work from 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM, and one arrives later than 9:30 AM or leaves earlier than 4:00 PM, it will be considered as a breach of contract.

However, if the terms and conditions of the contract is to complete an allotted amount of duties of the day after which one can leave, it will be permissible to leave before time.

Therefore, it is best for one to clarify this matter with one's administration.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

What is the responsibility of a son to his mother and a brother to his sister if she is a widow?

Answer.

Islam teaches us to be caring, kind and generous to our family members, especially ones close family members.

As a son, it is his responsibility to ensure the basic needs and requirements of his mother are taken care of, especially if she is a widow.

As a brother, it is also his responsibility to ensure the basic needs and requirements of his sister/sisters are taken care of if they are not married. If they are married, it is the responsibility of their husbands to do so.

Basic needs include arranging for reasonable living accommodation, reasonable food and clothing, as well medical attention when required.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Is there any significance in a Muslim turning eight years old?

Answer. We have not come across any Islamic significance of a person turning eighty years old.

However, it is mentioned in a Hadith: Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wa Sallam said: "Allah leaves no excuse for a person whose life He lengthened till the person reached sixty years of age." (Bukhari)

The Hadith is interpreted to mean that after reaching such a ripe age, there is

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no excuse left for not turning towards Allah Ta'ala and repenting for the past. During youth a person has many distractions and may be easily deceived. But after having experienced life and reaching the last phase of the worldly sojourn, there is no reason left for not reforming and turning towards Allah Ta'ala.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

My father stipulated in his Will that his house should be sold to my sister at R1000000. Then, the money received from selling the house to my sister should form part of his estate and should be distributed according to Shariah? Is this Shariah compliant?

Answer.

If your father stated in his will that his house should be sold to his daughter at R1000000 and the money received from the sale of the house should form part of his estate after his demise, this will be incorrect as all the heirs (including his daughter) are entitled to your father's estate (without buying or selling).

Alternatively, your father may sell his house to his daughter in his lifetime.

The money received from the sale will form part of your father's cash-on-hand. Whatever cash-on-hand remains at the time of your father's demise will devolve to all his heirs.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

What is the ruling on performing Hajj on behalf of a deceased person?

Answer.

It is permissible to perform Hajj on

behalf of a deceased person who has not performed Hajj during his lifetime. If the deceased person made a bequest (Wasiyyah) to perform hajj on his behalf, then the expenses of performing Hajj on his behalf would be paid from one third of his nett estate. If he did not make a bequest (Wasiyyah) to perform Hajj on his behalf, the person who intends to perform Hajj on his behalf shall bear the expenses and pass on the reward to the deceased person. (Mabsoot)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

What is the ruling of intercourse during pregnancy? Some say it is okay and others say it is harmful to the mother and child? Please explain?

Answer.

Conjugal relations during pregnancy is based on the wellbeing of the mother and the child in the womb. If there is a fear of harm to the mother or child, it should be refrained. If there is no harm, conjugal relationship is permissible.

If in doubt, medical advice should be sought whether harm is likely or not.

Mufti Ismaeel

Tale Carrier

Once a person was selling a slave. He informed the buyer that the slave had the bad habit of carrying tales. The buyer did not pay much attention to this and purchased the slave. After some time, the slave said to the master: "Your wife is having an affair and she wants to kill you." He then went to the master's wife and said: "Your husband does not love you anymore and he intends taking a second wife. Why don't you cut off a strand of his beard that is closer to his throat, then you can use that strand to enchant him into loving you alone." That night while the master pretended to be asleep, his wife came with a blade. He was convinced that she was about to kill him so he jumped up and killed her. When the wife's family members heard of what had transpired, they killed the husband. In this way a conflict and battle broke out between the two families which lasted for many years. (Ithaafus Saadatil Muttaqeen vol. 7, pg. 567)

Lessons:

1. *Playing one spouse against the other or sowing discord between two people is a filthy habit which can have severe consequences.*
2. *One should not accept the reports of anyone and everyone. People have different agendas and they may implicate one in the process.*
3. *When a person entertains suspicions, he will look for the slightest clue to support it and then become convinced of the suspicion that he had, although there may be absolutely no reality to it.*

Lesson From The Qur'an

Do not covet something in which Allah has made some of you superior to others. For men there is a share of what they earned, and for women, a share of what they earned. Pray to Allah for His grace. Surely, Allah is All-Aware of everything.
(An-Nisa', 4:32)

This ayah was revealed in response to questions regarding disparity between men and women. Sayyidah Umm Salamah, the mother of believers, looking for an explanation, observed: "Men take part in battles and we do not. We do not take part in combat so we can become martyrs. Also our share in the inheritance is half theirs." According to another report from 'Ikrimah some women said "We deeply desired that Allah would let us participate in battles so we would get the same reward as men." According to another report a woman was concerned that since women have half the share in inheritance and are given half the weight as witnesses in many cases, they would also get half the reward of men for all good deeds.

Lest anyone influenced by feminist ideology jump into confusion here, women were not seeking equal rank in the family or tribal hierarchy; they were rather concerned about rewards in the Hereafter. They wanted to make sure they would get equal wages of piety for equal piety. And

they were assured, here as well as at many other places in the Qur'an, that the rewards for good or bad deeds are the same for men and women.

While we are encouraged to compete with each other in performing good deeds, we should not get carried away with the idea of competition. Feminism is the result of taking competitiveness to extremes by seeking everything for women that applies to men. This is its foundation and this foundation is being demolished in no uncertain terms here.

If men are superior in some respects (like physical strength) so be it. That is Allah's plan. If they are given the sole responsibility for earning a living for the family and therefore are given a bigger share in the inheritance in most circumstances, so be it. Their abilities are not the same. Their spheres are not the same. But within their sphere, ultimately everyone will get the rewards based on their own effort and ability. If they listen to this ayah, women will be content being women and will

lead happy lives.

But the message is not to be limited to its immediate context. It is general and applies to all unhealthy rivalry. We have not been created equal in our appearance, skin color, physical strength, talents, and abilities. We should not waste any time comparing ourselves with others and lamenting our disadvantages in any of

these things. We submit to the Will of Allah in everything that is beyond our control. But we try to do the best in areas where we have been given freedom of action. And we seek Allah's grace and mercy all the time.

Most of the psychological problems in the world would go away if we followed this one gem of advice.

Words of a Wise Man

A wise man once left a will stating the following: "I bear witness that none is worthy of worship except Allah, and that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger. We do not differentiate among the Messengers of Allah. I bear witness that my salah, my sacrifice, my living and my dying belong to Allah the Lord of the worlds. He has no partner. And of this I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims. And that Allah resurrect all from the graves. And that paradise is a truth and so is hellfire. And the reckoning is a truth and so are the mizan (scale) and the sirat (path standing over hellfire). And that Allah is the One who rewards the servants according to their deeds. And that the Qur'an is the very word of Allah and that it is not created. And that Allah is seen in the hereafter by the believers. They will look at Him with their eyes openly and they will also hear His words. And that He is above the Throne. And that the Qadar, both its good and bad, is from Allah. There will be none except that which He wants, decrees and preordain. And that the best of people, after the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), is Abu- Bakr, Umar, Uthman and then Ali (RAA). To all four them I pledge my allegiance, and for them I beseech Allah's forgiveness as well as for those who killed or were killed during the battles of al-Jamal and Siffeen. Indeed I ask forgiveness to all the Companions of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). I advise all to obey those in charge so long as they are establishing salah and that the Caliphate stays in Quraysh. And that what much of it intoxicates, then little of is haram. And that the Mut'a (temporary marriage) is haram.

I advise all to have taqwa of Allah in secrecy and openness. Stick to the people of Sunnah who follow the footsteps of the Messenger and his noble companions. Never miss the Jumuah and always remain part of the jama'ah or the Community. When death befalls me, then let there be no menstruating woman around me. Let my visitors Put on good oil scent and beautify themselves."

Such were the words every Muslim should value and cherish. They came to us from one of the great sources of wisdom; a man named Muhammad ibn Idris ash-Shafi'ee (ra) may Allah have mercy on his soul.

Lesson From Sahih al-Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

The Book of Menses

Chapter 20 : A menstruating woman should not offer Qadha Salaah (of those Salaah missed during menses).

And Jaabir bin Abdullah and Abu Sayeed quoted from the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) "A woman (in her menses) must abandon Salaah".

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

During menstrual period, a woman is exempted to offer Salaah; also She has not to offer Qadha of these prayers (Salaah) even after cessation of menses unlike the Saum of Ramadhan. In the month of Ramadhan, a woman is not supposed to fast during her menstrual period, but she has to offer Qadha of the missed fasts after Ramadhan.

Hadith No. 314

Narrated Mu'adha (RA)

A woman asked 'Aisha, "Should I offer the prayers which I did not offer because of menses" 'Aisha said, "Are you from the Hurauriya' (a town in Iraq?) We were with the Prophet and used to get our periods

but he never ordered us to offer them (the Prayers missed during menses)." 'Aisha perhaps said, "We did not offer them."

Comments

A woman came to Hadhrat Ayesha (RA) and asked her if she was supposed to offer Qadha of those prayers (Salaah) that she has missed during her menstrual period. Hadhrat Ayesha (RA) asked her if she was a 'Hurauriya'? (*Hurariya is a place 2 kms from Kofa wherefrom the nuisance of Khawarij sect started. These Khawarij people considered the offering the missed Salaah during menses obligatory (Waajib) after attaining the ritual purity*). This woman told Hadhrat Ayesha that she was not from among Hurauriya and that she only asked to acquire knowledge about the issue. Hadhrat Ayesha (RA) told her that one is not supposed to offer these missed prayers (Salaah) as Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) did not ask them to do so.

Chapter 21 : To sleep with a menstruat-

ing (wife) while she is wearing the same clothes (of menses).

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Imam Bukhari (RA) wants to say that one can sleep with a menstruating woman provided she is putting on the clothes.

Hadith No. 315

Narrated Zainab bint Abi Salama (RA)

Um-Salama said, "I got my menses while I was lying with the Prophet under a woolen sheet. So I slipped away, took the clothes for menses and put them on. Allah's Apostle said, 'Have you got your menses?' I replied, 'Yes.' Then he called me and took me with him under the woolen sheet." Um-mi Salama further said, "The Prophet used to kiss me while he was fasting. The Prophet and I used to take the bath of Janaba from a single pot."

Comments

There is a Hadith in Abu Dawood in which Hadhrat Ayesha (RA) says that she used to come out of the bed after the commencement of her menses and avoided to get close to Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Here Um-mi Salma says that when she started menses she wanted to go away from Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) but he called her back. There is no contradiction in these two Ahaadith. If a woman distances herself from her husband during menses there is no problem and if she sleeps with him, it is also permissible.

Chapter 22 : One who keeps separate

clothes for menstruation besides other dresses for the ritual purity.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

It is permissible to keep separate clothes for menses and that it is not extravagance.

Hadith No. 316

Narrated Um-mi Salama (RA)

"While I was lying with the Prophet under a woolen sheet, I got my menses. I slipped away and put on the clothes for menses. The Prophet said, "Have you got your menses?" I replied, "Yes." He called me and I slept with him under the woolen sheet."

Comments

Earlier on a Hadith was quoted in which Hadhrat Ayesha (RA) said that they used to have only a single garment and that they used it during menses and whenever it got soiled with blood of menses they used to apply saliva to the blood spot and rub off the blood with their nails. Ulema say that this Hadith is of early days of Islam when the Muslims were going through hard times and the Hadith of Um-mi Salma quoted in the present chapter is of the latter days when the economic conditions of Muslims had improved.

