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EDITORIAL

All thanks for Almighty, the most Merciful and Exalted

Upbringing of Childre - Some Lessons

If you are yourself a father or any of your friend's offspring is under your guardianship, have you ever thought about the ways of their upbringing? Have you ever imagined how many necessary responsibilities you have regarding them? To what extent do you satisfy those responsibilities? The future of these children, their development and decline, lies to a certain level in your hands. Every child steps into this world with a just disposition, and it is generally his parents or guardians who turn him from the right path towards the wrong one. Don't let your garment get stained. Think, is it that your carelessness or inattentiveness is adding a title of this crime in your deed book, God forbid?

Is 'better upbringing' synonymous to strictness? Will the target be achieved by filling the hearts of children with fear and by leaving them, as if, almost helpless? Also, will more than the necessary loving be beneficial? Will the desire of better upbringing be satisfied by letting our children do whatever they want to and consider it necessary to fulfill their every demand without any prevention or prohibition? Enough experience is there to make us reach the conclusion that both of these approaches are opposite extremes and away from the true middle path. The first and the last responsibility that lies on a Muslim guardian with regard to the upbringing of children, is to make them tread the path of becoming a better Muslim, so that after attaining the age, they may be counted among the proud sons of the Muslim Ummah; they may prove themselves the best slaves of Allah - correct in beliefs and pious in deeds; they may get every kind of blessing and success, worldly as well as religious. Pon-

der; do you nurture the children under your guidance according to this principle and for this purpose?

What is the condition of overall upbringing of the children of our "nobles"? Those, laying high claims of their dynastic nobility, must think on which path they are setting their youngsters? How many children are there in whose hearts the love of Allah and His Messenger is being established? How many minds are being inculcated with the worth of Islamic principles? How many heads are illuminated with the meaning and message of the Qur'an? Before how many, the model of the Perfect Man (SAW), is introduced? In the hearts of how many the passion of following the way of Siddiq, Farooq, Uthmaan, Ali, Hasan and Husain (RAA), is developed? In how many hearts is the service of mankind and sympathy nurtured? **How many are told that slavery of the other is shamelessness? How many are made aware that liberty of choice is their birth right and indispensable inheritance? How many are taught the lessons of choice and dignity?**

Far and wide, only the opposite of all this can be discerned. Instead of Allah's slavery, the voices of servitude to the leadership are heard. From the day first, employment is set as the target of every endeavour. The curriculum framed by the unknown, the books compiled by the unfamiliar, the law and legislature ordained by the strangers – are the things on which the intellectual development of our children is being expended right from their birth. To do a menial job is regarded as a shame; buying necessities from the market an affair against nobility. Our

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Question Answer

Question: I vowed that I would not watch movies, but I did not stipulate any particular type of movies. One year later I watched a movie that was not bad or indecent. My question is: how can I stop committing this sin?.

Answer: The ways in which you can give up watching movies: you can achieve that by means of several things that were mentioned by the scholars and educators, such as the following:

1. Finding out about the shar'ī ruling, which has been discussed previously in many answers.
2. Bearing in mind that Allah, may He be exalted, is always watching and that He knows what is secret and is even more hidden. One of the early generation was asked about what they did that help them to lower their gaze and refrain from looking at haraam things. He said: By knowing that Allah sees you more quickly than you see what you are looking at.
3. Righteous friends who will remind you if you forget and alert you if you are heedless. They are close friends who love one another for the sake of Allah and you are brought together in obedience to Allah, may He be exalted. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): "Friends on that Day will be foes one to another, save those who kept their duty (to Allah)" [al-Zukhruf 43:67]. That is the good companion whom the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) likened to the bearer of musk. It was narrated that Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "The likeness of a good companion and a bad companion is that of one who

carries musk and one who works the bellows. With the carrier of musk, either he will give you some or you will buy some from him, or you will notice a good smell from him; as for the one who works the bellows, either he will burn your clothes or you will notice a bad smell from him."

4. Keeping yourself busy with things will benefit you in religious and worldly terms. You should have a daily wird that you recite; memorize the Book of Allah; study some books by the scholars or listen to them, and busy yourself with things that are beneficial and serve the people and society.

5. Marriage, which is what the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) recommended to help lower their gaze and guard chastity, as he said: "O young men, whoever among you can afford it, let him get married, for it is more effective in lowering the gaze and guarding one's chastity. And whoever cannot afford it, let him fast, for it will be a shield for him." Narrated by al-Bukhaari (4779) and Muslim (1400).

6. Always asking Allah to help you, guide you and purify your hearing and sight. The best thing that a person can do to rid himself of evil inclinations after taking the proper measures is to turn to his Lord and ask Him to help him with that, to make things easy for him and to purify his physical faculties.

We ask Allah to enable you to do that which He loves and that pleases Him.

Question: I have a sister who is five and half years old and I want to teach her to memorize Qur'aan. Where should I start with her, and how?.

Answer: Raising children to follow Islam from

an early age, teaching them to memorize the Book of Allaah and educating them is the Sunnah of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and is regarded as a very important matter, especially in this day and age. But it is something that many people neglect with regard to their children and those under their care, and they get distracted by things that will be of no benefit to them in the Hereafter and may indeed harm them, and make them emotionally attached to those who do not even deserve to be mentioned, let alone taken as role models, such as actors, sports players and singers.

We appreciate our sister's question and we ask Allah to make her steadfast and to help her in this matter and others, and to decree reward for her on the Day of Judgement. What can be greater than meeting one's Lord with a record of good deeds which includes guiding others to do good or sharing in establishing good?

With regard to this little sister and teaching her to memorize Qur'aan, we advise the following:

- 1- Start with that which is easiest to read and memorize, namely Soorat al-Faatihah, then with the last juz', working from the end. Starting with something easy helps one to move on to more difficult material. Moreover she will have a real need for that when she starts to learn the prayer.
- 2- The amount to be memorized every day should be small, so that she will be able to memorize it and it will be easy for her to memorize what comes next. This amount will vary from one child to the next, depending on his or her intelligence and memory.
- 3- Review often so that what has been memorized will stick. Do not let any day go by without memorizing something new and reviewing the old.
- 4- Encourage her by giving her a prize every time she finishes a juz' – for example – and memorizes it well.

5- Start to move from prompting her and having her repeat, which is usually the first stage in memorization, to teaching her how to read, so that it will be easy for her to read the Qur'aan by herself at times when her sister or teacher are not present.

6- Let her get used to reciting what she has memorized in her prayer, whether that is obligatory or naafil prayer, once she reaches an age where prayer is required of her and she can understand it.

7- Let her get used to listening to what she has memorized on tapes or on the computer, so that she can hear both a good pronunciation and good recitation, and she can review and consolidate what she has learned.

8- Choose a good time for memorization when there are few distractions – such as after Fajr or between Maghrib and 'Isha'. Avoid times when she is hungry, tired or sleepy.

9- Praise her for what she has memorized in front of neighbours and relatives, so as to encourage her and encourage them to do the same thing; at the same time, pray for refuge for her with Allah for fear of the evil eye and envy (hasad).

10-It is essential for her to have one style of Mus-haf with no changes, so that the layout of the verses will be imprinted in her memory.

11-You should encourage her to write out what she has memorized so that she may combine learning how to write with reinforcing what she has memorized.

May Allah bestow strength on all of us.

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tions of the fabricators, the distortions of the transgressors, and the erroneous explanations of the ignorant..." [al-Fawā'id al-Majmū'ah: 3]

May Allāh make us from the sincere Muslims. Amīn.

Lesson From The Qur'an

Commentary: Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani

Sura Baqarah—Verse 229-233

الطَّلَاقُ مَرَّتَيْنِ ۖ فَمَا سَاكَ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ تَسْرِيَةٍ ۖ بِإِحْسَانٍ ۖ
وَلَا يَجِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَأْخُذُوا مِمَّا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ شَيْئًا إِلَّا أَنْ
يَخَافَا إِلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ ۖ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ
اللَّهِ ۖ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا فِيمَا افْتَدَتْ بِهِ ۖ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ
فَلَا تَعْتَدُوهَا ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ
الظَّالِمُونَ ۚ

Divorce is twice; then either to retain in all fairness, or to release nicely¹²³. It is not lawful for you to take back anything from what you have given them¹²⁴, unless both apprehend that they would not be able to maintain the limits set by Allah. Now, if you apprehend that they would not maintain the limits set by Allah, then, there is no sin on them in what she gives up to secure her release. These are the limits set by Allah. Therefore, do not exceed them. Whosoever exceeds the limits set by Allah, then, those are the transgressors.

[2:229]

123. By this verse, a cruel practice prevalent in Arabia was eliminated. In pre-Islamic Arabia, a husband had the power to divorce his wife innumerable times, and then revoke the divorce each time. This power brought misery to the women whose husbands divorced them, but when the period of iddah came near, they revoked the divorce, and after some time divorced her again, and so on. Thus they neither maintained her as their wife, nor did leave her to marry someone else. By the present verse, power of husbands was restricted to divorcing twice only. This verse means that the proper way of di-

vorcing one's wife is that the divorce is pronounced twice at the most. So long as the number of divorce is not more than two, it is open for the husband to revoke his divorce during the period of iddah, in which case they may resume their marital relations may enter into a fresh marriage by mutual consent. But it should be done in all fairness with bona fide intent to restore a just marital life. This is meant by the words, 'either to retain in all fairness'. But if the marital relations are broken so the divorce, and after the expiry of the period of iddah the woman will be released to contract marriage with someone else if she so wills. This release too should be in proper and graceful way without causing any impediment for the woman. This is the purport of the words, 'or to release nicely'.