Chapter 23 : The participation of a menstruating woman in two Eid Salaah and Dua (invocation) congregation of Muslims, and their isolation from Musalla in Eidgah.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

A menstruating woman can attend the religious gatherings of preaching and Dua but should remain away from prayer place.

Hadith No. 317

Narrated Aiyub (RA)

Hafsa said, 'We used to forbid our young women to go out for the two Eid prayers. A woman came and stayed at the palace of Bani Khalaf and she narrated about her sister whose husband took part in twelve holy battles along with the Prophet and her sister was with her husband in six (out of these twelve). She (the woman's sister) said, "We used to treat the wounded, look after the patients and once I asked the Prophet, 'Is there any harm for any of us to stay at home if she doesn't have a veil?' He said, 'She should cover herself with the veil of her companion and should participate in the good deeds and in the religious gathering of the Muslims.' When Ummi 'Atiya came I asked her whether she had heard it from the Prophet. She replied, "Yes. May my father be sacrificed for him (the Prophet)! (Whenever she mentioned the Prophet she used to say, 'May my father be sacrificed for him) I have heard the Prophet saying, 'The unmarried young virgins and the mature girl who stay often screened or the young unmarried virgins who often stay screened and the menstruating women should come out and participate in the good deeds as well as the religious gathering of the faithful believers but the menstruating women should keep away from the Musalla (praying place).' "Hafsa asked Ummi 'Atiya surprisingly, "Do you say the menstruating women?" She

replied, "Doesn't a menstruating woman attend 'Arafat (Hajj) and such and such (other deeds)?"

Comments

A menstruating woman is forbidden to offer few obligatory prayers (like Salaah, Sawm, Tilaawah etc), however she can continue to offer other types of Ibaadah like remembrance of Allah (Zikr), attending the preaching and Dua congregations but she should not go near the prayer place as she is not allowed to enter the Musjid in this state.

Imam Tahaawi (RA) says that the women were asked to attend the Salaah in Musjids in early days of Islam in order to show the enemies of Islam the more number of Muslims.

Allaama Ayni says that there were two reasons to allow women to come out of their homes for Salaah, one is given above and the another one was that during those days there was peace and women were safe. Now since both these reasons are not found so the women are not allowed to come out for the Salaah. Hadhrat Ayesha (RA) says:

"If Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) would have seen what women are doing (now), he definitely would have stopped them from going to Musjids".

Chapter 24 : If a woman gets menstruation three times in a month. And women will be believed what they say about menses and pregnancy and whatever is related to menses.

As per the statement of Allah Ta'ala: "And it is not lawful for them to conceal what Al-

lah has created in their wombs". (2:228) Hadhrat Ali (RA) and Hadhrat Shuraih are of the opinion that if a woman gets a close witness from her home and says that she gets menses thrice in a month, she will be believed. Atta sais that the condition of her menses will be same as before and Ibrahim said the same. And Atta said that menstruation is from one to fifteen days. Muatamar reports from his father that he asked Ibn Seereen about the woman who witnesses blood five days after the cessation of menses, he said that the women know more about it.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

A divorced woman has to wait for three months i.e., to have three menstrual cycles after the divorce and then only she can marry again. Now the question arises that if such a woman says that she got her menses thrice in a single month, would it mean that her Iddah (i.e., completion of three menstrual cycles after divorce) is complete and she can marry again? Imam Bukhari (RA) says that such a woman will be trusted about her menses and pregnancy if she says that she got three cycles in month and that is practically possible, then she will be trusted.

Juristic decision of Hadhrat Shuriah (RA) and its approval by Hadhrat Ali (RA)

A divorced woman came to Hadhrat Ali and said that she got menses thrice in a month and on this she had a dispute with her husband. Hadhrat Ali asked Hadhrat Shuriah to settle that dis-

pute. Hadhrat Shuriah gave the decree, that if she could produce pious persons from her home as witness to her claim then she would be trusted and if she could not do so then she would not be believed. Hadhrat Ali (RA) liked this decision very much.

Ata says that if a woman claims to have got three menstrual periods in a single month, she will be believed only if she was having the same routine before as well.

Hadith No. 318

Narrated 'Aisha (RA)

Fatima bint Abi Hubaish asked the Prophet, "I got persistent bleeding (in between the periods) and do not become clean. Shall I give up prayers?" He replied, "No, this is from a blood vessel. Give up the prayers only for the days on which you usually get the menses and then take a bath and offer your prayers."

Comments

Fatima bint Abi Hubaish asked Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) that since she was getting prolonged menstrual periods (Istihaadha), was she supposed to leave Salaah for all these days? She was told to leave the Salaah only during the days of true menstruation and not during the days of extra bleeding or Istihaadha. This Hadith shows that a woman's statement is trusted in such kind of situations.

The details of difference of opinions amongst the jurists may be seen in the books on Fiqh.

Truth and Relativity

Ali Unal

Einstein's theory of relativity (1905) dealt a severe blow to the worldview based on Galileo's laws of simple cause and effect physics, which reached its peak in the nineteenth century Goethe's observation that "people running after an idea fall into more and more error", was demonstrated tellingly, and scientists were obliged to acknowledge the limitations of scientific theories. For example, Masaryk's admission that: "Theories, after nourishing for a while the organs in the body of science, dry up and fall to the ground like leaves" pointed out how difficult it is to maintain constant and permanent success in science.

For centuries, scientists accused religion of being a collection of dogmas and religious people of being dogmatists. However, when classical physics' limitations were revealed, scientists realized that they were guilty of the same charge. In other words, as Russell put it: *Newton's law reigned for such a long time and explained so many things that no one believed that it would ever need correcting. But eventually it became apparent that correction was needed. Let there be no doubt about it, one day these corrections will need to be corrected.*

Science advances, if and when it does, by trial and error. Despite this, Einstein's theory of relativity, which replaced

classical Newtonian physics, is treated in many circles as absolute truth.

That it one day will need revision or even give way to a new theory is not mentioned.

It seems that going to extremes while pursuing a single idea is a constant human trait. While each great idea contains a share of truth, it is not the only means or expression of truth. If we think of truth as a light at the center point of a circle or a straight line, we see that the light is reflected ray by ray to an infinite number of points on the circle's circumference or along the straight line. Each point is touched by a ray of the truth, and therefore each can be said to be true. However, only the light of the truth in the center never changes, since it is absolute; all other points are relative. What gives the relative truth its particular dimensions, properties, and relevance is the receiving point's nature, properties, time, and conditions. This is true for both the natural and social sciences, and for such Islamic sciences as *tafsir* (Qur'anic commentary) and *fiqh* (jurisprudence).

Given this, is there a permanent absolute truth? Yes, such a truth does exist, but only in the spiritual dimension of things. In fact, from one view, even those principles related to the spiritual dimension

of things contain exceptions, for they are connected to the visible external dimension and thus are only relative truths. When discussing absolute and general laws, even scientists cannot affirm absolutely their own laws, such as cause and effect, and say: "If the universe is in T_1 condition at this moment, it cannot be concluded that a little later it will be in the same condition."

As stated above, the difference between absolute and general principles is seen in the social sciences and even in such Islamic sciences as *tafsir* and *fiqh*. In the Realm of Unity, however, single and indivisible truth opens the door to countless relative truths in this material and quantitative world. For example, the Qur'an mentions good works as being virtues with inherent value. And yet we know that some types of virtues may not be considered virtue under different circumstances and times. For example, an administrator's serious manner may be considered dignified at work but haughty at home, A weak person's self-respect before a strong person is praiseworthy, but undesirable in a strong person before a weak one.

In the same way, what is erroneous for one person can be meritorious for another. Thus we say: "The pious deeds of righteous people are sometimes the mistakes of those near to God," Again, an act that earns a single merit for one person can earn a million merits for another. As long as there is no conflict with the word's literal meaning, its root is studied, and Arabic grammatical rules as well as Islam's basic principles are not violated, each meaning that any qualified interpreter de-

rives from those Qur'anic verses open to interpretation must be respected.

The most obvious historical manifestation of a general principle's relative truth is seen in the sphere of justice. Absolute justice considers personal and public rights as equal. But there are times when one or even both sets of rights cannot be protected, when the most fundamental rights encompassing both the individual and society are endangered. During those times when individual rights must be sacrificed for the public good, relative justice becomes necessary. Historically, the institution of a hereditary sultanate in the Muslim world arose from the need to establish public and individual security by ending internal clashes and civil wars. In other words, it was demanded by relative justice. Such justice, required by the necessity of compelling circumstances, gains the same authority as absolute justice.

This world contains such a variety and abundance of colors, shapes, properties, times, and conditions that relativism cannot be avoided. Nevertheless, we need some almost absolute truths to guide our lives. For example, saying that causality has no creative effect in the universe is absolutely true, for everything is in God's hand. We cannot be absolutely certain of what will happen next, and our lives and that of the world actually consist of this moment.

Living this truth consciously, along with believing and surrendering our free will to God, we must admit that causes operate in a relatively (not absolutely) reliable manner in this life. Drawn over absolute reality like a shawl or veil, these causes

allow it to assume an appearance of familiarity or habit and thereby make life livable. Eventually, all technology and science are constructed on this veil. In this broad region of human action and observation, Newton's classical physics has precedence over Einstein's relativity physics.

Relativity reminds us of our vulnerability. Those climbing the ladder of Divine Knowledge find that the highest state they can reach through their heart is the station of amazement. As Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "We did not know You as we should, O Known One," and "How could I see Him? What I saw was light."

Similarly, scientists solve one problem only to discover new ones, a process that eventually causes their trust in science's centuries old foundations to collapse. Just when they "find" the truth, they see everything slip from their grasp. The fact of relativity makes them exclaim: "The only thing I know is that I don't know anything," which then leads them, like moths circling a light, to flap their wings eternally around the light of Divine Knowledge.

Relativity shows that absolute truth lies only in—and can be known directly only by—Revelation. Therefore we have a clear and absolute need for religion and definitive religious principles. As two people cannot agree even on a simple matter, absolute truth can come only from God. Our duty is to organize our life according to the God-given truth at the point of belief. Understanding that we can attain only a partial truth also means that we acknowledge the space separating multiplicity from oneness. Through its pointing

to and yearning for the oneness beyond multiplicity this understanding functions as an important proof of Divine Oneness.

Relativity is an important measure for living peaceably among people, due to the different professions, temperaments, schools, and sects that have arisen in philosophy, teaching methods, and religions. All dispositions, sects, schools, and methods have portion of the truth, and none are absolutely wrong or false. The important thing is to unite around a common point. When we

look to the past and various catastrophes from the perspective of Divine Destiny, and when we look at future responsibilities and Divine orders from the perspective of free will and human responsibility, it is possible to reconcile even proponents of fatalism and free will.

The essential thing is to live believing that absolute truth, when it touches this world and becomes relevant for us, is relative and thus conditioned by the points, circumstances, and conditions of those receiving it. Based on the analogy given above, countless relative truths reflect the absolute truth located at the center point of the circle or the straight line at innumerable other points, according to each one's properties, color, and design. As long as people recognize, acknowledge, and defer to their own distance from the absolute truth and do not transgress their limits, unmanageable conflicts will not arise. But when people lose this sense of proportion and their capacity to know and propose the truth, when they take what is relative for what is absolute, they fall into error with catastrophic results.

Chasing Love

Sobia Asrar

“Beautified for men is the love of things they covet; women.....” [3:14]

It works vice versa too.

When I was young, I used to barf at stories that ended in a romantic setting. Yep, Cinderella, Snow White, The little Mermaid—they were all too syrupy for me. I was more into horror and mystery fiction, which kept me on my toes.

As I grew older, every novel and movie, whatever the genre, almost always had a subplot involving two individuals falling in love. I seemed to mind less, as long as the storyline was captivating. I now think that is where I went wrong.

No, do not get the wrong picture. This is not a confession, per se. All I am saying is that I do feel that I know more about romance than I should. That what I have seen and read is something that I shouldn't have seen or read. And the worst part is that I am not alone. We live in a culture that encourages sex education to such an extent that innocence is no longer there. It is this bottomless moral abyss we are sinking into and there is nothing between it and us.

The other day, I went on a spree of cartoon watching, which I thought was perhaps the safest thing to see on the box. Every other cartoon I saw had to have the hero with a girl, even if the hero was an animal! Kids watch this. They absorb it.

We don't give them enough credit, but, they are smart. It's about time we learnt that. And, high time we became smarter.

These same children grow up into teenagers, cultivated with that message that love's not all bad. And, if you couple that with the sex 'awareness' education that they receive at school, you can pretty much calculate the whole equation of what is happening to our youth today.

This is not an exaggeration, as most parents are probably thinking right now. It is not uncommon to find, in Muslim societies, girls or boys standing outside the masjid or in Islamic conventions with the sole purpose of flirting with those of the opposite sex. And, in Muslim countries, where that would be considered a taboo to be done in public, just visit chat-rooms and the filthy talk going on there should convert you to my belief.

Parents, I am a teenager. I know. Your children are not those ingenuous young babies of yours anymore. In those same bodies and under those innocent faces, there is a soul, a mind that you just may not recognize if you look deep enough.

They are changing, not just physically but mentally as well. The problem is that while physical change may or may not require that much of your concern the mental picture they have of the whole world, es-

pecially love, surely necessitates at least some intervention.

Alright, so I am not suggesting you sneak behind your teenager's back, rummaging his drawers for anything incriminating or have a panic attack because your daughter seems to be acting a bit suspiciously tonight. Just keep the channel open, give them some space and make sure they know they are welcome to ask you anything they may be confused about. If, however, you do spot that they are going in the wrong direction, a little bit of confrontation will be necessary. Yet, make sure it does not go violent; be stern, but loving, disciplined but open. Do not shout at or blame them at the first instant. Reason with them and show them you think they are mature enough to talk to them. Let them know the limits and why. Study the Qur'an with them; discuss hadith relating to your subject. Give examples from the Companions' lives. Most of all, remind them that even if you are not around, Allah is All-Watchful of everything they do.

Here is another tip from the other side of the generation gap: perhaps the worst chastisement for a lost teenager is his parents telling him they trust in him, when he knows he is betraying them and doing something wrong. The most sickening feeling for a young girl is when her mother and father tell her they are proud of her, when she is completely aware of all her sins, day in and day out. Parents, this is one of your best weapons; use it sincerely and aim it well.

Oh, and a note to those youth who are reading this—yeah, so I know you are fuming and seething. Well, I am not that self-righteous snob you think. I never said I did not do anything wrong ever or that Satan

never pulled me away from the right path. I mean, who has-n't fantasized about that perfect man, one's very own prince charming? Who has not dreamed of a strong, caring, popular, rich, religious and handsome guy to, one day, be hers? But the moment we take that fantasy further, attempting to turn it into a reality, thinking there is actually an impeccable man out there or chatting to strangers on the Net to find the love of your life or going out on dates to bring yourself closer to a man you call your boyfriend; that is when we should realize that we are running after nothing but a pipe dream. We cannot find happiness and love through wrong, and after all these years, if there is one thing I have learnt, it is that every time I did something wrong, I felt it. And I know you do too. Deep down in my heart that I thought had died a long time ago, there would be this nagging feeling; something tugging me, as if telling me that all I need to do is say I am sorry to Allah and beg Him to forgive me. Because I know, that if He lets it go, there is nothing better for me in the whole universe, not a guy, not a date, not an anniversary and certainly not love.

Love is a tricky thing—infatuating and wild. Who doesn't want it? Islam does not tell us to hate love. Just to make sure we do it in the right way - through marriage. In that, there will be love and satisfaction to a degree you can never otherwise experience. At the end of the day, though, a fairytale ending is not really our purpose in life now, is it?

Beautified for men is the love of things they covet; women... This is the pleasure of the present world's life; but Allah has the excellent return (Paradise with flowing rivers, etc.) with Him." [13:14]

The Mediator

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jeelani (ra)

The mediator is essential. Ask your Lord for a physician who can treat the illnesses of your hearts, a healer who can heal you, a guide who can guide you and take you by the hand. Draw near to those whom He has brought near to Him, His elite, the ushers of His nearness, the keepers of His door. You have consented to serving your lower selves and pursuing your passions and natural inclinations. You work hard to fully satisfy and satiate your lower selves in this world, although this is something that you will never achieve. You keep to this state hour after hour, day after day, month after month, and year after year, until you find that death has suddenly come to you and you cannot release yourselves from its grip.

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is reported to have said:

“In every craft seek the expertise of its experts.”

Worshipping is a craft, and its experts are those whose deeds are righteous; those who are knowledgeable of the Law and have put it into practice; those who have bidden farewell to all creatures after knowing them; those who have run away from their lower selves, their possessions, their children, and everything other than their Lord (mighty and glorified is He) on the feet of their hearts and their innermost beings. Their bodies are in populated places,

in the midst of the creatures; but their hearts are in the wilderness and deserts. They keep to this until their hearts grow and their wings strengthen and fly to heaven. Their spiritual aspirations ascended, so their hearts flew up and reached the True One (mighty and glorified is He). Thus, they became among those about whom Allah (mighty and glorified is He) has said:

“And in Our sight they are among the righteous elect” (38.47).

You have this world in your hearts. You have acts of disobedience in your hearts. Let me take charge of you to cleanse and purify you with drinks I offer you. The drinks that I give you are pious restraint, renunciation, piety, faith, certitude, knowingness, Knowledge, forgetting everything, and being in a state of extinction with respect to everything. After reaching this state, existence through your Lord (mighty and glorified is He), nearness to Him, and remembrance of Him will come to you. When all of this has become true of someone, he becomes a sun, moon, and guide for the creatures — taking them by their hands from the river of this world to the shore of the hereafter. Woe to you! You depend exclusively on your opinion and say: “What do I do with the company of the jurisprudents and scholars?” You think you have been created only for earning worldly things, eating, drinking, and having sexual

intercourse . Repent and return before the Angel of Death comes to you and takes you while you are amid the worst of deeds. Everyone of you is told to observe the commandments and prohibitions and endure with patience whatever destiny brings.

Moses (AS) came to his people carrying the Torah which contained the commandments and prohibitions. They said to him: "We will not accept what you say unless we see Allah's face and hear His speech." He said to them: "He has not shown His face to me so how would He show it to you?" They replied: "If you do not show us His face and let us hear His speech, we will not accept His words." Therefore, Allah (mighty and glorified is He) revealed to Moses (AS) the following: "Tell them if they want to hear My speech, they must fast for three days, and on the fourth day purify themselves and dress up in new, clean clothes, then bring them to hear My speech." Moses told them that, so they did so. Then they came to the place on the mountain where Moses used to privately converse with His Lord (mighty and glorified is He). Moses had chosen seventy men from the scholars and ascetics of his people . Then the True One (mighty and glorified is He) addressed them, and they were all thunderstruck, with Moses (prayer and peace be on our Prophet and on him) remaining alone. He said, "O Lord! You have killed the elite of my nation," and he wept. Allah responded to his weeping with mercy and revived them. They stood on their feet and said: "O Moses, we do not have the capacity to hear the speech of Allah (high is He), so be the mediator between us and Him!"

Thus, Allah spoke to Moses who, in

turn, enabled his people to hear Him by repeating His words. Moses could hear the speech of Allah (mighty and glorified is He) because of the strength of his faith and the realization of his obedience and servitude, whereas they failed to hear Him because of the weakness of their faith. If they had accepted from him what was brought to them of the Torah, had acted with obedience on the commandments and prohibitions, had kept to good manners, had not tried a test, and had not dared to say what they said, they would have been able to hear the speech of Allah (mighty and glorified is He).

Carrying Stories

Nabi (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) said: "No one from my companions should convey to me anything regarding anyone, for verily I like to come out to you in a condition that I have a clean heart." (Sunan Abi Dawood)

Our Nabi (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) was cautious with regards to the stories reaching him regarding his companions. Today, let alone entertaining stories, many a time we are tempted to search and dig into the affairs of others. We need to remind ourselves that being human beings, our hearts are extremely sensitive. At times, all it takes is a single word and our heart turns away from a person and despises him/her, whereas the word may have been conveyed to us in the wrong manner and completely out of context.

In the Name of Allah

Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani

A hadith of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) reads:

“Every act not initiated with Bismillah is incomplete.”

The holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) laid stress on initiating every mentionable act even eating, drinking, mounting, writing etc., with the name of Allah. Apparently, it is only a small act which, considered as customary, is often neglected, but in essence the objective behind it is to invigorate the basic mode of thinking. It is the affirmation of such an essence which when kept in view not only changes ones approach towards the matters of life but also managing its limitless aspects. It is a proclamation that nothing, not even an atom, in this universe moves without Allah’s will. In his practical life man is decreed to adopt materialistic means but neither have these means come into existence themselves not can they, of their own, possess power to do any job. In fact the Creator of these means and the one who, after putting effectiveness in them to bring forth the resultant effect, is someone else.

A simple example of this goes: Often we drink water without any serious consideration. A casual observer at the

most thinks about the sources from which it has reached him. But how it reached him from these sources; how many forces Allah has put into the service of quenching man’s thirst; what kind of wonderful and impeccable system has been put in place?, only a few think about it.

Allah has kept in stock vast reserves of water in the shape of oceans, and to save it from rotting has firstly made it saline and then continuously flowing. Further, apart from the fact that thousands of animals die within it every day, it never rots. Since it was not possible for man to benefit directly from the sea water owing to its unpalatable taste, Allah, on the one hand, evaporated into the air and installed such an automatic plant therein which continuously turns this sour water sweet without any human effort or financial aid; and on the other hand, by turning the evaporated water into cloud formation made a free air cargo service through which these heavy water tanks fly hundreds and thousands of miles to supply sweetened water to various part of earth.

Since it was neither possible for man to bear continuous cloudy weather and rains nor has he the power to store water for months together, so Allah’s wis-

dom and power made the arrangement of showering huge amount of water and snow onto the mountains and store it there in the form of glaciers. This real purpose of this heart engaging cold storage system which looks catchy to the heart, is to serve as a resource for quenching our thirst. Further, man was not put into trouble of bringing water from glaciers to satisfy his needs, but the sun's heat was put to service of melting down the glaciers and water was made to pass through rivers, streams and such underground pipe lines wherefrom man could dig it out anywhere. No human thought or arrangement is involved in this process whatsoever. The only job man has to do is to take the amount of water he needs from these streams or from under the ground. Though such an endeavour is limited and small in comparison to the natural and universal system, still he has to toil hard, spend money and take help of other resources. Every single sip of water that we drink in a twinkle reaches us only after such a long process in which oceans, clouds, mountains, sun, winds, streams, earth and its hidden resources, and lastly man and his manufactured tools, have all played their part.

The essence behind the Prophet's (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) teaching of spelling Bismillah before drinking water is that prior to consuming this blessing of Allah one may, for a moment, think about Allah's kindness of putting into man's service innumerable powers to make it reach his lips. Accepted that man also has put into his effort and employed different types of tools for it, but both have access up to a

certain limit only; after that, such a wonderful and sense striking mechanism is in place which is not only away from the human involvement but beyond their thought and imagination. Further, a common person has no concern other than that he drinks a glass of water to satisfy his thirst, the notion where it goes after passing his throat and what kind of services it performs in his body seldom occurs to him. A little attention and it will dawn upon him that every single part of his body needs water without which it will cease to function properly. Since we cannot ascertain the depletion of the required level of water in our body, Allah, in shape of thirst, installed a commonly understandable meter which goads every sensible, insensible, young, old and even an infant, to look for water. It is not only the requirement of his lips and throat but in reality it is needed beyond this point. It is the need of whole human body and it reaches to every part struggling to keep itself functional. Ultimately, only that amount of water is retained by the body which it needs and the rest is extracted out flushing with it the residual harmful elements.