124. It means that the husband should not claim that the dower he had paid to his wife should be given back to him. However, if the woman asks for divorce on her own initiative, and there is no fault on the part of the husband, she can secure her release by forgoing the dower, and then it will be lawful for the husband to accept it.

فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا تَحِلُّ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدُ حَتَّى تَنْكِحَ زَوْجًا غَيْرَهُ ۖ
فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ يَتَرَاجَعَا إِنْ طَنَّا أَنْ
يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ ۖ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ يُبَيِّنُهَا لِقَوْمٍ
يَعْلَمُونَ ۚ

Thereafter, if he divorces her, she shall no longer remain lawful for him¹²⁵ unless she marries a man other than him. Should he too divorce her then there is no sin on them in

their returning to each other, if they think they would maintain the limits set by Allah.

These are the limits set by Allah that He makes clear to a people who know (that Allah is alone capable of setting these limits).

[2:230]

125. This is the rule about the third divorce. As explained earlier, the husband should not give divorce thrice, so that all options remain open for the spouses. But if someone gives the third divorce also, then the wife becomes unlawful for him in the sense that he can neither revoke his divorce, nor can he contract a fresh marriage with her. However if she marries a third person, and he divorces her on his own accord for some reason, then she may contract a fresh marriage with her first husband, if she so wills. But it should be noted that any stipulation of divorce when marrying the third person is a grave sin.

وَإِذَا طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَبَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ
بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ سَرِّحُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ ۖ وَلَا تُمْسِكُوهُنَّ
ضِرَارًا لِّتَعْتَدُوا ۗ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ ۗ وَلَا
تَتَّخِذُوا آيَاتِ اللَّهِ هُزُوعًا ۗ وَادْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَمَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ لِيُعْظِمَكُمْ بِهِ ۗ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ۝۳۱

When you have divorced women, and they have approached (the end of) their waiting periods, then, either retain them with fairness or release them with fairness. Do not retain them with wrongful intent, resulting in cruelty on your part, and whoever does this, actually wrongs himself. Do not take the verses of Allah in jest, and remember the grace of Allah on you and what He has revealed to you of the Book and the wisdom, giving you good counsel thereby, and fear Allah, and be sure that Allah is the One who knows everything.

[2:231]

وَإِذَا طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَبَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ أَنْ

يَنْكِحْنَ أَرْوَاجَهُنَّ إِذَا تَرَاضُوا بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ ذَلِكَ
يُوعِظُ بِهِ مَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۗ
ذَلِكَمُ أَزْكَى لَكُمْ وَأَطْهَرُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

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When you have divorced women, and they have reached (the end of) their waiting period, do not prevent them from marrying their husbands when they mutually agree with fairness. Thus the advice is given to everyone of you who believes in Allah and in the Hereafter. This is more pure and clean for you. Allah knows and you do not know.

[2:232]

وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضِعْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ حَوْلَيْنِ كَامِلَيْنِ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ
يُتِمَّ الرَّضَاعَةَ ۗ وَعَلَى الْمَوْلُودِ لَهُ رِزْقُهُنَّ وَكِسْوَتُهُنَّ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ لَا تُكَلِّفُ نَفْسٌ إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۗ لَا تَضَارَّ
وَالِدَةٌ بَوْلِهَا وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ لَهُ بِوَلَدِهِ ۗ وَعَلَى الْوَارِثِ مِثْلُ
ذَلِكَ ۗ فَإِنْ أَرَادَا فِصَالًا عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِنْهُمَا وَتَشَاوُرٍ فَلَا
جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا ۗ وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ أَنْ تَسْتَرْضِعُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ فَلَا
جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا سَلَّمْتُمْ مَا آتَيْتُم بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا
اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ۝۳۳

Mothers (should) suckle their children for two full years, for one who wants to complete the (period of) suckling. It is the obligation of the one to whom the child belongs that he provides food and clothing for them (the mothers) with fairness. Nobody is obligated beyond his capacity. No mother shall be made to suffer on account of her child, nor the man to whom the child belongs, on account of his child¹²⁶. Likewise responsibility (of suckling) lies on the (one who may become an) heir (of the child)¹²⁷. Now, if they want to wean, with mutual consent and consultation, there is no sin on them. And if you want to get your children suckled (by a wet-nurse), there is no sin

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Lesson From Sahih al-Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

The Book of Knowledge

باب وَضْعِ الْمَاءِ عِنْدَ الْخَلَاءِ .

Chapter 10 : To keep water at the toilet place.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

The Arab people usually used clay to clean their private parts after attending the call of nature and then after shifting to a separate place, used water to obtain complete cleanliness.

Hadith No. 141

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا هَاشِمُ بْنُ الْقَاسِمِ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا
وَرَقَاءُ عَنْ عُيَيْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي يَزِيدَ عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - دَخَلَ الْخَلَاءَ ، فَوَضَعَتْ لَهُ وَضُوءًا قَالَ مَنْ وَضَعَ
هَذَا . فَأَخْبِرَ فَقَالَ اللَّهُمَّ فَقِّهْهُ فِي الدِّينِ

Narrated Ibn 'Abbas (RA)

"Once the Prophet entered a lavatory and I placed water for his ablution. He asked, "Who placed it?" He was informed accordingly and so he said, "O Allah! Make him (Ibn 'Abbas) a learned scholar in religion (Islam)."

Comments

This is a famous Hadith narrated by Ibn Abbas (RA). He says that once during his youth he saw Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) going to attend the call of nature. He thought that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) needed water for Istinja that time, so he of his own kept water nearby in some pot in such a way that once Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) would come out and he

would see water and use it. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was very much pleased on seeing the water at the time of need. He (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) enquired about it and was told that it was kept by Ibn Abbas (RA). Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was very pleased with Ibn Abbas (RA) and made Dua for him. It was by virtue of this Dua that Ibn Abbas (RA) was bestowed by Almighty Allah with the special understanding of Qur'an at a very young age.

Lessons from the Hadith

It is preferable to use water for Istinja.
It is of great benefit to serve the elders.
The Dua of pious people helps in a big way.
The elders should make Dua for youngsters who serve them.

باب لَا تُسْتَقْبَلُ الْقِبْلَةُ بِعَائِطٍ أَوْ بَوْلٍ إِلَّا عِنْدَ الْبِنَاءِ جِدَارٍ أَوْ
نَحْوِهِ .

Chapter 11 : Do not face Qiblah while defecating or urinating except when you are behind a building, a wall or something like that.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

This is a controversial issue among different schools of thought. Imam Bukhari (RA) along with Imam Shafa'ee (RA) and Imam Maalik (RA) are of the opinion that it is not permissible for one to face Qiblah or turn his back towards it while urinating or defecation in open places, but it is permissible to do so if one is behind a building, a wall or some-

thing like that (toilets etc). As per Imam Haniefah (RA), it is neither permissible in open places nor in toilets etc. As per Imam Ahmad (RA) facing Qiblah is never permissible but it may be permissible to turn one's back towards it if there is a wall etc.

Hadith No. 142

حَدَّثَنَا آدَمُ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ أَبِي ذُنَبٍ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا الزُّهْرِيُّ عَنْ عَطَاءِ بْنِ يَزِيدَ اللَّيْثِيِّ عَنْ أَبِي أَيُّوبَ الْأَنْصَارِيِّ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - إِذَا أَتَى أَحَدُكُمْ الْغَائِطَ فَلَا يَسْتَقْبِلِ الْقِبْلَةَ وَلَا يُؤَلِّهَا ظَهْرَهُ ، شَرِّقُوا أَوْ غَرِّبُوا

Narrated Abu Aiyub Al-Ansari (RA)

Allah's Apostle said, "If anyone of you goes to an open space for answering the call of nature he should neither face nor turn his back towards the Qiblah; he should either face the east or the west."

This Hadith is narrated by a famous Sahaabi - Abu Ayyub Ansari (RA), who had the privilege to host Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) when the later migrated to Madina from Makkah (i.e., Hijrat). At that time everyone wanted to become host of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). To solve this issue, Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) told them to leave his she-camel free and the place where she would sit, the owner of that house would be his host because of the fact that the she-camel would act under the divine instruction. When the she-camel of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was released, she sat in front of the house of Hadhrat Abu Ayyub Ansari (RA) and as such he got the honour to host Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) in Madina.

Hadhrat Abu Ayyub Ansari (RA) says that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said that whosoever goes to attend the call of nature i.e., either to defecate or urinate, he should avoid to face Qibla or turn his back towards it. Khana Ka'ba has been decreed Qiblah of believers by Allah Ta'ala and is

highly blessed and honoured place on the face of earth. It was constructed by angels for Adam (AS), then by the blessed prophets like Hadhrat Ibrahim and Hadhrat Ismaiel. Even a simple look at Khana Ka'ba fetches a lot of reward. The believers have been asked to honour it with full reverence and it is part of the same reverence that they have been forbidden to face or turn their backs towards it while defecating or urinating. Though there is difference of opinion among the learned scholars and jurists on the issue whether to face Qiblah behind a wall is permissible or not, yet it seems to be quite safe not to do so during this act in all circumstances.

باب مَنْ تَبَرَّزَ عَلَى لَبْتَيْنِ .

Chapter 12 : One who egests while sitting on two bricks.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Arab people used to attend the call of nature in open spaces out of the locality and looked for some low level place which would keep them out of the sight from others. As the days passed on and the population increased, the need for having toilets in the locality arose along with the question whether egesting while sitting on two foot rests like bricks etc in the toilet was permissible or not.