This is a simple example of Allah's blessings on us. On a proper introspection it will become manifest that similar type of organized system is working behind every single favour bestowed upon us by Allah. The involvement of materialistic tools and human effort is limited only to a small circumference and once you creep outside it even the minutest of occurrence is engulfed by the limitless wisdom of divine system where human effort, resources, planning etc., play no part. Usually, since

man's limited vision can't look beyond the materialistic mechanism that is why he is captivated by its functioning. The purpose of sending the Prophets is to free man from this narrow vision, and unveil before him a broader view and deeper thought.

By teaching us to initiate every mentionable work with Bismillah, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has tried to connect man to his Lord in every single aspect of his life. This is because when a person relates his every act subordinate to the will of Allah, and time and again acknowledges his powerlessness and inability then slowly and slowly this notion gets rooted into his heart that his status in this world isn't that of a lord or creator but a simple slave and a created being of the Lord of the worlds. This sense of servitude creates in him humility, lowliness, sympathy and supportiveness and saves him from haughtiness, pride, callousness, frivolity etc.

History is witness to the fact that the instances of repression and/or oppression in this world have taken place only when man, by forgetting his reality, cuts relations with his Creator; further, by branding the favours bestowed upon him by Allah the miracles of his own power, he considers himself the real owner. But the one who, at each and every step, spells out the name of Allah and humbly relates the favours upon him solely from Allah, never represses or oppresses any created being in any form.

Bismillah or '*In the name of Allah*', is apparently a small word but there is a limitless universe of essence and facts hidden behind it. By guiding a common man

towards initiating every act with Bismillah, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has tried to divert his attention towards becoming such a human being who wants to live in this world not like a Pharaoh or Nimrud, but a simple slave of Allah so that his every act turns into Ibadah.

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fers to the treatment of slaves, it nevertheless contains some very pertinent directives for employers. Your employees are your human brothers who deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. Pay them enough so that they are able to maintain themselves with dignity. Do not impose on them so much work, or so long working hours that may be overbearing.

Treat them, as you yourself would like to be treated.

(Jamiat-ul-Ulema, KZN)

Cont'd from page 2

erate on their part to project this world view in a negative view.

The holy Quran is the embodiment of Islam's worldview, and the only solution to the prevalent bias against Muslims and Islam is to spread the word of God. The Quran is the best introduction to the worldview Islam symbolizes. Islam throughout its history has espoused the most creative, scientific, tolerant and dignified culture witnessed everywhere from Spain to India and beyond.

An aberrational individual can never be the criterion to indict a whole worldview.

Abid Ahmad

The Distinguished Researcher and Litterateur

Mawlana Manazir Ahsan Gilani (ra) is often referred to as Muhaqqiq al-Islam (the researcher of Islam), Sultan al-Qalam (King of the Pen), and Mutakallim al-Millah (The Philosopher of the Nation).

He was born on the 9th of Rabi' al-Awwal 1310 AH (September 1892) in a village called Gilan in Bihar (present-day India). His father's name was Abul Khair. Their Arab [ancestors] reached the Indian subcontinent about three centuries ago via Iran and finally settled in a village which came to be known as Gilan. His elementary education was at home and then he stayed in Tonk for six years studying under the revered Mawlana Syed Hakim Barakat Ahmad (ra). Thereafter, he was admitted in Darul Uloom Deoband (1331-1332 AH) and studied Bukhari and Tirmidhi from Shaykh al-Hind Mawlana Mahmud al-Hasan (ra) and also accepted Shaykh al-Hind as his spiritual mentor. He also studied Muslim from 'Allamah Mawlana Anwar Shah al-Kashmiri (ra). His other teachers at Darul Uloom Deoband include: Mawlana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani (ra), Mufti Aziz al-Rahman Usmani (ra), Mawlana Habib al-Rahman Usmani (ra) and Mawlana Syed Asghar Hussain al-Deobandi (ra). While at Darul Uloom Deoband, he was noticed by his teachers to have special qualities

which [made him stand out] from the rest of the students.

After graduating from Darul Uloom Deoband in 1332 AH, he stayed in Deoband until 1338 AH working for the monthly organ Al-Qasim of the Darul Uloom. During this time his literary works such as Sawanih-e-Abu Zar Ghifari and Kynat-e-Ruhani made him famous amongst the academic and literary circles of the Ulama of the Indian subcontinent. The next twenty-five years of Mawlana Gilani's life were spent in Hyderabad (India), where he was the head of the religious department in Osmania University. During this time, thousands of people benefited from his precious personality and matchless knowledge. In 1368 AH, he retired from Osmania University and returned to his homeland of Gilan, where he devoted most of his time to writing.

Mawlana Gilani was a master of the Urdu language and a talented and prolific writer. He enlightened the hearts and minds of thousands with his unique style of writing and speech. After reading his first book Sawanih-e-Abu Zar Ghifari, Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanawi (ra) said: "The writer of this book will prove to be a great researcher of Islam."

His most famous works are :

Al-Nabi al-Khatim
 Musalmano ka Nizame Taleem-o-Tarbiyat
 Islami Muashiyaat
 Imam Abu Hanifa ki Siyasi Zindagi
 Tadween-e-Hadith
 Al-Din Al-Qayyim
 Tadween-e-Quran
 Tadween-e-Fiqh
 Muqalat-e-Ahsani
 Tafsir-e-Surah Kahf
 Tazkara-e-Shah Waliullah
 Musalmano ki Firqabandio ka Afsana
 Rahmatulil Alamin

His last book was the biography of the founder of Darul Uloom Deoband, Mawlana Muhammad Qasim Nanotwi (ra) called Sawanih-e-Qasmi.

Mawlana Qari Muhammad Tayyib (ra) says: "When I requested him (Mawlana Gilani) to write the biography of Mawlana Qasim Nanotwi, he accepted it very happily and he replied to me: 'My academic career began with Al-Qasim (the monthly organ of Darul Uloom Deoband) and looks like my academic career will end on Al-Qasim (meaning Mawlana Qasim Nanotwi).' Indeed this is what happened, [as] he had only written five pages of the fourth volume of this book when his temporary life ended on Al-Qasim."

Shaykh Abu 'I-Hasan 'Ali al-Nadwi (ra) says: "Mawlana Gilani was an organization in himself. He was the scholar of scholars, writer of writers, historian of historians, jurist of jurists, Muhaddith of Muhaddithin, Mufassir of Mufassirin, and researcher of researchers."

Indeed Allah had blessed him with all these qualities. He belonged to that group of Muslim elites who revolutionized

the Muslim thought and upheld the truths of Islam in the Indian subcontinent at such a time when both the British and the Hindus were against Islam and Muslims. His writings are a proof of his unrivaled scholarship and knowledge. The Ulama of Islam gave the masses knowledge of the revelation and the Sunnah through their writings and speeches and this knowledge would strengthen their faith and conviction and would serve as their most powerful weapon against the internal (nafs [ego] and shaytan) and external enemies of Islam.

Shaykh Abu 'Hasan 'Ali al-Nadwi (ra) further says: "It can be said without exaggeration that finding a like of him (Mawlana Gilani) in the present-day Muslim World in respect to his broadmindedness, enormity of study, depth and vastness of knowledge, and piety is very hard."

Ulama of Islam meet the challenges posed by the demurrers of Islam by their heavenly knowledge. They are the inheritors of the Prophets of Allah, who used to respond to the challenges of people by means of miracles. Likewise the Ulama defend Islam by means of their knowledge which they inherited from the Prophets. Knowledge is the Karamah, or miracle, of the Ulama. Ulama have always fortified Islam and did Jihad against all innovations and misconceptions with their pens and moving speeches, which illuminated the hearts of the Muslim masses and safeguarded them from falling in the traps set by the enemies of Islam.

One of the misconceptions that the strayed tried to create in the minds of the Muslims was to create doubt in the authenticity of the Hadiths of Rasulullah

(Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). They are called “Munkarin al-Hadith” (those who deny the Hadiths or their authenticity). This chaos not only confused the common Muslims but also posed a threat to the devoted Muslims. The Ulama of Deoband combated this fitna with full force and opposition. Mawlana Gilani’s book Tadween-e-Hadith (The Compilation of Hadith) has defended the Hadiths of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) to such an extent that after a Muslim studies this book, not only his misconceptions will be erased but he will have plenty of proofs to establish the legitimacy of the sanctified sayings of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

Imam Syed ‘Ataullah Shah Bukhari (ra) says about this book: “When I studied Tadween-e-Hadith of Mawlana Manazir Ahsan Gilani, condition of wajd and jazb came over me. When Hazrat Gilani was writing this book, I thought as if all curtains between him and Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) were lifted and as if he was writing the words of Rasulullah himself. Tadween-e-Hadith is the last complete and successful thing against the fitna of Hadith denial.”

Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanawi (ra) says about Mawlana Gilani (ra): “All of the manazir (academic arguments) of Manazir Ahsan are ahsan (excellent)”.

“He is Sufficient for Me”

When Nabi Ebrahim (‘AS) left his wife Haajar (‘AS) with her infant child, Ismaa‘eel (AS), in the barren land of Makkah Mukarramah as per the command of Allah, his wife asked him: “O Ebrahim! Where are you going and leaving us behind in this valley in which there is neither company nor anything else?” Ebrahim (AS) did not look at her or reply to her. After repeating the question a few times she asked: “Has Allah commanded you to do this?” When he replied in the affirmative she exclaimed: “Then he will not allow us to perish.” (Sabeeh Bukhaari) In some narrations these words also appear: “He is sufficient for me” and “I am pleased with Allah”. Thereafter her supplies were depleted and she ran between Safa and Marwah as a result of which Jibreel (‘AS) descended to unearth the well of Zamzam. When he asked her: “To who has your husband entrusted you?” she replied: “To Allah.” Then Jibreel (‘AS) exclaimed: “He has entrusted you to that Being Who is sufficient.” (Fathul Baari)

Lessons:

1. *When our gaze is constantly fixed on Allah and we have deep conviction in Him, we will be prepared to make every sacrifice for His sake and we will not become victims of depression and despondency even in the most challenging of situations.*
2. *The hallmark in the life of Haajar (AS) which gave her that level of acceptance in the court of Allah was her submission to His commands. She did not look for any short-cuts, rephrase the words, re-interpret the meanings and alter the context of deen to suit her convenience. Doing this would be equal to putting the cart before the horse instead of the horse before the cart.*

The Place of Charity in Islam

Hasan Laidi

I was once asked by a young man what does giving money, a smile, a good word, and removing a harmful item from the road all have in common? The major disasters that happened around the world, in the past months made me think of this young man and the interesting question is posed to me. I replied, without hesitation, with the following answer: sadaqah. Sadaqah is a term related to the concept of charitable giving, but far exceeding it in its aims, means and impact.

Although charitable giving is a common value in all religions, sadaqah is so firmly and deeply emphasized and encouraged in the Islamic Law that it surpasses the role that giving plays in all of them. For example, one form of sadaqah, the zakah (the annual obligatory alms), is the third of the pillars comprising the foundation of Islam, without which, one *cannot* be a Muslim.