Hadith No. 143

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ يُوسُفَ قَالَ أَخْبَرَنَا مَالِكٌ عَنْ يَحْيَى بْنِ سَعِيدٍ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَحْيَى بْنِ حَبَّانٍ عَنْ عَمِّهِ وَاسِعِ بْنِ حَبَّانٍ عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ أَنَّهُ كَانَ يَقُولُ إِنَّ نَاسًا يَقُولُونَ إِذَا قَعَدْتَ عَلَى حَاجَتِكَ ، فَلَا تَسْتَقْبِلِ الْقِبْلَةَ وَلَا بَيْتَ الْمَقْدِسِ . فَقَالَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عُمَرَ لَقَدْ ارْتَفَقْتُ يَوْمًا عَلَى ظَهْرِ بَيْتِ لَنَا ، فَرَأَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - عَلَى لَبْتَيْنِ مُسْتَقْبِلًا بَيْتَ الْمَقْدِسِ لِحَاجَتِهِ . وَقَالَ لَعَلَّكَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى أَوْزَانِهِمْ ، فَقُلْتُ لَا أَدْرِي وَاللَّهِ . قَالَ مَالِكٌ يَعْنِي الَّذِي يُصَلِّي وَلَا يَرْفَعُ عَنِ الْأَرْضِ ، يَسْجُدُ وَهُوَ لَاصِقٌ بِالْأَرْضِ .

Cont'd on page 37

A Pioneer of the Environment

Francesca De Chatel

“There is none amongst the believers who plants a tree, or sows a seed, and then a bird, or a person, or an animal eats thereof, but it is regarded as having given a charitable gift [for which there is great recompense].”

[Al-Bukhari, III:513].

The idea of the Prophet Mohammed as a pioneer of environmentalism will initially strike many as strange: indeed, the term “environment” and related concepts like “ecology”, “environmental awareness” and “sustainability”, are modern-day inventions, terms that were formulated in the face of the growing concerns about the contemporary state of the natural world around us.

And yet a closer reading of the hadith, the body of work that recounts significant events in the Prophet’s life, reveals that he was a staunch advocate of environmental protection. One could say he was an “environmentalist avant la lettre”, a pioneer in the domain of conservation, sustainable development and resource management, and one who constantly sought to maintain a harmonious balance between man and nature. From all accounts of his life and deeds, we read that the Prophet had a profound respect for fauna and flora, as well as an almost visceral connection to the four elements, earth, water, fire and air.

He was a strong proponent of the sustainable use and cultivation of land and water, proper treatment of animals, plants and birds, and the equal rights of users. In this context the modernity of the Prophet’s view of the environment and the concepts he

introduced to his followers is particularly striking; certain passages of the hadith could easily be mistaken for discussions about contemporary environmental issues.

Three Principles

The Prophet’s environmental philosophy is first of all holistic: it assumes a fundamental link and interdependency between all natural elements and bases its teachings on the premise that if man abuses or exhausts one element, the natural world as a whole will suffer direct consequences. This belief is nowhere formulated in one concise phrase; it is rather an underlying principle that forms the foundation of all the Prophet’s actions and words, a life philosophy that defined him as a person.

The three most important principles of the Prophet’s philosophy of nature are based on the Qur’anic teachings and the concepts of tawhid (unity), khalifa (stewardship) and amana (trust).

Tawhid, the oneness of God, is a cornerstone of the Islamic faith. It recognizes the fact that there is one absolute Creator and that man is responsible to Him for all his actions: “To God belongs all that is in the heavens and in the earth, for God encompasses everything [4:126].” The Prophet acknowledges that God’s knowledge and power covers everything. Therefore abusing one of his creations, whether it is a living being or a natural resource, is a sin. The Prophet considered all of God’s creations to be equal before God and he believed animals, but also land,

forests and watercourses should have rights.

The concepts of khalifa - stewardship, and amana - trust, emerge from the principle of tawhid. The Qur'an explains that mankind holds a privileged position among God's creations on earth: he is chosen as khalifa, "vice-regent" and carries the responsibility of caring for God's earthly creations. Each individual is given this task and privilege in the form of God's trust. But the Qur'an repeatedly warns believers against arrogance: they are no better than other creatures. "No creature is there on earth nor a bird flying with its wings but they are nations like you [6:38]"; "Surely the creation of the heavens and the earth is greater than the creation of man; but most people know not [40:57]".

The Prophet believed that the universe and the creations in it – animals, plants, water, land – were not created for mankind. Man is allowed to use the resources but he can never own them. Thus while Islam allows land ownership, it has limitations: an owner can, for example, only own land if he uses it; once he ceases to use it, he has to part with his possession.

The Prophet recognized man's responsibility to God but always maintained humility. Thus he said: "When doomsday comes, if someone has a palm shoot in his hand, he should plant it," suggesting that even when all hope is lost for mankind, one should sustain nature's growth. He believed that nature remains a good in itself, even if man does not benefit from it.

Similarly, the Prophet incited believers to share the earth's resources. He said: "Muslims share alike in three things – water, herbage and fire," and he considered it a sin to withhold water from the thirsty. "No one can refuse surplus water without sinning against Allah and against man" [Mishkat al Masabih].

The Prophet's attitude towards sus-

tainable use of land, conservation of water and the treatment of animals is a further illustration of the humility of his environmental philosophy.

Sustainable Use of Land

"The earth has been created for me as a mosque and as a means of purification." [Al-Bukhari 1:331] With these words the Prophet emphasizes the sacred nature of earth or soil, not only as a pure entity but also as a purifying agent. This reverence towards soil is also demonstrated in the ritual of tayammum, or "dry wudu" which permits the use of dust in the performance of ritual purification before prayer when water is not available.

The Prophet saw earth as subservient to man, but recognised that it should not be overexploited or abused, and that it had rights, like the trees and wildlife living on it. In order to protect land, forests and wildlife, the Prophet created inviolable zones known as hima and haram, in which resources were to be left untouched. Both are still in use today: haram areas are often drawn up around wells and water sources to protect the groundwater table from over-pumping. Hima applies particularly to wildlife and forestry and usually designates an area of land where grazing and woodcutting are restricted, or where certain animal species are protected.

The Prophet not only encouraged the sustainable use of fertile lands, he also told his followers of the benefits of making unused land productive: planting a tree, sowing a seed and irrigating dry land were all regarded as charitable deeds. "Whoever brings dead land to life, that is, cultivates wasteland, for him is a reward therein." Thus any person who irrigates a plot of "dead", or desert land becomes its rightful owner.

Conservation of Water

In the harsh desert environment

where the Prophet lived, water was synonymous to life. Water was a gift from God, the source of all life on earth as is testified in the Qur'an: "We made from water every living thing" [21:30]. The Qur'an constantly reminds believers that they are but the guardians of God's creation on earth and that they should never take this creation for granted: "Consider the water which you drink. Was it you that brought it down from the rain cloud or We? If We had pleased, We could make it bitter" [56:68-70].

Saving water and safeguarding its purity were two important issues for the Prophet: we have seen that his concern about the sustainable use of water led to the creation of haram zones in the vicinity of water sources. But even when water was abundant, he advocated thriftiness: thus he recommended that believers perform wudu no more than three times, even if they were near to a flowing spring or river. The theologian El-Bukhari added: "The men of science disapprove of exaggeration and also of exceeding the number of ablutions of the Prophet." The Prophet also warned against water pollution by forbidding urination in stagnant water.

The Treatment of Animals:

"If anyone wrongfully kills even a sparrow, let alone anything greater, he will face God's interrogation" [Mishkat al Masabih]. These words reflect the great reverence, respect and love that the Prophet always showed towards animals. He believed that as part of God's creation, animals should be treated with dignity, and the hadith contains a large collection of traditions, admonitions and stories about his relationship to animals. It shows that he had particular consideration for horses and camels: to him they

~~were valiant companions during journey and battle, and he found great solace and wisdom in their presence as the following tradition reveals: "In the forehead of horses are tied up welfare and bliss until the Day of Resurrection."~~

Even in the slaughter of animals, the Prophet showed great gentleness and sensitivity. While he did not practice vegetarianism, the hadiths clearly show that the Prophet was extremely sensitive to the suffering of animals, almost as though he shared their pain viscerally. Thus he recommends using sharp knives and a good method so that the animal can die a quick death with as little pain as possible. He also warned against slaughtering an animal in the presence of other animals, or letting the animal witness the sharpening of blades: to him that was equal to "slaughtering the animal twice" and he emphatically condemned such practices as "abominable".

Conclusion

It is impossible to do justice to the full scope and significance of Prophet Mohammed's environmental philosophy in this short article. His holistic view of nature and his understanding of man's place within the natural world pioneered environmental awareness within the Muslim community.

Sadly, the harmony that the Prophet advocated between man and his environment has today all too often been lost. As we face the effects of pollution and overexploitation, desertification and water scarcity in some parts of the world and floods and violent storms elsewhere, it is perhaps time for the world community as a whole, Muslims, Christians and Jews, Hindus and Buddhists, atheists and agnostics, to take a leaf out of the Prophet's book and address the current environmental crisis seriously and wisely

"He who is content with a little (livelihood), Allah will be satisfied with him (for) his minimum deeds". Mishkaat

Islamophobia

Deliberate Fabrications

A former journalist with the British tabloid newspaper the Daily Star has repeated accusations that a number of British daily newspapers put pressure on journalists to fabricate anti-Muslim stories.

Richard Peppiatt, who worked as a full-time freelance journalist at the Daily Star for two years, claimed that editors forced journalists to fabricate news that suggested Muslims and immigrants were threatening national security.

He said the fabricated stories were mainly related to Muslims, depicting them as a threat to British society. The defamatory stories became more widespread after the bombings in London on June 7, 2005 — often referred to as 7/7 — and the Sept. 11, 2001 attack on the United States.

“Especially since 7/7 and, to a degree, since 9/11, Muslims have certainly been painted as the ‘cartoon baddy.’ Definitely in the tabloids. Someone always has to be blamed, you can’t just leave it up in the air when something happens; somebody always needs to take the blame. Sadly it’s the Muslims that have been chosen to be portrayed as the ‘baddies,’” he told Cihan in a phone interview.

Peppiatt noted that it was not possible for Muslims to take action against the publication of derogatory articles because it is only possible for an individual who has been mentioned by name to make a complaint to the Press Complaints Commission (PCC), the regulatory body for UK magazines and newspapers. However, if a group or a religion is targeted it is difficult to file a complaint.

“It was therefore challenging for Muslims to complain as there was no one individual being affected by the articles. However, it clearly does affect individuals as it affects the way people behave towards each other in society. I certainly came to understand that what we print in the media has a direct effect on the lives of individuals; this can lead to violence on the streets, based on what we write,” Peppiatt told Cihan.

He also noted that statistics about immigrants in the country were being changed to present a negative picture of them.

“[There was fabrication in the Daily Star] regarding the number of jobs immigrants are taking and the numbers arriving in Britain. It is in stories about that where the statistics were de-contextualized and sensationalized to make the scenario look much worse than it actually is.

They will mention how many come and not how many have left. There have been cases in which there has been a net drop in immigration figures, but that was never mentioned as it did not fit the narrative of painting immigrants in a bad light. There was no fair perspective and no consideration that immigrants are trying to get a better life. This was done on purpose, as the editors wanted to present a negative perspective on immigration,” he said.

Peppiatt made his first confessions on the issue last November when he spoke to the Leveson Inquiry, chaired by Lord Justice Leveson at the Royal Courts of Justice in London, which is currently looking at the culture, practices and ethics of the British press in

general. The inquiry was launched following the News International phone hacking scandal.

"...This naturally led to fabrication in order to fulfill an unrealistic quota. Much more insidious was when this same philosophy was applied to stories involving Muslims and immigrants, when yet again a top down pressure to unearth stories which fitted within a certain narrative (immigrants are taking over, Muslims are a threat to security) led to casual and systemic distortions. In short, ethical concerns were always subservient to financial ones," Peppiatt told the Leveson Inquiry.

Regarding the reasons why he made the confessions, Peppiatt told Cihan that for a long time he had not been happy about the stories he was asked to write. "The only way to combat what the sensationalists were writing was to be sensationalist myself, to embarrass them publically. Leaving quietly would not have made a difference. It was a gamble that may have embarrassed them into changing their behavior a little bit," he added.

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Excellent Method of Reformation

Hafiz Ibnu Katheer (RA) has reported on the authority of Ibnu Abi Haatim (RA) that a strong and powerful person from Syria used to frequent the gathering of Hadhrat Umar (RA). When he did not come for some time, Umar (RA) enquired about him. Those around replied: "O Ameer-ul-Mu'mineen! He is addicted to wine." Umar (RA) summoned his scribe and ordered him to write (the following letter):

From Umar bin Khattab to so and so. Peace be upon you. Before you do I praise Allah whom there is none worthy of worship besides Him, the One who forgives sins and accepts repentance, Who is severe in punishment, the All Mighty. There is none worthy of worship besides Him. To Him is the place of return.

Thereafter, Umar (RA) instructed those in his presence to collectively make du`aa for him that his heart accepts this message and that Allah Ta`ala accepts his repentance.

When the letter of Umar (RA) reached him he read it many times over and pondered its contents. He then declared that in this I have been warned of punishment and at the same time promised of being forgiven. Thereafter he wept and quit drinking. He made such taubah that he never returned to drinking.

When Umar (RA) was informed of this he said to the people: "In such situations you all should adopt the same procedure. You should be concerned to reform him when he is involved in any vice. Make him hopeful of the mercy of Allah Ta`ala and make du`aa to Allah Ta`ala for the acceptance of his taubah. Do not assist Shaitaan against him (by ridiculing and enraging him, thereby causing him to go further away from Deen)." (Tafseer Ibn Katheer, vol. 4, p. 74)

Inevitable Tests for Believers

In the name of God, the Lord of Grace, the Ever Merciful Alif. Lam. Mim. Do people think that once they say: 'We are believers', they will be left alone and will not be put to a test? We certainly tested those who lived before them; and so most certainly God knows those who speak the truth and most certainly He knows those who are liars. (The Spider, Al-Ankaboot: 29:1-3)

Alif. Lam. Mim. These are three of the separate Arabic letters that occur at the beginning of some Qur'anic surahs. In our view, they are meant to alert the audience to the fact that such letters are the material from which the divine book given to the Prophet, i.e. the Qur'an, is made. They are familiar to the Arabs who use them to compose whatever ideas they wish to express. Yet they cannot compose anything like this divine book, because it is of no man's composition; its author is God.

Surahs that start with such separate letters always speak about the Qur'an, either immediately following these letters or later on, as is the case in the present surah. Hence, we read in its verses: 'Recite what has been revealed to you of the book.' (Verse 45) 'Thus it is that We have revealed this book to you.' (Verse 47) 'Never have you been able to read a book before this, nor have you ever been able to transcribe one with your right hand.' (Verse 48) 'Is it not enough for them that We have revealed to you this book which is being read out to them?' (Verse 51) The fact that references to the Qur'an and its inimitable style are invariably made in these surahs confirms our view concerning these separate letters.

Immediately after the opening, the

surah begins speaking about faith and the hard test believers are subjected to in order to make their belief a reality. It mentions that it is through such testing that true believers are distinguished from liars: 'Do people think that once they say: 'We are believers', they will be left alone and will not be put to a test? We certainly tested those who lived before them; and so most certainly God knows those who speak the truth and most certainly He knows those who are liars.' (Verses 2-3)

This is the first strong note made in the surah, given in the form of a rhetorical question about people's concept of faith. They often imagine that it is merely a word they utter: 'Do people think that once they say: 'We are believers', they will be left alone?'

Belief is not a mere word we say; it is a reality that imposes duties, a trust that carries requirements and a struggle that demands patience and perseverance. It is not enough that people should claim to believe. When they make this claim they are not left alone. They are subjected to tests so as to prove their sincerity and true metal, just as gold is tested with fire so as to separate it from any cheap elements. The Arabic word used here for test derives from the root fitnah, which imparts exactly this sense of being subjected to a test with all that this implies.

Such tests to prove people's belief is a general and long established rule: 'We certainly tested those who lived before them; and so most certainly God knows those who speak the truth and most certainly He knows those who are liars.' (Verse 3) God certainly knows what people harbor in their hearts before any test, but the test reveals, in prac-

tice, what is known to God, yet hidden from human knowledge. He thus makes people accountable for what they actually do, not for what He knows of their reality. This is, in one sense, an act of grace, while in another, it is an act of justice. At the same time, it sets an edifying example for people so that they do not hold anyone accountable for anything other than what is clearly apparent of their deeds and what such deeds entail. They should remember that they cannot know what is in another's heart; only God knows that.

Let us now discuss the general rule that God has set in operation, one whereby believers are subjected to a test so as to distinguish those who are truthful from those who lie. Faith is the trust God has placed in this world of ours. It is borne only by those who are worthy of it, have the strength to bear it and are totally devoted to it. They must prefer it to their own comfort, safety, security, and all temptation. This trust entails being in charge of the earth, leading mankind along the way God has chosen for them, implementing His word in life. Hence, this trust is both noble and heavy. It is part of God's command, and as such, it needs a certain type of person to patiently endure adversity.

As part of the test, a believer is subjected to hardship by others. Believers often realize they have no one to support or defend them and that they lack the power with which to face tyranny. This is the immediate picture our minds see when tests are mentioned, but it is certainly not the hardest type of test. There are many different types of testing, some far more trying and difficult.

There is, for example, the test presented by family and loved ones. A believer may fear that the sacrifices he is called upon to make could put his family in a perilous situation, or that he cannot protect his loved ones. On their part, fearing for his life, his

loved ones may call on him to compromise or to give up. They may appeal to him in the name of their close relation not to expose himself to destruction, or burden them with what they cannot bear. The surah refers to an aspect of such testing with parents, and this is very difficult to pass.

Another form of test is to see those who are deep in error and follow falsehood reveling in success, with the world at their feet, applauded by the masses, and with no obstacles in their way. Glory comes easy to them and everything in life is theirs to enjoy. Contrast this with the believer who finds himself ignored, unnoticed and undefended. Only a few people like him appreciate the value of the truth in which he believes, but none of these has any say in life.

Source: Arab News

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of the dangers of the street.

The psychology here is over the edge, but "when you ask young men to go kill people for a living . . ."

Let us stop shrugging off the madness of war - and I mean that term literally. We try to contain this madness with crisp rhetoric, discipline and honor codes, but human psychology will have none of that.

As Matthis Chiroux, an Afghan vet and war resister, pointed out recently in an excellent essay, the phenomenon of "war porn" - the photographic record of desecrated corpses - is widespread within the ranks and aggravated by our long, slow defeat in the war on terror: our inability to impose our will on a living enemy. "Historically, defeated or nearly defeated armies have been guilty of some of the most serious atrocities," Matthis writes.

When the glory of victory eludes us, we can only impose our will on corpses.

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Source: Tribune Media Services

Even Prophets Felt Distress and Turned to Allah

By Aisha Stacey

Du'a is the weapon of the believer; therefore, there is no need to resort to despair, or anger, because sharing our grief with God is a way of relieving and overcoming burdens.