Textual evidence of this, testifying to the importance of sadaqah and indicating its types can be found abundantly within the Qur'an and the Sunnah. The following verse, for instance, one's faith and sincerity are indicated by the person's sincere generosity, "You will not attain piety until you spend of what you cherish; and whatever you spend Allah knows it well." [3:92).

Our beloved Prophet, Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam, set an example in spending that cannot be matched; we know that he was more generous than all people. In fact, he was more generous in the month of Ramadhan than all other months, and in that month, Ibn Abbas said, "He used to be more generous than the blowing wind." (Bukhari) He also encouraged his Companions to give selflessly, advising them that they should never fear poverty because of giving (as he told Bilal the Abyssinian), "Spend O Bilal and tear no decrease (in your wealth) from the Lord of the Throne." And, it is this very message that has been carried down to Muslims through the ages.

Money collected from sadaqah through the institution of Baitul Mal (the House of Finance) was, at one time, the main source of funding for the Muslim country and for its needy citizens - both Muslims and Non-Muslim. But, after losing the Baitul Mal system in modern times, Muslims' spirit of sadaqah has dwindled so much that some are not paying even the obligatory zakah. This must change, for a Muslim will not be true to his beliefs unless he gives sadaqah abundantly, sincerely and feel the joy of the act itself. Giving indicates having trust in Allah and certainty in

one's beliefs. The Prophet, Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam, said, "Miserliness and faith can never co-exist in the believer's heart," (Nasa'i) and "Be aware of miserliness for it destroyed those before you; it lead them to hold back (sadaqah), to cut kinfolk relationships and tempted them to lewdness. (Abu Dawud).

While it is true that we have seen a recent revival in the spirit of giving amongst Muslims, especially aiding those in need due to wars or manmade and natural disasters. We must not be satisfied and stop there, as there is so much more to do. We have a true personal challenge ahead of us that we, as individuals, must rise to over-

come. Our challenge is to continue this spirit of giving all year round, and not be moved only in response to an incident or event.

This proactive approach is rooted in the Islamic concept of sadaqah jariyah or an ongoing and continuous charity—it is the real gift that keeps on giving, even long after we have passed away. Our individual goal should be to keep our eyes on the prize (Jannah) and the door to our giving hearts wide open, because not everyone in need will come knocking, it takes constant effort to seek them out and extend a hand. And, for someone in need, sometimes a helping hand is all it takes.

GREAT JUSTICE BY A KIND JUDGE

An old woman was held guilty of shoplifting at a grocery store. The case was presented in front of the judge. In her defense, the lady confessed her crime and said she had stolen grocery items like rice and some pulses as she was very poor and her only son had died in an accident leaving behind his wife and three children who were dying of hunger.

The owner of the grocery store insisted that she be punished so that others learn a lesson not to shoplift.

The judge was a very kind and honest person. After going through the documents he looked up and told the poor old lady, "I am sorry you have committed a crime no matter what the situation a crime is a crime so you are liable to criminal charges."

The poor lady had to pay a fine of 100 and if she could not pay she would be sent to jail for 1 year according to the law.

The judge then took his hat off and put 10 in it, turned towards the audience in the court and said, "Each one of you present in the court is fined 5 for letting a whole family starve until this poor old lady is forced to steal to feed her daughter-in-law and her grandchildren. The clerk will now collect the fines from all of you present."

The clerk brought the collection which was about 300 to the judge including the fine from the owner of the store. The fine of 100 was paid off and the judge gave the old lady remaining money so she could take care of her family until she got a job somewhere.

Moral of the Story: Justice is a human right and kindness is humanity. So always be kind and compassionate along with being just.

Crime and Punishment

Syed Iqbal Zaheer

***Why is it, it is often asked, that those who do not worship One God should stay in Hell-fire forever, as promised in the Qur'an. Isn't that unreasonable?
Although this is a common doubt, it has some simple answers.***

At the start, we must understand that the one who makes the rules, prescribes the punishments. In the USA, the state has made a law that no man will marry two women at a time. It is the USA then, which decides the punishment for those who break the law. It is not for any other to decide the punishment. For example, Saudi Arabia cannot determine the kind, level and extent of punishment for an American having broken the law. If indeed, Saudi Arabia is made the judging authority, the man who broke the law could be rewarded for solving two women's problem. For, there are several million women in the USA who will certainly remain single all their lives. Several millions are to join these millions in coming years, a trend which, like everything in the West, shows a graph line rising upward. The problem is so acute, that even one or two high level scientific magazines have made efforts to highlight it. So, a Saudi court might actually reward an American who has two wives. But did the Saudis make the law against polygamy that they should be judging those who break the law?

Of course not. It is Americans who made the law, and it is they who will suggest a punishment for the defaulters.

Take another example at a simpler scale. A father tells his son, "If you drank wine again, I will throw you out of this house, and will never let you in." Now, it is the father who made the rule. It is he who prescribes the punishment. It is not for his neighbor to tell him, "Come on now. Are you barring your son forever? This is just not reasonable. A week or two yes, but forever?" The man might of course say in reply, "Who are you? I know what I am doing."

Similarly, it is Allah who made the law that no one shall worship any other besides Him. And it is He who prescribed the punishment. To be sure, it is He who will judge those who will break the rule: not the Americans, not the Saudis.

Now, someone might be asked, "What's the wisdom?" The answer is, when you ask for wisdom, you have already objected to the law and the Lawmaker. You could be reminded, "Who are you?" After all, Allah is prescribing punishment for a

crime against Him, and not against you. His right is taken away, and so He will deal with the criminals the way He thinks fit. Lest we forget, it is His creations He is dealing with, and not our creations. So, where do we figure in?

By way of a second answer we might state that seriousness of crimes are judged by the intentions behind them. If you shot a gun at a deer in the forest, but accidentally killed a man somewhere in the bushes, you have committed a crime and deserve some sort of punishment. But if you aimed a gun at a man and killed him, intentionally, then the punishment will be different. You might have to lose your own life. So the size of the crime does not matter. In both cases you killed a man. It is your intention that matters.

Now, God has declared that someone who has known Him as One God, refuses to acknowledge Him, but instead, worships other suggested deities, then he will stay in the Fire forever. Why forever? It is because of the intention. If the criminal had lived forever, he would have worshipped false gods forever. Indeed, till his final breathe he will remain on polytheism, and might spell the name of a deity as his last word.

We have a good example in the nation of Nuh. They were polytheists. So Allah raised a Prophet amongst them. The following verses give the story in brief (23: 23-25): "And We did send Nuh to his people. He said, 'O my people! Worship Allah. You have no god other than He. Will you not then fear?' Said the chiefs of the unbelievers of his people, 'This is no more than a man like yourselves, who seeks to gain su-

periority over you. Had Allah willed, He could have surely sent down angels. We have never heard of this among our ancestors of old. Surely, he is naught but a man bedeviled; so wait on him for a while." (That is, wait until either he gives up his madness, or meets with his death).

In the above lines one can notice that the polytheists did not say, "Nuh is mistaken. We worship One God alone through the worship of the deities." Nor did they say, "What One God is this man speaking about? Aren't there several?" But rather, they simply refused to accept any criticism. In any case, Nuh warned them that they faced Allah's ire for worshipping idols. But his people would not give up. On the other hand, Nuh also did not give up. He continued with his efforts. For how long was it? For 950 years. Now, his people did not say after first hundred years of Nuh's warning: "Come on boys. It's been a century since we have been worshipping idols. Let us now devote the next century to One God." They did not. They did not give up idol-worship even after 950 years. Had Nuh remained warning them for 9500 years, they would have still remained on polytheism for 9500 years. Had he remained with them for eternity, they would have remained with idol-worship for eternity. So, why should they not remain in the Fire for eternity?

Finally, when Allah says in the Qur'an that the polytheists will stay in the Fire forever, then either you believe in the promise, or you do not. If you believe, then you should not be worshipping idols. If you do not, then what does it matter what Allah says about it in the Qur'an?

Source: youngmuslimdigest

Golden Advice

Imam Harith Muhasibi (ra)

It used to be said, "It is sufficient proof that a person's character is flawed that he finds in others the same faults he himself possesses, yet they are hidden from him; that he hates in people things he himself does; that he offends those sharing his company, or that he discusses other people's business when it is not his concern."

Use your intellect to worship God by not being obsessed with your plans.

Rely on God, that He will ward off from you [the harm] contained in the divine ordainment. Sayyiduna Ali (RA) said:

"O son of Adam, do not delight in wealth, and do not be overwhelmed with grief when you are afflicted with poverty. Do not be saddened by tribulations."

Do not be overly pleased by easy times. Verily, gold is tested for its purity by fire. likewise, a righteous servant is tested by tribulations. you will never attain what you desire except by leaving off what you have a strong craving for. you will not reach the level you anticipate except through persevering with what is displeasing to you.

Exert your utmost in guarding the obligations God has made incumbent upon you.

Be pleased with what God has desired for you. Ibn Mas'ud (RA) said;

"Be pleased with what God has measured out for you and you will be the wealthiest of people. avoid what God has forbidden for you and you will be the most impeccable of people. perform the obligatory acts God, most High, has imposed upon you and you will be the most devout of people."

Do not complain against one who is most merciful to you, to one who is merciless towards you.

Rely upon God, and you will be amongst the elite. 'Ubada bin al-Samit (RA) said to his son:

"O my son! despair of the idea that people can help you in any way, for this is true wealth. beware of craving [people's possessions] and seeking their help to meet your needs, for this is true poverty."

When you pray, let it be the prayer of one bidding farewell.

Know that you will not experience the sweetness of faith until you believe in the Ordainment of God— its good and evil. Speak the truth and act on it, God will increase you in light and heart-vision.

Do not be like one who commands the truth, yet he is far from it, you are then forced to confess your sins, and are exposed to the anger of God. God says:

Grievously hated is it with God that you say what you do not do. (61:3)

The messenger of God (Sallallahu Alaihi

Wasallam)

“One who gives advice but is not admonished himself; who pulls other people back from ruination but he himself is not pulled back; and who forbids wrong, but he fails to heed his own admonition will be disappointed when he meets God.”

Only keep the company of intelligent, God-fearing people. Only sit in the presence of insightful, scholarly people.

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was asked:

“Which of our companions are best?” He said, “One whose appearance reminds you of the God, and whose speech increases you in knowledge, and whose actions remind you of the hereafter.”

Humble yourself before the truth and make yourself subservient unto it.

Constantly remember God and you will obtain nearness to Him.

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:

“Those who will be sitting in the company of God on the day of Judgment, are the subservient, humble, fearful people who remember God much.”

Be sincere with God and His messenger, and give sincere advice to the believers. Consult those who fear God in your affair. God mentions, rather, of His servants, the knowledgeable one's fear Him. (35:38)

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:

“The religion is - giving sincere advice.”

Similarly, one should be sincere to the leaders of the Muslims by giving them sincere counsel.

Know that the one who has given

you sincere advice has displayed love for you. Conversely, one who has displayed a false face to you has betrayed you. One who does not accept your sincere advice is not your brother. Sayyiduna Umar bin al-Khattab (RA) said:

“There is no good in people who do not give sincere advice, and there is no good in people that do not love those who offer sincere advice.”

Prefer the truth in every situation and you will benefit.

Move away from excessive extremes and you will be safe.

“Verily, honesty leads to righteousness and righteousness leads to the pleasure of God, most High. Lying leads to licentiousness and licentiousness brings about the anger of God.”

Sayyiduna Abdullah ibn 'Abbas (RA) said:

“Do not talk about things that do not concern you, and leave much of what does concern you. and do not argue with fools or clement people. Only mention your brother in ways that you would love to be mentioned.”

Undertake the action of a person who knows that he will be rewarded with good, and that he will be taken to task for his transgressions.