Du'a is the essence of worship that there is etiquette when supplicating God for anything, both in times of need and when we praise and thank Him so here we will look at the way the Prophets made du'a.

Role Models

As we know the Prophets throughout time always had special and close relationships with God. They turned to Him in times of distress and need, and they never forgot to praise and thank Him for the countless blessings in their lives. The Prophets were aware of the importance of patience and gratitude and above all their relationships with God were bonds formed due to their complete and utter submission to His will. However, even with such trust and love they still at times became scared or distressed, and felt alone and overwhelmed.

Consequently, the Prophets turned to God and called on Him to make them patient and steadfast, they asked for help in this life and bliss in the next. They called on God to make their families and companions righteous and patient, and to make themselves and all around them, grateful and serene.

Although God loves us to turn to Him and speak the words that flow from our hearts, the words of the Prophets are more complete and submissive to God's will, then

we could hope to be. Supplicating God with the du'as found in the Quran and the authentic traditions of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, is a righteous and comforting practice.

When Adam and Eve were expelled from heaven, Adam turned to God in repentance:

{Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If You forgive us not, and bestow not upon us Your Mercy, we shall certainly be of the losers} (Al-'Araf 7:23)

Humankind continues to make mistakes and commit sins but we only harm ourselves. Our sins and mistakes do not harm God. However if God does not forgive us and have mercy on us, we will surely be among the losers.

When Prophet Jonah, peace be upon him, awoke in the belly of the whale he thought he was dead and was lying in the darkness of his grave. He felt around him and realized that this was not a grave but the belly of the giant whale. He was afraid and raised his voice calling out to God:

{None has the right to be worshipped but you oh God, far removed are you from every imperfection and truly I have been one of the wrongdoers!} (Al-Anbiya' 21:87)

How many times has each one of us sunk to the ground or into a chair in despair?

Throughout his life Prophet Job was put through many trials and tests by God but he remained steadfast, patient and was constantly turning to God for forgiveness. Even

when he felt at his most helpless he did not complain but turned to God and begged for forgiveness. He said:

{Verily distress has seized me and You are the Most Merciful of all those who show mercy} (Al-Anbiya' 21:83)

The Quran relates to us the stories of the prophets in order that we might learn from them. They are worthy role models and their lives are not so different from our own. How many times has each one of us sunk to the ground or into a chair in despair? How many times have we felt so physically or mentally exhausted that it seems we will be unable to go on for even one more second?

Prophet Moses

Prophet Moses was forced to flee Egypt and walk out into the desert to face an unknown future. After walking for more than a week across the burning sands, he came to an oasis. It was there that this man of honor helped the women at the well before flinging himself under a tree and calling out to God for help.

Moses knew that God was the only One who could deliver him from his predicament, so he turned to God and before his supplication was finished help was on its way. Moses was probably hoping for a slice of bread or a handful of dates but instead God gave him safety, provisions and a family.

{My Lord! Truly, I am in need of whatever good that You bestow on me!} (Al-Qasas 28:24)

There are lessons for humankind throughout the story of Prophet Moses. When Moses was sent by God to confront Pharaoh, he was afraid that he would not be able to live up to God's demands, but instead of complaining or despairing Moses turned to God and made du'a.

{O my Lord! Open for me my chest (grant me self-confidence, contentment, and boldness). And ease my task for me; and make loose the

knot (the defect) from my tongue, (remove the incorrectness of my speech) that they understand my speech} (Ta-Ha 20:25)

After Moses learned of the great evil his people had committed by building the golden calf, he was angry. However, even amidst such wrongdoing he called upon God to have mercy upon them all.

{You are our Protector, so forgive us and have Mercy on us, for You are the best of those who forgive. And ordain for us good in this world, and in the Hereafter.} (Al-A'raf 7:155-156)

Prophet Solomon

Putting our trust in God and submitting to His will allows the believer to weather any storm

King (and Prophet) Solomon was acutely aware of the power of God. He always praised God for any condition that he was put in. He said:

{All praise and thanks is due to God} (Quran 27: 15).

Solomon also understood that no power or strength would be his, unless he requested it from God. He made du'a and asked for a kingdom that would never be surpassed. God granted his request and Prophet Solomon reigned over an empire the like of which we cannot imagine.

{He said, "My Lord! Forgive me, and bestow upon me a kingdom such as shall not belong to any other after me. Verily, You are the Bestower} (Sad 38:35)

These du'as are a small example of how the Prophets made du'a. Their stories and their du'as are found throughout the Quran. When we read the stories of Prophets Solomon, Joseph, Jacob or Abraham we find that they, and all of the Prophets, completely submitted to God. They raised their hands in supplication and requested help from God Alone.

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Be Careful**Living in the Age of
Email Forwards***Abu Abdullah Damiel*

The advent of modern technology has provided an unprecedented platform for individuals and groups to manufacture and spread false information about Islam at a large scale. This phenomenon is carried out by both, people who are members of the faith and others who are open adversaries of Islam. Whilst the latter group is less successful in its attempts to penetrate and circulate false teachings among Muslims, the first group for a long time, has had almost total success with very little opposition.

Though there is a small but growing circle of Muslims ever cautious and vigilant, aware of the dangers of false teachings and always demanding verification and proof, the vast majority of Muslims are completely oblivious to this predicament. Throughout the years, I have personally witnessed Imāms of mosques, students at universities and the average Muslim at home or at work, all inadvertently and naively involved in tampering with the pristine teachings of Islam. Commentaries are given of the Qur'ān with the aid of strange and fictitious Israelite traditions, aḥādīth are quoted, unanimously agreed by the scholars as fabrications, irrational statements are dressed up and put into the mouth of early Muslim scholars to gain legitimacy, and ridiculous rumors are spread without anyone questioning its authenticity or asking for a reference. Emails in particular are used as a vehicle to spread false information from person to person with astonishing

rapidity by encouraging recipients to forward messages, to everyone they know.

It is now quite normal to find our email boxes inundated with alleged miracles; like the "trees in the form of the shahādah in Germany", or famous conversion stories like, Neil Armstrong becoming a Muslim after hearing the adhān on the moon, or warnings on the birth of dajjāl with the help of doctored photographs or worst still fabricated aḥādīth on the merits of different actions.

Of course, this phenomenon is nothing new. Preachers, zealots, heretics, pamphleteers, story tellers and ignorant ascetics of every age give currency to legendary narratives and furnish it with a few of their own "pious inventions". Conscious of this problem, in the early centuries of Islam, a group of Muslims scholars took on the challenge and dedicated their lives to preserve the authentic statements of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and to purge out later additions. They travelled long arduous journeys, leaving their families and children and sacrificing the luxuries of food and comfort, deciphering hundreds of manuscripts, interrogating a multitude of men and writing volumes of books all with the intent of protecting and preserving this religion and eliminating fabrications.

Yet, the task is not over. Even today, the circulation of fables and fictitious legends continues via the pulpit, books, television and most recently the internet. If this trend con-

tinues unchecked it will lead to disastrous results.

It is only when we as Muslims work together, that we will be able to eradicate this problem. We must show a high level of caution and vigilance and avoid forwarding emails without verification. We must not quote or cite aḥādīth whose authenticity is unknown or doubtful. We should not feel inhibited or shy to ask someone for a reference or source.

In conclusion I would like to leave you with a few sayings of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and the early Muslim scholars on the dangers of falsely attributing a statement to the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and the importance of verifying information before it is passed on to others.

The Seriousness of telling lies about the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)

On the authority of ‘Alī (RA), the Messenger of Allāh (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: “Do not tell lies about me, for whoever tell lies about me will enter the Fire.” (Reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim)

It was narrated that Anas b. Mālik (RA) said: “What prevents me from narrating many aḥādīth to you is the fact that the Messenger of Allāh (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: “Whoever tells a lie about me deliberately, let him take his seat in the Fire.” (Reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim)

The prohibition of passing on any or every information that reaches you without verification.

It was narrated by Abū Hurayrah (RA) that the Messenger of Allāh (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: “It is a sufficient lie for a man to speak of everything that he hears.” (Reported by Muslim in the Introduction to his ṣaḥīḥ)

Imām Mālik said: “You should know that no man who speaks of everything that

he hears will be free of faults, and he will never be an Imām who speaks of everything that he hears.”

He further states “A person will not become an Imām in knowledge if he relates everything that he hears, and he will not be an Imām if he narrates from every single person and narrates odd (weak) reports.” (Reported by Muslim in the introduction to his ṣaḥīḥ)

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) warning us of people fabricating stories and aḥādīth.

It was narrated by Abū Hurayrah (RA) that the Messenger of Allāh (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: “During the end times of my ummah there will be imposters and liars who will narrate to you aḥādīth that neither you nor your forefathers ever heard. Beware of them and stay away from them, and do not let them mislead you or confuse you.” (Reported by Muslim in the introduction to his ṣaḥīḥ)

The importance of isnād and taking knowledge only from recognized authorities.

Imām Muḥammad b. Sīrīn said: “This knowledge (ḥadīth) is the foundation of religion, so watch from whom you learn your religion.” (Reported by Muslim in the introduction to his ṣaḥīḥ)

Ibn Abū Zinād narrated that his father said: “In al-Madīnah, I met one hundred men, all of whom were reliable, but no one accepted aḥādīth from them. It was said: “He is not one of its people.” (Reported by Muslim in the introduction to his ṣaḥīḥ)

Imām ‘Abd Allāh b. Mubārak said: “The chain of narration (isnād) is part of religion, were it not for the chain, anyone could say whatever he wanted.” (Reported by Muslim in the introduction to his ṣaḥīḥ)

Imām Sufyān ath-Thawrī said: “The isnād is the weapon of the Believer. So if he does not have a weapon with him, what will

he fight with?" [Sharaf Ashābāl Hadīth (1/15)]

Even people who appear righteous could fabricate aḥādīth unintentionally.