If anyone performs the night 'Ishā prayer in congregation, it is as though he has spent half the night standing in prayer, and if anyone performs the morning (Fajr) prayer in congregation, it is as though he has spent the whole night in prayer (Muslim).

Women's Mosque?

Women's Empowerment?

Khalid Baig

The Women's Mosque of America has started operations in Los Angeles. It is not a mosque per se, but the name of a non-profit organization. It began with holding female only Jumuah prayers, in an old synagogue with Stars of David etched on the stained glass windows. The decision to use this venue was made to "promote peace."

Creating a separate space for Muslim women is a noble idea. Unfortunately the organizers chose the one event for this project for which it has no basis in the Shariah. Muslim women are not required to offer Jumuah. They are allowed but not required. (They can offer the Dhuhr prayer instead.) Further by consensus of scholars of all schools, Muslim women are not allowed to lead Jumuah prayers or deliver Jumuah Khutbahs. Not surprisingly the project met with disapproval from the great majority of local Muslim scholars who objected exactly on this ground. The women who prayed there were advised to still offer their Dhuhr prayer as the prayer obligation remained undischarged.

But there is a larger issue that has not been discussed. One wonders what the officers of this corporation would think of establishing a women only school or women only college. Obviously if women need ac-

cess to Islamic education in an exclusive space, then would not a daily regular school be far superior to a twenty minute sermon delivered once a month? Alas their future programs make no mention of such a plan. On the contrary other programs will be coed.

It is also interesting to see the media reaction. This was a media event and all the big names were there. And they were excited. From the Los Angeles Times to the Wall Street Journal, from ABC news to Fox News, everyone praised this as a historic event. It was considered a key development in empowerment of Muslim women. "Maybe we could get a female Luther out of this," Los Angeles Times reported an excited congregant as saying.

The question that we must ask is what the media reaction would be if the organizers had opened a women's only college instead. Would that be considered a historic event that would open the doors to scholarship for Muslim women? Would that be praised by the same media as a space "where Muslim women can 'bring their whole self,' learn more about their faith and foster bonds of sisterhood?"

It is more likely that this would be ridiculed as a step backwards, as another

sign of oppression of Muslim women.

Why? Why the same act is praiseworthy in one case and blameworthy in the other? The answer may be that it is flouting the traditions and well established Islamic teachings in one case and complying with them in the other. The first act is therefore considered empowering and the other enslaving. The hypocrisy has a rationale!

It may be therefore empowering to deconstruct the notion of "women's empowerment" itself.

The sad fact is that we are caught up in the discourse of empowerment. Everyone these days is for "women's empowerment." And it is taboo to question this dogma. But let us ask, where does this word come from? Does it come from the Islamic discourse or its textual sources? The Qur'an does not talk about "women's empowerment." Neither does Hadith. Neither does the Islamic literature produced by authorities and scholars of varied persuasions over the centuries. If in doubt please tell me what is the Arabic term for "empowerment" and where do you find it in the Islamic textual sources?

Let us face it: It is a foreign term. And like other foreign terms it has to be examined carefully before we start using it and submit to its dictates.

The term as used today comes from the feminist discourse. And it brings with it the entire feminist agenda. Simply stated, the ideology of women's empowerment means establishing an absolute-no-holds-barred-equality between men and women. Dozens of international organizations are devoted to promoting "women's empowerment" and use the term interchangeably

with "gender equality" and "gender mainstreaming." At a more basic level it means fighting for your rights. As American feminist Gloria Steinem said, "Power can be taken, but not given. The process of the taking is empowerment in itself."

Let us contrast this with Islamic history.

The pre-Islamic Meccan society, like all Jahiliyya societies then and now, had its share of the weak and the downtrodden. Women were oppressed. So were slaves. Anyone belonging to another tribe was discriminated against. Did the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) go to them and say I have come to empower you? Did he invite them to start an empowerment movement? If he did, the seerah and Hadith books do not record it. Rather his message to everyone was, "Become a believer and you will be successful." The promise was *falah*, the eternal and ultimate success, to be achieved through *iman* (faith) and *taqwa* (righteous action performed with the fear of displeasing Allah). To men and women, to slaves and masters, the rich and poor, Arabs and non-Arabs, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said one thing:

"O people, say there is no god but Allah and you will be successful."

Belief in Allah and submission to His commands were the road to *falah*."

The society that was so built did eliminate the injustices to the slaves and women and the poor and all the downtrodden people. But the path to that uplifting was not through the talk of empowerment. Rather it was through an exactly opposite strategy. Islam did not urge women to fight for their rights; it urged the men to discharge

their responsibilities toward the women, fearing Allah. It did not urge the poor to fight for their rights; it urged the wealthy to discharge their responsibilities toward the poor, fearing Allah. It also urged the women to discharge their responsibilities toward their husbands. In fact it changed the focus of everyone from their rights to their responsibilities. For in the Hereafter we'll be held accountable for our responsibilities, not our rights. If we were shortchanged on our rights here, we will be fully compensated there. But if we were negligent in discharging other's rights on us, we will have to pay heavily for it there. Needless to say, with everyone concerned with their responsibilities, the rights of the others are automatically secured. Further, with justice being a supreme goal of Islam, redressing injustices becomes everyone's job not just those of the victims. With this approach Islam obtained justice in the society but without the incessant friction and disharmony that is an essential result of an ongoing fight. It uplifted women without instituting a perpetual gender war. As Imam Zaid Shakir notes: "Islam has never advocated a liberationist philosophy."

The language of empowerment is diametrically opposed to it. It makes everyone focus on their rights, not their responsibilities. The battle cry is, watch out for yourself for no one else will. This then becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. With no one being primarily concerned with discharging their responsibilities, securing your rights becomes a lifelong struggle. You will only get those rights for which you fight. Hence the perpetual campaign for women's empowerment.

What has that led to? The exact opposite of what it aimed at. The empowerment rhetoric did not end exploitation of women; it actually has opened exciting new avenues for it. As Dr. Brooke Magnanti wrote in the Telegraph, "Too often the word is used as a smokescreen for increasing consumerism, a cousin of L'Oreal's 'because you're worth it' whereby you can presumably empower yourself by buying shoes and pretty little journals, which is somehow worthier than simply buying things because you need or like these things. Or worse still, by landing some 9-to-5 corporate grinding job."

But it has done much more. It has destroyed the home and family beyond recognition. Even more, it has drastically changed men and women. Here are the words of Father John McCloskey, a Catholic priest lamenting the disaster that this world has faced.

"There is something radically wrong with the family and the relationship between the sexes in the West as we rapidly approach the third millennium of the Christian era... Indeed it would be hard to find similar situations in history, unless it be the pre-Christian paganism of the Roman Empire (cf. St. Paul's Letter to the Romans I: 11-20) or the behavior of the barbarian hordes of central Asia as they poured into a weak and decadent empire... Today, in societies that are nominally Christian, we witness the phenomenon of women who do not act like women, nor men like men, nor families like families. Codes of moral behavior that have made the family the central unit of society and have been the "guardrails" of civilization for centuries have been discarded as anti-

quoted.”

If we blindly follow the talk of women’s empowerment, we will also be headed to this lizard’s hole. Or we can follow the path of falah shown by the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and say good-bye to the borrowed language and borrowed ideologies.

The Women’s Mosque organization was started by two ladies, a comedy writer and a lawyer, as a reaction to their “mistreatment” at some other mosque. The “mistreatment” consisted in somebody in that mosque gently pointing them upstairs to a separate area for women. They apparently thought that the separate upstairs space that had been provided was beneath them. One wonders if that is the attitude of a humble servant of God. In reaction they organized an event that violated the commands of the same God whom they so desperately wanted to serve. And they started a first ever “protest mosque.”

Among other firsts, it also encouraged women to “enter the mosque in the type and style of clothing in which they feel comfortable.” In other words it decreed that Islam does not prescribe any dress code for prayers. Anyone who thought otherwise was asked to keep their opinions to themselves. It asked that no woman should remind another woman to, say, cover her head while praying. If the mosque was a consecrated space which imposed its own rules of decorum and proper conduct, including dignified and modest attire, the “Women’s Mosque” had nothing to do with that.

Such is the tragedy when we become consumed by our desires. These ladies and their sympathizers would do well to

listen to the words of Imam Zaid Shakir: “Our fulfillment does not lie in our liberation, rather it lies in the conquest of our soul and its base desires. That conquest only occurs through our enslavement to God.”

The empowerment rhetoric did not end exploitation of women; it actually has opened exciting new avenues for it.

Does Islam ask the women to get sacred knowledge? Absolutely. And today, unlike the bleak picture painted by the marketing department of Women’s Mosque, women are very active in seeking religious knowledge. They are doing it from their homes over the phone and Internet; in gatherings arranged at private homes; in schools established for this purpose. And they are doing it in mosques as well. There are some institutions who have thousands of women studying with them from their homes. They are studying Arabic, Hadith, Fiqh, Qur’an, and so on. May Allah bless these efforts and multiply them. This is the right answer to the problem of women education. Not a Jumuah khutbah delivered by a woman once a month.

The organizers of the Women’s Mosque are right that for proper education women need a safe space where they are by themselves. Where they can discuss their problems freely, get inspired by other sisters, and seek both emotional and intellectual fulfillment from them. Where they do not have to act like men or compete with them. Where women can be women. If one is guided by Islamic teachings and not the talk of empowerment then one could easily see that it should lead to the development of female only schools, colleges, and youth groups.

Worker's Rights in Islam

We need to acknowledge the immeasurable contribution of 'labour' to the smooth functioning and prosperity of society; and we also need to pay tribute to the dignity and human worth of the 'labourer'.

As Muslims we need to look at how we fare as a society in the treatment of our workers. Islam spread to every corner of the globe because of the conduct that Muslims displayed. People were naturally attracted to Islam because of their close association and interaction with Muslims. We need to ask ourselves why do individuals who see how we pray, fast, live, etc., ... individuals who have virtually become part of the family still do not find reason to accept Islam.

Are we perhaps falling short in displaying justice, compassion and kindness in our dealings with them? Is our conduct turning them away from Islam?

Domestic Employees

The manner in which we address our domestics helps to develop their self-worth and confidence. It is improper to address them as "Boy" or "Girl." It is even more repugnant when the "Boy" or "Girl" is as old as our mothers or fathers.

The Holy Qur'an states:

"And neither shall you defame one another

nor insult one another by offensive names; evil is a name implying wickedness after one has attained to faith." (49:11)

Also:

"O you who believe! Spend on others out of the good things that you may have acquired, and out of that which We bring forth for you from the earth; and choose not for your spending the bad things, which you yourselves would not accept without averting your eyes in disdain. And know that Allah is self-sufficient, ever to be praised." (2:267)

Muslims are cautioned not to offer as charity things that they themselves would not like to receive. We need to guard against offering 'inferior acts of kindness' as tokens of appreciation and gratitude.

Mua'dhins

Our Mua'dhins are perhaps one of the most underrated people in our societies. They often work seven days a week, 365 days a year, and are in some instances housed in squalid conditions and paid meagre salaries. In some Masaajid, every Musalli feels that he has the right to instruct the Mua'dhin.

The Holy Qur'an states: "And who is better in speech than one who calls to

Allah and does righteous deeds and says:

"I am of those who submit." (41:33)

The Mua'dhin has a very noble and honoured status in the sight of Allah. He proclaims the greatness of Allah five times a day; he has the honour of caring for the House of Allah! Nabi SallAllahu 'alayhi wasallam has said:

"The Mua'dhins will be the proudest of people on the Day of Qiyamah." (Muslim)

Imaams/ Maktab Teachers/ Apas Muallimhs

Our Imaams and Teachers have dedicated their lives to fulfilling the mission of Nabi SallAllahu 'alayhi wasallam. They are regarded as the best of people by virtue of the vocation they pursue. Nabi SallAllahu 'alayhi wasallam has said: "The best of you are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it." Do we really hold them in esteem? Does our attitude reflect a sense of respect and admiration? Nabi SallAllahu 'alayhi wasallam has said:

"Verily from among the signs of the final hour are that the congregation will push each other forward since they will not find an Imaam who will lead them in prayer." (Ahmad)

Imaams from foreign countries and black ethnicity are subjected to some of the worst forms of exploitation. We have reports of Black Ulama being offered wages as Imaams of R800.00 a month excluding accommodation. We are prepared to spend millions on Masjids but we offer a pittance to those who serve the Masjid. This is a sad indictment against us.

Fundamental Principle

The Holy Qur'an states:

"O You who believe, do not consume your property among yourselves wrongfully, but let there be trade by mutual consent, and do not kill yourselves..." (4:29-30)

Believers are cautioned against exploitation of any kind, even if the other person being the weaker party agrees to such a deprivation or exploitation under the stress of circumstances. "Do not kill yourselves" refers to the eventual outcome of exploitation – It perpetuates a cycle of hatred, and anger, which will eventually rebound on the oppressors themselves. Exploitation of any kind is tantamount to self-destruction.

Mutual consent is the fundamental principle that forms the basis of employer/employee relations. This mutual consent has to take the form of an agreement or contract. The provisions of the contract must be based on justice, and compassion.

The contract from an Islamic perspective must include among other things:

- Description of the type of work
- Place of work
- Duration of contract
- Remuneration
- Ordinary hours and days of work
- Dignity of the Employees

"(They are) Your brethren whom Allah has placed in your custody. Let him who has been made custodian of his brother by Allah feed him from what he himself eats, clothe him out of what he clothes himself, and impose not on him work that will overcome him..." (Bukhârî & Muslim)

Although this tradition primarily re-

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Greatest Void

Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (ra)

The greatest vacuum obtaining in the Muslim World today is that of leadership. Not one man is to be found anywhere—earnest, zealous and deep-hearted—who can face the challenge of Western Civilisation with faith, courage and imagination and chalk out a new course of thought and action which may be free from intellectual and cultural servility as well as extremism, and who without getting involved aimlessly in the superficial manifestations of the Western way of life can concentrate directly on substance and reality. An ideal man, a genius who can give to his people a new lead based, on the one side, on faith which is the legacy of the Apostles and religion which was revealed to Muslims through the sacred Prophet, and, on the other, on knowledge which is universal and does not belong to any particular age or community. A leader worthy of Islam and Muslims who may derive inspiration from the Divine faith which is the most valuable asset in the service of mankind and in the evolution of civilisation, and, at the same time, exploit, to the fullest advantage, the enormous material means and resources the West has developed after centuries of sustained endeavour but which have not yet been put to proper use due to want of moral and spiritual discipline and are being employed foolishly and

callously for the annihilation of mankind and the obliteration of all that is good and noble in life. A lofty-minded man of resoluteness and wisdom who can treat as raw material the culture, civilisation, vitality and inventiveness of the West for erecting a new and mighty structure of life which may be representative of faith, morality, compassion, righteousness, justice and the typical Western spirit of enterprise, creativeness and originality. A leader of renovation and renaissance who may not proceed from the assumption that the Western Civilisation has attained the ultimate stage of progress and perfection, the seal of finality has been set on it and now there is no option for anyone but to accept it *in toto*, with all its faults and imperfections. On the contrary, he should scrutinise it, bit by bit, accepting what he likes and rejecting what he does not, and, then, evolve a pattern of life which is in harmony with his own ideals and aspirations and whose roots may be going down deep into the discipline of life, the particular outlook on the world and the distinctive attitude towards humanity and the overpowering solicitude for After-life which are the hall-marks of Islam so that from it may stem forth life about which the Quran has furnished the following testimony :

“Whosoever doeth right, whether male or female, and is a believer, him, verily, We

shall quicken with good life, and We shall pay them a recompense in proportion to the best of what they used to do.” (al-Nahl: 97)

A pattern of living based on faith in the holy Prophet that he is the eternal mentor and guide of mankind, its ideal specimen and beloved master and that the *Shariat* he brought is not only the soundest and the most natural source of legislation but, also, a whole programme of life which alone holds the key to felicity in this life as well as the next. Apart from it, no other design of life is acceptable to God.

A wise and forward-looking leader who may borrow the empirical sciences from the West—which, in fact, are neither Western nor Eastern and possess a practical utility for his people—and shake-off from these sciences the dirt that has got stuck to them as a painful reminder of the dreary conflict during the Dark Ages between the Church and the rising intelligentsia of Europe; who can remove the chaff from the grain and purge the useful branches of learning of agnosticism, prejudice and other misconceptions and instil into them the spirit of faith and, thereby, produce results far ahead of where the West has stopped and, also, much more beneficial to mankind.

A man who may not make the West his preceptor and relegate himself to the rank of a pupil or gleaner but treat it as an associate and a fellow-traveller who, on account of certain circumstances, has stolen a march over him and whose achievements he now has to re-evaluate in the light of the

knowledge bequeathed to him by the holy Apostle and to make his own contribution. He ought to know that if he has to learn a great deal from the West, the West, too, has to learn no less from him and what he can give to the West is far more superior to what the West has to offer. His endeavour should be to bring about a synthesis between the material and the spiritual - forces of the West and the East respectively and then to evolve from it a way of life the West may also be compelled to adopt and which may serve as an inspiration to the most highly advanced nations of the present-day world.

This is the portrait of an earnest and high-minded leader of a Muslim country or of the Islamic World but, unfortunately, it cannot be claimed even for one man today that he bears resemblance to it so much so that what we have said will seem to be pure wishful thinking to the reader. Before a man of this stature the modern parasitic and imitative leaders of the Muslim countries will look like pygmies. None of the leaders the Islamic countries have thrown up during this century come anywhere near the standard we have indicated nor can anyone among them be expected to fill the vacuum of leadership which has become the most lamentable reality of the contemporary times. As Iqbal has said:

Neither in Mustafa nor in Raza Shah does it dwell,

The soul of the East still is in quest of a body.

The Prophet's Means of Livelihood

Muhammad Hamidullah

When Muslims migrated from Makkah to Madinah their problem of poverty and unemployment was solved by the introduction of the institution of brotherhood which led to the creation of units that bound one Helper and one Emigrant together and resulted in the merging of their families into a single family. This joint family then lived and worked together. A question arises: how did the Prophet live? What were the means of his livelihood?

A Swedish Orientalist writes: "To begin with, Muslims were extremely poor. They indulged in loot. They had nothing to eat and were obliged to attack caravans. The Prophet used to send them on such expeditions". This is a very serious charge against Islam from the moral point of view, i.e., Islam called upon others to be just and honest, but its adherents helped themselves by all means, including loot.

But there is no truth in the allegation. We have already noted that the Muslims of Madinah had their own means of livelihood. They had lands which they tilled and they had orchards. The Emigrants from Makkah followed their example. Some started trading. Those who were craftsmen worked as shoemakers, carpenters, blacksmiths, etc. The means of livelihood of the Prophet

(Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) in that period are generally not mentioned in history-books. It is necessary, therefore, to say something on the subject before we proceed further.

On arrival in Madinah from Makkah the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) stayed in Quba in the south of the city. According to some accounts he stayed there for three weeks but we prefer the version of an historian who suggests that the stay lasted four days. He reached there on a Monday and left on Friday. He halted at noon and *en route* led a congregational prayer. He then moved forward to the settlement of Banu Najjar and stayed there in the house of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (RA).

It is perfectly clear that during his initial stay for three or four days in Quba the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was entertained with great enthusiasm and respect by the local Muslims who offered him their hospitality. When he moved forward to Banu Najjar, his hosts there, according to *Sahih al-Bukhari*, belonged to the family of his grandparents. The mother of Abd al-Muttalib had been from Madinah. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was thus related to a family of Madinah. History provides evidence that the family of the

Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) kept in close and cordial contact with these relatives after the demise of 'Abd al-Muttalib. Whenever 'Abbas, an uncle of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), undertook a journey to the north, i.e. Syria, he made it a point to stay with the family both while travelling to and returning from his destination.

Under the circumstances it is not surprising that *Sahih al-Bukhari* states that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) stayed with Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (RA) in the settlement of Banu Najjar because he belonged to his family through his grandparents. If he was staying in his own family the question about his means of supporting himself did not arise. His relatives must have considered it an honour and a privilege to have such a distinguished guest with them.

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) stayed there for a few months because he ordered the construction of a large mosque there. The number of Muslims was fast increasing all over Madinah. Those who offered prayers in their local mosques now began to visit the mosque of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) for they were anxious to pray behind their leader. A small mosque could not have been adequate. The construction of a large mosque, therefore, began. A few residential rooms were provided for the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) in this mosque. They were not many to begin with because the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was accompanied only by one wife i.e. Lady Sawdah. A few days later the second wife, Sayyida Aisha (RA), to whom he had been married earlier, also arrived. Each needed a separate room. The two daughters of the Prophet

(Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) viz. Sayyida Fatimah and Sayyida Ruqayyah were accommodated in one room. Later, however, the number of residents decreased for the girls were married away. But more accommodation became necessary when the number of the Prophet's wives increased. At the time of his demise he had nine wives and a slave girl — Mary, the Copt. Some explanation is required in this context. As far as Mary is concerned it is established that she did not live in the rooms attached to the mosque but had a separate house at some distance from the mosque. Sayyida Safiyyah also had a separate house of her own. Sayyida Sawdah occupied a room attached to the mosque, while another room was shared by the two daughters of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). A third room was built for Lady 'A'ishah. In the beginning, therefore, only three rooms were built when the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) shifted there from the house of Sayyiduna Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (RA).

What were the Prophet's means of livelihood? Most of the Helpers (*Anfar*) in Madinah who were prosperous farmers had earmarked a fruit tree in their gardens for him. This was done with the Prophet's consent. All the dates of these trees were sent to his house every season. If they were in excess of the family's requirements they were distributed among the poor and were served to the guests. This was standard practice. Muslim historians and traditionists often quote from Sayyida Aisha that sometimes the family had to be content with dates and water for months and no food was cooked in the house. The

tradition probably relates to the period when the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) had no means of income except date trees. Gradually the number of wives increased and so did the needs of the family. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) bought a few goats whose milk was consumed by the household. Sometimes a she-camel or a goat was gifted by people who considered it an honour to offer a present. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) occasionally accepted it.

In the beginning he had one goat. The number later increased to ten. He had one she-camel, the number later increased to four. There was a grazing ground in the suburbs of Madinah. A Companion voluntarily tended the cattle and daily took the milk to Madinah. The Prophet's household used milk. Similarly Sayyiduna Sa'd ibn Ubaidah, a member of Banu Najjar, and a close relative of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) from his mothers side, regularly sent some food — dessert, vegetable, meat - to the house. He was a rich man who sometimes entertained as many as eighty parsons to a meal at his house.

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) did not like to eat by himself. *He* always invited the people who were present to join him in the meal which consisted of dates and dishes prepared at home or received from friends.

Soon another small means of income was added. From the month of Ramadan 2AH began a series of battles with the enemy. Of the spoils of war, one-fifth went to the state treasury while four-fifth was distributed equally among the soldiers. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi

Wasallam) participated in most of the battles. He had then two sources of income: one, as a soldier who was entitled to an equal share with others; and two, as a head of the state to whom one-fifth of the spoils were given. He could distribute them at his discretion. But he did not spend a penny for private purposes and kept reserve which was spent on public works such as defense, purchase of arms, etc. However, if some provisions were occasionally needed in the household, they were provided with the permission of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) from that portion of funds in the public treasury which had been earned from the spoils of war.