Imām Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd al-Qattān narrated from his father: "You will not see in good people anything worse than in telling lies about aḥādīth.

Imam Muslim commented: "This means, lies would flow from their tongues but they do not lie deliberately. (Reported by Muslim in the introduction to his ṣaḥīḥ)

Some statements from the early salaf.

Imām 'Abd'l-Rahmān b. Mahdī said: "it is not permissible for a man to be an Imam until he knows what is authentic (in ḥadīth) from what is not authentic."

Imām Sufyān ath-Thawrī said: "Increase in (the knowledge of) ḥadīth as it is a weapon (for you)."

Imām Sufyān al-Thawri said: "The angels are guardians of the sky, and the scholars of ḥadīth are the guardians on Earth."

Imām Yazīd b. Zarī' said: "For every religion there are knights, and the knights of this religion are the scholars of ḥadīth."

'Imām Abd Allāh b. Mubāarak said: "The example of the one who studies his Religion without an isnād is like the one who attempts to ascend a roof without a ladder." [Sharaf Ashābul Hadīth (1/15)]

Abū Mansūr b. Sallām al-Faqīh said: "There is nothing heavier upon the people of heresy and more hated by them than listening to the ḥadīth and its narration with its isnād." [Sharaf Ashābul Hadīth (2/36)]

Imām ash-Shawkānī describing the efforts of the early ḥadīth scholars writes:

"The scholars went to great extents to inform the people of fabricated aḥādīth, and they exposed the fairytales of liars, and removed from the aḥādīth of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) the false Attribu-

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Purification

On Repentance

Sayyiduna Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jeelani (RA)

The key to the fear of Allah is repentance, and sticking to it is the key to the nearness to Allah (*Azza wa Jall*). Repentance is the root and branch of every goodness, which is why the righteous persons never abandon it under any circumstances. Repent, O backsliders, O disobedient ones! Seek reconciliation with your Lord by means of repentance. This heart remains undeserving of the True One (*Azza wa Jall*) as long as it contains an atom of this world and longing for any creature. Therefore, when you seek His company, evict both of these attachments from your hearts. This will not cause you any harm. For once you have established a connection with Him, this world and the creatures will both come to you while you are with Him, at His door. This is an experienced thing; it has been experienced by the ascetics who renounced everything.

Repent and acknowledge your deficiency. Repentance is the water of the True One (*Azza wa Jall*). He revives the earth after its death with rain and quickens the hearts after their death with repentance and wakefulness. O disobedient ones, repent, never despair of the mercy of Allah (*Azza wa Jall*) and never lose hope of His mercifulness!

You must repent and ask for forgiveness frequently, for these are two great means in achieving success in the affairs of this world and the hereafter. Noah (AS) ordered his people to pray for forgiveness, and he promised them that He would respond by granting them forgiveness, putting this world at their command and at their service. So he

said, quoting Him (*Allah*): **{And ask forgiveness from your Lord, He was ever Forgiving. He will let loose the sky for you in plenteous rain, will succour you with wealth and sons, will assign to you gardens and will assign to you rivers}** [71. 10-12].

Repent from your sins and turn away from your current attribution of partners to Allah so that He will then grant you all that you wish for of things of this world and the hereafter.

You have sinned as your father Adam (*AS*) sinned, so repent as he did. When he and his wife Eve (*AS*) ate from the tree that their Lord forbade them to eat, He punished them with remoteness and stripped them of the rewards of His generosity. He left them naked, so they picked up leaves from Paradise (to cover their bodies). But the leaves dried up and fell, and they remained naked. They were then sent down to earth. All that occurred as a result of the evil of disobedience and non-compliance. The poison of disobedience flowed into their bodies so He expelled them. Then Allah (*Azza wa Jall*) taught them how to repent and ask for forgiveness. They did repent and asked for forgiveness, so He relented toward them and forgave them.

When will you repent, O backsliders, O disobedient ones? Be reconciled with your Lord (*'Azza wa Jall*) by means of repentance. Were it not for my feeling of shame in the presence of Allah (*'Azza wa Jall*) and of His patience, I would get up and grab one of you by the hand and say to him: "You have committed such and such. Repent to Allah (*'Azza wa Jall*)". You should not speak and you will not be spoken to until your faith, your certitude and your knowingness of your Master (*'Azza wa Jall*) have strengthened. Then, you will clinch to the firm handhold, which is the attainment of your heart to Him. The Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam*) will be proud of you before the nations. O you who have believed with your tongue, how long will it be before you believe

with your heart? O you who are a believer in your public life, how long will it be before you become a believer in your private life? Faith of the heart combined with striving against the lower self is the useful thing. Faith of the tongue associated with disbelief in your heart is useless. The faith of the hypocrite is the faith of one who is afraid of the sword.

O disobedient ones, repent from your disobedience, for your Lord (*'Azza wa Jall*) is Forgiving, Merciful! He accepts repentance from His servants, covers the sins and erases them. Repent with your tongues and your hearts. O Allah, we are repentant to you for every sin and guilt and we will never again commit them! **{O our Lord, do not condemn us if we forget or fall into error!}** [2.286]; **{O our Lord, do not deviate our hearts after You have guided us!}** [3. 8];

O Forgiver of sins, forgive us! O Veiler of shortcomings, draw a veil over our shortcomings! Ask Him for forgiveness, for He (*Allah*) forgives sins, accepts righteous deeds no matter how few they are and rewards in return things that are even better, for He is Generous and Bountiful. He gives rewards without recompense or reason, so how would it be if there is a reason?

Deal with Him by means of the belief in His oneness, performance of righteous deeds, detachment from this world and turning away from it, choosing the hereafter, welcoming it and wishing for it and giving up the acts of disobedience and pleasures and forsaking them. The seeker of the True One (*'Azza wa Jall*) does not wish for His Paradise and does not fear the Fire, but wishes for His countenance only. He wishes for his nearness to Him and fears his remoteness from Him. You are the prisoner of Satan, passion, the lower self, this world and lustful desires, yet you do not have a clue. Your leg and your heart are in shackles, yet you are totally unaware of this. O Allah, deliver him

from his captivity and deliver us! Amen. You must keep the fast, perform the five daily prayers at their prescribed times and honor all the limits of the Law. After performing the obligatory worshipping duties move to the supererogatory ones. Impose on yourself observing the strictest laws of religion [*'azeema*] and avert following the allowed concessions [*rukhsa*]. When the person resorts to these concessions and give up observing the strictest laws, it is to be feared that he will totally lose his religion. Observing the strictest laws is for grown men, because it is the endurance of that which is the most dangerous, hardest and most difficult. The allowed concessions are for youngsters and women because it is the easiest.

O young man, if you keep to repentance and proper reflection, you will give up all interests in worldly things and become occupied with those relevant to the hereafter! You will give up your interest in that which belongs to creatures and become occupied with that which belongs to the Creator, and you will give up committing evil and do only good. O you who have relinquished reflection and repentance, you are a loser but you do not have a clue! You are a loser not a winner. Your likeness is as the likeness of a man who sells and buys without keeping account of his expenditure or counting the cash. He will soon find that his capital has disappeared and what is left with him is bad, pseudo-silver coins. Woe unto you! Your capital, which is your lifetime, has gone while you do not have a clue! Everything that you have earned is counterfeit whereas everything that the believers have earned is a gem. The believer will soon fulfill his commitments, while you will be taken and thrown in prison. The True One will not accept a single atom of what you have, for the True One (*'Azza wa Jall*) accepts sincerity, while you have no sincerity. Have you not heard this saying of the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam*): "Call yourselves to account

before you are called to account, weigh yourselves before you are weighed and smarten yourselves up for the greatest parade".

It has been said that whomever Allah (*'Azza wa Jall*) wishes to be a knower of Him (*'Azza wa Jall*), one of His saints, one of His lovers, one of His sought after ones [*murad min mureedeh*], He assigns an angel to look after him in both his private and his public lives, foster his heart and his intention, drives away from him evil and allows only what is good to reach him. This is similar to what He (*Ta'ala*) said about Joseph (*AS*): **{Thus (did We order) to ward off from him evil and lewdness; he is of Our chosen servants}.**

This is what He did for the Prophets, the Messengers, the saints and the truthful (*AS*).

John (*AS*) was passing by children who were playing when they said to him: "Play with us". He replied: "Glory be to Allah, it is not for playing that we have been created". The lower selves of the people of Allah urge them to do good not evil. They have joined their hearts after being subjected to striving. Whenever their lower selves are striven against, they gain comfort and long for the Highest Companion. Listening to the Qur'an comes to be all their business. Before this, they used to hear only the sound and miss the meaning. Do not listen to or participate in prattle. The Qur'an is the source of life for the hearts and of pure serenity for the innermost beings and it lays the foundation for neighbouring ar-Rahman [the Merciful One] (*'Azza wa Jall*) in Paradise.

O young man, you have piled up sins one on top of another, and you are heading toward a vague, ambiguous end which can be either good or bad. Pay attention to death as there is no way that you can escape your death.