But the *zakah* funds could not be used under any circumstances for the person of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), his family and the clans of Banu Hashim and Band Muttalib. No other system except Islam forbids the use of state income to a ruler for his private purposes. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) could only spend on his person part of the income received as spoils from the battles with the enemy. The words: Say, the spoils belong to Allah and the Messenger" (8:1), cover only the spoils of war. "And know that whatever you take as spoils in war, a fifth thereof shall go to Allah and to the Messenger and the needy and the wayfarer..." (8:41). The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) could spend a part of the spoils of war on his person but not a penny from *zakah*.

These were the constraints with which the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) lived in Madinah. In Makkah,

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Obstacles to the Acquisition of ‘Ilm

Mawlana Muhammad Saleem Dhorat

The importance and reward of acquiring Dini knowledge cannot be overemphasized. Allah states:

Can those who know be equal to those who do not know? (39:9)

The Glorious Qur’an and the ahadith of Rasulullah sallallahu ‘alayhi wasallam emphasise the necessity and virtue of acquiring Dini knowledge. Nothing demonstrates this more clearly than the fact that Allah has ordered Rasulullah sallallahu ‘alayhi wasallam to supplicate to Him for increase in knowledge:

Say: “O my lord!, increase me in knowledge...” (20:114)

Voluminous books can be written on this subject, but I wish to focus on certain factors that are very important yet often overlooked by those who have been favoured by Allah with the opportunity to engage in the acquisition of ‘ilm.

In order to be bestowed knowledge it is not sufficient to merely enroll somewhere; it is also necessary to save oneself from those factors that become an obstacle in the acquisition of knowledge. The main factors are as follows:

1. Sin and disobedience to Allah

This is the greatest and most dan-

gerous obstacle to the acquisition of knowledge. Dini knowledge is not merely the accumulation of facts and scholarly opinions; Dini knowledge is a special nur from Allah. Sinning engulfs the heart in darkness, leaving no room for this nur.

The great imam, Imam Ash-Shafi’i rahimahullah once complained to his respected teacher Imam Waqi’ rahimahullah about his difficulty in keeping knowledge to memory. His teacher did not advise him in techniques of learning or ask how much effort he was making in his studies; instead, he advised his student to stay away from sins.

2. La ya’ni and wasting time

Here, three points should be kept in mind:

- Be mindful not to waste a single moment.
- Do not become involved in la ya’ni.
- Do not mix with people unnecessarily.

Time

Time is a gift of Allah that cannot be preserved. Minutes just tick away, signaling that life is ticking away. Abu Ad-Darda’ (RA) and Al-Hasan Al-Basri (ra) say:

You are but days: when a day passes, part of you has passed.

The time you have taken out for the acquisition of knowledge should be spent in that very objective. Once this time passes it will not return, and only regret will remain. Our pious predecessors would not let a single moment go to waste. They would sacrifice even the necessities of life in their pursuit of knowledge.

La ya'ni

La ya'ni is a sickness due to which even talented students find themselves left behind. La ya'ni means to spend time doing something that is of no benefit in this world or the hereafter. Common examples of students succumbing to la ya'ni are following sports in the media and listening to sports commentaries. Playing sports (whilst remaining within the limits) is beneficial, but listening to commentaries is of no benefit. Other examples of la ya'ni are reading novels, following the news, interacting on social media etc. These can all be classed as robbers of time.

A person may reason that as la ya'ni is not haram there is no harm in it, but were it really harmless why would Rasulullah sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam discourage it?

*It is from the beauty of one's Islam that he leaves la ya'ni. (Muslim)
... and Allah dislikes futile talk... (Bukhari)*

There are many harms of la ya'ni:

It occupies the mind. To free the mind and focus solely upon knowledge is essential for success. All la ya'ni activities result in wasting precious time and in men-

tal distraction.

It sets a bad example. A person seeking knowledge is on the path of becoming an example for others. Should he be engaging in such activities, or setting a better example?

It leads to sin. Hadrat Thanwi (ra) explains that every futile and la ya'ni act borders on sin: although initially mubah (permissible), la ya'ni ends in sin.

Unnecessary mixing

Friendships and unnecessary mixing will lead to loss. If a person were to recall occasions in his life when he did not achieve his potential or he incurred a loss, he will conclude that one of the main contributing factors was friendship.

Making friends or enemies occupies the mind and diverts the attention away from the objective. Not making friends does not mean a person remains aloof at all times, only that his mind is not constantly occupied with others. A thermometer to gauge whether friendships are harming you or not is whether you miss your friend when you are apart and whether you are always looking out for him. If that is the case, you have exceeded the boundary of friendship.

3. Laziness

Laziness and a laid back attitude will not bring the desired result. Wishes and hopes are of no avail without effort. In order to acquire 'ilm, effort cannot be over-emphasised.

Imam Muhammad Al-Hasan (Ra) states that for a student to succeed, he needs three qualities:

Greed for knowledge

Intelligence - If he does not have this naturally, he should strive to improve by exerting every effort possible to comprehend the knowledge he is being taught, and not give up.

Preoccupation and focus, i.e. he is only occupied in this one task and that is what he is interested in at all times.

4. Disrespect

Any form of disrespect results in being deprived of knowledge, or at the least its barakat. One should have adab for everything related to knowledge: teachers, books, classrooms, learning equipment, staff and even fellow classmates. Everything that plays a role in a student's facilitation of knowledge is worthy of respect.

Sometimes a talented student may feel that any disrespect or negligence he had shown in honouring and respecting the means of knowledge has had no adverse effect on him; his abilities, power of recall and position at the top of the class have not altered in the least. However, this is a form of self delusion, for true knowledge and barakat of knowledge is judged by two things:

- a. the degree to which 'ilm manifests itself in a student's life in the form of 'amal.
- b. The degree of Dini khidmat a student has the tawfiq to render after graduation.

A quick look at those who have done great Dini works will reveal that they were generally not students who excelled academically and always came first in class; rather, their successes were due to their humbleness and their utmost respect and reverence towards their teachers and

everything associated to 'ilm.

Sometimes a student regards his own teachers as inferior, so is negligent about showing them respect and honour. He does not see the greatness of world renowned luminaries in his teachers and hence does not feel them to be worthy of his respect and honour. No doubt, there are great 'ulama in this world, but whatever a student has achieved or achieves is through his own teachers. The ability to read and understand the books of the great scholars has only become possible due to the effort and attention of his teachers, hence every teacher who is a 'link in the chain' has a right to enjoy respect and honour.

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however, he had inherited property of his own as well as the property of his wife. Also he himself was a trader. The situation was different in Madinah. He was a guest in the initial stages of his stay. Later he had permanent means of income through gifts assigned to him e.g. date trees. After some time spoils of war became another source of income. Soon after the Battle of Badr followed the Battle of Uhud. Muslim historians have recorded that a Jew called Mukhayriq embraced Islam. He willed that in the event of his death in the battle all his orchards in Madinah should be given to the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). He had seven orchards whose income was exclusively reserved for the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Thus came to end the economic difficulties of the early period in Madinah.

Homecoming

Mufti Muhammad Shafi Usmani (ra)

In his Ihya' al-'Ulum, Imam al-Ghazali has identified three different situations with regard to committing sins:

The first state is that of total sinlessness, that is, no sin has ever been committed. This is either the hallmark of angels or that of the prophets, may peace be on them. The second stage of getting involved in sin comes when one takes the initiative and ventures into sin and then repeats and persists with it, never feeling ashamed or regretful and never thinking of stopping and abandoning it. This is the degree of the satans and the devils. The third station belongs to human beings, the children of Adam who, immediately after having committed a sin, regret it and resolve firmly not to go near it in future.

This tells us that failing to repent after committing a sin is the style of devils exclusively. Therefore, it is the consensus of the entire Muslim ummah that Taubah is obligatory. The Holy Qur'an says:

(O those who believe, repent before Allah, a sincere repentance; may be your Lord removes from you your sins and admits you to gardens beneath which rivers flow.)
(66:8)

How generous is the mercy of our Lord! A man spends a whole lifetime in disobeying Him. Nevertheless, when he

repents sincerely before his death, not only his sins are forgiven, but he receives much more when he is admitted into the circle of favoured servants of Allah and made an inheritor of Paradise.

In a hadith, the Holy Prophet Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam has been reported to have said:

'One who repents from sin is loved by Allah and one who has repented from sin is like one who had never committed a sin.' (ibn Majah)

According to some narrations, if a servant of Allah repents from a sin and his repentance finds acceptance with Him, he is not only absolved from having to account for it, but the very record in writing posted by the angels is erased out from his book of deeds so that he may not be disgraced either.

However, what is necessary is that the repentance is genuine and is offered in sincerity. This repentance stands on three pillars. Firstly, one should regret over and feel ashamed about what he or she has done. According to hadith:

'Taubah is (another name of) remorse'. Secondly, one should immediately leave off the sin he has committed and he should, for the future too, firmly resolve to stay away from it. Thirdly, one should think

of making amends for what has gone by, that is, he should try to take measures to rectify what has happened in sin to the best of his ability. For example, if he has missed a prayer or a fast, he should make up for it by doing what is known as qada (compensatory worship). If one does not remember the correct number of such missed prayers and fasts, he should think, calculate and come to an estimated number and then go on to offer qada for these in all seriousness. If one finds it impossible to do so all at one time, he could offer, with each salah due at its time, one qada of each salah he missed throughout his life, which is commonly known as 'umri qada. In the same way, one should do his best to make up, as and when convenient, for obligatory fasts he missed by offering qada fasts. May be one has not paid the obligatory zakah due on him; he should, then pay the zakah due on him for previous years as well, paying it all or paying it gradually. God forbid, if one has usurped someone's right, he should return it back to him and if he has hurt someone, he should seek his forgiveness. But, should it be that one does not regret what he has done, or, despite being regretful, he does not leave off that sin for future, then, this repentance is no repentance even though it may be said a thousand times, as so delightfully put in verse by a Persian poet (translation):

*Repentance on the lips, rosary in hand
and a heart full of the taste of sin
Sin laughs at my style of seeking for-
giveness!*

The point being made here is that man, once he repents as stated earlier, and despite having been in all sorts of

sins, becomes a servant dear to Allah. And should it ever be that, out of human weakness, one does fall into sin yet another time, he should immediately renew his repentance in the fond hope that this time, like every other time, Allah Almighty shall, being Most-Forgiving, relent towards him. Let me conclude with yet another (translation of a) Persian couplet which says:

*This is the Court of My Presence,
not the Court of Despair.
Even if you have broken (the promise in)
your repentance
a hundred times, come again!*

Eating with the best "Fork"

A scholar once visited Darul Uloom Deoband during a trip to India. He was invited for a meal by Hadbrat Moulana Anwar Shah Kashmiri (ra).

The scholar asked the respected Moulana (ra): "Why do you not also eat with a fork and spoon (as many others eat)."

Moulana immediately stretched out his hand, drawing attention to four of his fingers, and said: "I am eating with a fork! Just as a fork has got 4 prongs, my hand has got fingers!"

Hadbrat Moulana then said: "My fork is better than your fork in 4 ways..."

- 1. My fork can feel the temperature of the food whilst your fork cannot.*
- 2. My fork can bend and catch hold of the food easily, whilst your fork cannot. I notice how you find difficulty to get hold of your food.*
- 3. If my fork hits against my teeth or gums I do not feel any real pain, whilst your fork causes great pain if it pierces you – as does sometimes happen when eating with a fork.*
- 4. My fork excretes a fluid after eating which helps with digestion, whilst your fork is unable to do so.*

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