Give up indulging yourself in idle gossip and becoming involved in matters that are irrelevant to you. Curtail your hopes and

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The Ideal Prophet

The Historic Aspect of Prophet Muhammad's Life

Maulana Syed Sylaiman Nadvi (RA)

Continued from previous issue

Strong memory was the nature's gift to the Arabs who could memorise hundreds of verses eulogising their tribes and forefathers and even the horses of good breed. Like every other human faculty, retentive memory is also strengthened by constant practice. The Prophet's companions and their successors, who were always eager to store in their minds the smallest detail pertaining to the Prophet, had developed this faculty to unbelievable perfection. They used to learn by heart every act and incident, words and deeds of the Prophet with the same care and scrupulousness as the Muslims still memorise the Qur'an. Every traditionist could repeat, word for word, tens of thousands of traditions: and though he often committed them to writing, he could not expect to command the respect of others unless he could also reproduce them from his memory. Since consultation of one's writings was taken as an evidence of forgetfulness and was a discredit to a scholar, one normally kept such annotations for private use only.

Some orientalists, particularly Sir William Mur and Ignaz Goldziher, have raked together all possible doubts about the accuracy of the traditions, particularly in regard to their codification and compilation, which, they assert, were taken in hand ninety years after the death of the Prophet. I have explained here in some detail what meticulous and painstaking efforts were made by the companions of the Prophet, from the very first day, to ensure the accuracy of the traditions. Their trustworthi-

ness, solicitude and carefulness are, of a fact, sufficient to set at rest all the doubts in this regard.

Nevertheless, there were reasons, as I would presently tell you, for the diffidence of the companions to put the traditions into writing, at least, in the earlier stages.

The first reason was that in the initial stages the Prophet had forbidden to write anything save the sacred Scripture. The Prophet is related to have instructed his companions: "Do not write anything from me except the Quran." This command was meant for the commonalty in order to guard against the mixing up of the revelations with the traditions. But when the revelation was fairly completed and the people had learnt to distinguish between the two, the Prophet permitted the companions to take down what they heard from him. There were, however, companions who ever remained overcautious and refrained from writing anything of the traditions for the fear of committing a mistake and thus incurring the displeasure of the Prophet.

Another reason, as referred to earlier, was the diffidence of the Arabs to write anything that ought to be memorised. "Some of the companions held the View that once the narratives relating to the Prophet were put into writing, the people would give up the practice of learning them by heart. In their view, writing of anything made the people indolent, for, once a written record came into existence, people developed the habit of consulting it when need arose. The fear was not entirely unfounded, since, we see that as the annotations of

traditions grew in number, scholars gradually gave up the practice of enshrining them in their memory. Later on, it did not remain a bar to scholarship to rely entirely on written records.

The third reason was that the Arabs disliked to write anything and then get it to their heart and memorise it by rote. To them, it was an evidence of short memory and, for that reason, if anybody ever took down something, he tried to hide it from others.

The earlier scholars were of the opinion that anything inscribed in the hearts of the people was much safer and more lasting than what was penned on paper. A written record was, in their view, always open to interpolation and destruction while something dwelling in the people's memory was beyond the reach of every intrusion.

For all that, it is a canard to assert that the reports about the Prophet's teachings, life and conduct were transmitted only by word of mouth to the first ninety or hundred years, as assumed by the orientalist. The reason for this erroneous assumption is that the *Muwatta* of Malik b. Anas and the *Al-Maghazi* of Ibn Is'haq are generally taken as the first compilations on the Prophet's biography. Both these writers were contemporaries who died in 179/795 and 151/768 respectively, and hence these sciences were wrongly dated as originating in the second century after *Hijrah*. The facts are, however, otherwise, since there is ample evidence to prove that the compilation of these "materials had started much earlier.

Caliph Umar b. Abd Al-Aziz, who died in the year 101/719, was himself a noted scholar and had been the governor of Madina before his nomination as Caliph in 99/717. Immediately after ascending the caliphate, he sent an edict to Qazi Abu Bakr b. Muhammad b. 'Amr b. Hazm al-Ansari (d. 117/735) saying: "Start compiling the traditions of the Prophet, for I fear that these will be lost gradually."

The command of Umar b. 'Abd al-

'Aziz,, mentioned in the *Tahaqat* of al-Bukhari *Muwatta* of Malik and *Musnad* of Darimi, was executed by Qazi Abu Bakr who compiled all the available reports and submitted them to the Caliph. Copies of this compilation were sent to all the provincial capitals of the Islamic empire. Qazi Abu Bakr was specially selected for the job since he was then Qazi at Madina. An additional reason for his selection was that his mother's sister, 'Amra, was the chief disciple of 'Ayesha, the wife of the Prophet and the mother of believers, and thus whatever the former had learnt from her venerable mentor had already been committed into writing by Qazi Abu Bakr. Caliph 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz had accordingly asked him to pay particular attention to codify the traditions transmitted by 'Ayesha.

There is, in fact, sufficient evidence to show that several reports of the commands and utterances, events and incidents relating to the Prophet had been compiled during his life-time. On the occasion of the peaceful occupation of Makkah, the holy Prophet had a sermon. Al-Bukhari and several other traditionists report that on the request of Abu Shah, a companion hailing from Yemen, the Prophet had caused the sermon delivered by him to be transcribed. Prophet of Islam had also sent letters to several emperors and rulers of the countries around Arabia inviting them to embrace Islam. A few years back, the letter addressed by the Prophet to Muqagis of Egypt was discovered within the hardcover of a book preserved in a local monastery. The photostatic copy of the letter, since published, confirms the content of reports transmitted by the early scholars of traditions, word for word, leaving no doubt about its authenticity. What else can one demand for the authenticity and trustworthiness of traditionists? Abu Huraira is once reported to have claimed that nobody except 'Abd Allah b. Amr b. al-'As possessed a larger collection of the traditions than he had, but it was because the latter took down what he heard from the

Prophet while Abu Huraira did not do so. Another tradition preserved in *As-Sunan Abu Dawud* and *Musnad Ibn Hanbal* says that 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr had, on one occasion, discontinued reducing the traditions into writing. It is related that an objection was raised that it was improper to take down everything for the prophet was, at times, in different frames of mind, happy or angry, and some of the remarks might not be actually meant for guidance of the people not present on the occasion. Later on, 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr raised the matter with the Prophet, who, pointing to his lips, replied, "You can write. Whatever comes out of them is just and right." 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr once remarked that of the two things for which he wanted God to grant him life, one was *the-sadiqa* in which he had written down whatever he had heard from the Prophet in his own words. On another occasion, when Mujahid enquired from 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr about *Sadiqa*, the latter replied, "This is *Sadiqs* in which I have written down the Prophet's words as I heard them from him. Nobody intervenes in it between me and the Prophet."

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As believers we must never forget that God hears our du'as and supplications, and answers. Sometimes the wisdom behind the answers is beyond our comprehension but God desires only good for us. Putting our trust in God and submitting to His will allows the believer to weather any storm, and to stand tall in the face of adversity. We are never alone.

Source: islamreligion.com

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reduce your greedy keenness on obtaining worldly things because you will soon be dead. Your death is so close that it may come while you are sitting here. In this case you will have come here on foot but get carried back to your house in a coffin.

The Dignity of Corpses

By: Robert C. Koehler

(Associated Press) - This image made on Thursday, Jan. 12, 2012 from undated video posted on the Internet on Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2012 by a YouTube user who identified himself as "semperfiLoneVoice" shows men in U.S. Marine combat gear, standing in a semi-circle over three bodies. U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta is branding as "utterly despicable" the video purporting to show four U.S. Marines urinating on the corpses of Taliban fighters. The Marine Corps had said Wednesday that it was looking into the YouTube video but hadn't yet verified its origin or authenticity.

Civilization hasn't successfully drawn a moral border at the sanctity of human life itself, but because it needs to put some limit on human behavior, it has, apparently, taken a last stand at the dignity of corpses.

It's OK to kill your enemy, but not to urinate on him, at least not after he's dead.

The latest scandal of the war on terror - the release of the video of four Marines urinating on the corpses of two dead Afghans ("Have a good day, buddy") - has turned the game of geopolitics downright surreal. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, exercising code-red damage control, said the men may be guilty of a war crime. Official condemnation of the act has been far swifter and more severe than the routine statements issued by Pentagon spokespersons after the mere bombing of a village and the deaths of disputed numbers of women and children. There were no press releases dismissing the incident because the desecrated Afghans

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were insurgents.

It was almost as though, in the game of war, where nothing is sacred except the supremacy of power - winning - this is where power stops and humanity begins: You must respect your enemy's dead body. It says so right there in the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

However, upon reflection, it seems to me that, in all likelihood, in an era where positive spin is crucial to a successful war effort, the official stand in defence of the dignity of corpses may not be in deference to morality so much as public relations. If skewering the head of one's enemy on a pike furthered a political end, official "thou shalt not" morality would manage to find a loophole for such behavior (it's for the greater good), and the nation's ultimate moral stand would retreat even further into obscurity and irrelevance.

My point is this: Morality is no match for the need to win, for the culture of domination. And the moral bedrock of civilization is nothing but sandstone.

This is not a plea for sterner morality but for a shift away from domination mentality, whether at the personal, the corporate or the geopolitical level - or at least for public awareness of the price we pay when we build a nation around the endless defeat of enemies, real and imagined.

"When you ask young men to go kill people for a living, it takes a whole lot of effort to rein that in."

The quote is from a breezy Associated Press story about the urination incident, putting corpse desecration into context. The speaker is a Marine lieutenant "who teaches the law of war to Marines before they are sent off to Afghanistan." His point is that we shouldn't judge these men too harshly.

The point is made with more vehemence further down in the story, when the reporters quote a Vietnam vet who sneers at

the public's "naïveté" about war: "I did a hell of a lot worse in Vietnam than urinate on some dead bodies," he said. "We cut left ears off and wore them around our necks to show we were warriors, and we knew how to get revenge."

It's just part of the time-honored tradition of war, from Achilles and Hector onward through the bloodstained millennia. The AP story reads like the shadow version of the speech President Obama gave at Fort Bragg last month, announcing the shutdown of the Iraq operation: "You are part of an unbroken line of heroes spanning two centuries . . ."

When war is merely upcoming - with Iran, for instance - we talk about it with matter-of-fact abstraction and, of course, urgency. Gotta do it now or . . . or . . . Iran will become a member of the nuclear club, and then there will be hell to pay. And then we go to war and there is, indeed, hell to pay, but we pay it with a shrug and the unspoken words: What did you expect? "When you ask young men to go kill people for a living, it takes a whole lot of effort to rein that in."

Such quotes, however, did not accompany the recent stories about another former Marine, 23-year-old Itzcoatl Ocampo, who served in Iraq in 2008 and was arrested last week for the murders of four homeless men in Anaheim and Yorba Linda, Calif.

Ocampo, by all accounts, suffered not only serious and untreated PTSD related to his military service, but had this condition compounded by poverty. "After he left active duty in 2010, Ocampo returned to Orange County to find his father living under a bridge," according to a KTLA-TV report. His father was homeless! He loved his father. He started stalking and murdering homeless men - desecrating their corpses with 40 or more stab wounds - and even showed a picture of one of his victims to his father, warning him

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Science Upholds Faith

The Baby's "Water of Life" and the First Breath

From the first human being until now, the production of amniotic fluid has continued flawlessly. Without it, a baby could not develop in its mother's womb.

Harun Yahya

Amniotic fluid is specially produced for the baby; it ensures that the organs are prepared to function after birth. The baby, as it were, practices with the amniotic fluid to become accustomed to the outside world by regularly ingesting it. In this way, its tongue begins to perceive bit-ter, sweet, salty and sour tastes. Afterward, the salivary glands begin to function. The amniotic fluid ingested by the foetus begins to prepare the intestines for their absorptive function, and it makes the kidneys function by creating the necessity for the constant filtration of this same fluid from the blood. The fluid absorbed from the kidneys is transmitted back again to the amniotic fluid, without contaminating it, because the kidneys have the ability, distinct from their later function, to filter and sterilize the fluid ingested by the baby. And this fluid, as when you clean a swimming pool, is continually purified with the help of a few other fluids.

In the same period along with these developments, digestive fluids begin to be secreted in the stomach in order that the digestive system may be fully prepared. (Flanagan, G.L. (1996). *Beginning Life*. Dorling Kindersley, London, p. 64.) And the cells in the baby's newly formed intestines acquire the ability to distinguish between sugars and salts and later to return particular waste

products to the mother's blood. In this way, both the intestines and the kidneys are put into action. The amniotic fluid is ingested by the intestines of the foetus once every three hours, that is, eight times a day and is returned to the mother via the blood. As much fluid as is ingested is released to the pool of amniotic fluid both from the mother's womb and from the lungs and kidneys of the foetus where it is produced. In this way, the amount of this fluid, so vitally important for the foetus, remains constant. Because of this perfect system, the digestive system of the foetus is put into operation without any harm to the foetus.

The amniotic fluid not only prepares the digestive system for the post-birth period, but also ensures that the baby may move more comfortably in the mother's womb. The foetus floats in this fluid like a rowboat tied up in a harbour. In this state it can move very securely in the mother's womb. At the same time, this fluid protects the foetus from any physical trauma from outside. Pressure applied on the fluid from any direction is dispersed equally in every direction protecting the foetus from any harmful effects. For example, if the mother runs, the jolts produced have no effect on the baby; it is like a cork shaken in a container filled with water. The most perfect protective

system possible has been created for the foetus; every kind of danger has been foreseen and precautions taken.

The presence of amniotic fluid is also important for the health of the mother. This fluid fills the whole womb, so as the foetus grows and gains weight; no pressure is exerted on the womb itself. If this fluid were not present, the growing foetus would weigh the uterus down and the counter-pressure exerted by the uterine walls would make the normal development of the foetus impossible.

This special fluid provides another vital necessity for the foetus: a constant temperature. It is known that fluids distribute heat evenly. The amniotic fluid is recycled continually and has a constant temperature. The heat needed for the development of the foetus is distributed equally in every direction.

If there is a single problem with the production of this fluid, with its continuous purification or the adjustment of its volume, the natural development of the foetus is impaired. For example, if the amount of amniotic fluid is less than required, or if it is not present at all, a series of abnormalities begins to appear. Limbs wither and become deformed, joints fuse, skin loosens and, because of pressure, the face is deformed. The most serious problem is that the development of the lungs is impeded and the baby dies immediately after birth. (Science et Vic, (March, 1995). No.190.p. 112-113.)

All this shows us that from the first human being until now, the production of amniotic fluid has continued flawlessly. Without it, a baby could not develop in its mother's womb. This fact completely discredits the evolutionists' claim that development occurs stage by stage over a period of time. If one single stage in the creation of a new Human being did not occur, for example, as

we said just now, if the production of amniotic fluid were deficient, birth could never take place and the human race would never have come into existence. Therefore, it cannot be claimed that amniotic fluid began to be produced over a period of time when the need for it arose. This fluid must exist along with the baby. It is impossible to claim that such a fluid, which has such important functions, was formed in a moment by chance. To say that a complex organism came to exist in a moment is to say that this organism was created. It is impossible for chance actions to calculate, determine needs, to select the things appropriate for these needs and apply them at the right time and in the right place.

It is clear that Allah creates the amniotic fluid and the systems to which it is connected. He too determines the amount of amniotic fluid required. "Allah knows what every female bears and every shrinking of the womb and every swelling. Everything has its measure with Him." [3: 8]

After birth the most important thing for the baby is to breathe; it is necessary that the lungs, which had never known air before, fill with it and start to breathe. The baby, who had previously received oxygen from the mother's blood, must now take it from the air with his own lungs. And in a miraculous way, the lungs, when had never taken a breath before the first moment of birth, begin to breathe quite normally.

At the moment the baby is born, Allah creates everything in readiness and ensures that the preparation of the lungs has been completed as required. For the preparation of the lungs, the diaphragm comes into play; it is located between the stomach and the rib cage. The diaphragm begins to function towards the sixth month of pregnancy. At first it expands and contracts intermittently several times an hour, but after birth it will do this continuously.

It can be seen from this that the baby is constantly under special protection, but it must be remembered that this is not the mother's protection. As the foetus develops, the mother carries on her normal life; none of the changes in her body are under her control. Even if she wanted to intervene, she could not. All these developments occur by the eternal power of our Lord. Allah has created all the things required for a child to come into the world as a normal human being in the most wonderful way. All the needs of the baby while it is in the ictus stage are met, and the mother is spared the necessity of thinking about what she must do to bring the baby into the world and ensure that the baby will survive.

Even if she thought about doing something to this end, there is nothing she could do. For example, taking waste material from the body of the foetus into her own kidneys, purifying it and discharging it are things which no mother could do on her own. It is Allah who determines all the needs for a new human being to come into the world and constructs the system in the way that will best respond to these needs.

Al-Jumuah, Vol. 15 Issue 7

Talking of Madinah

What type of world would it have been without Makkah and Madinah?

By Shaykh Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (RA)

Friends have invited me to give a talk on Madinah, describing what I saw there, and I have readily agreed. As a Persian poet has said: "To talk of the beloved is no less pleasant than to meet him."

I do not know when I first heard of Makkah and Madinah. Like all Muslim children, I was brought up in an environment in which Hijaz (Arabia) and Makkah and Madinah were household words. I, distinctly, remember people saying Makkah, Madinah together as if these were the same. When they took the name of one of them, they, generally, mentioned that of the other as well. I, thus, came to imagine that Makkah and Madinah were not two different places, but one, and learnt to appreciate the difference only as I grew up. It, then, became clear that these were two different towns separated from each other by over 300 kilometers.

In my childhood, I had heard people talking about Arabia and the two towns with the same fervor and enthusiasm as they did about Paradise and its joys and comforts, and it was from that time that I was seized with the desire to attain Paradise and visit Arabia.

Soon I realized that it was not possible for anyone to see Paradise during his lifetime, but he could, of course, go to Arabia. Parties of Hajjis (pilgrims) were visiting it regularly. So, why could I, also, not make a visit to that 'Paradise of Faith?'

It relieved humanity of the heavy load under which it was groaning and broke the fetters unjust rulers and ignorant lawgivers had put around its feet.

Days rolled by and I grew in age. My old eagerness was revived when I read books on the life of the Holy Prophet and studied the history of Islam, and the urge to perform the Hajj and make the pilgrimage to Makkah and Madinah became so strong that I was never without it.

Then, it so happened that I did reach the place where neither the grass grew nor rivers flowed. Only barren mountains stood on all sides of it like sentinels. Yet, as famous Pakistani poet Hafeez Jullundri has said:

*Neither grass grows here nor flowers bloom,
Yet even heavens bend themselves low to
meet it.*

As I saw the apparently unattractive stretch of land, I felt how devoid of scenery that town was. At the same time, however, I thought what a great favor it had bestowed upon mankind. Without it, the wide world would have been nothing more than a golden cage, and man, a prisoner. This was the town that took man out of the narrow confines of the earth and made him acquainted with limitless possibilities of development, and restored to mankind its glory and freedom. It relieved humanity of the heavy load under which it was groaning and broke the fetters unjust rulers and ignorant lawgivers had put around its feet.

As I reflected over what the world would have been without this town, I thought of comparing it with the bigger towns of the world and seeing what would have been the loss of human race and civilization had the latter not come into existence. One by one, all those towns came to my mind, and I felt that they were flourishing merely for the sake of a handful of men and had made no notable contribution to human progress and happiness. On the contrary, they had been guilty of various sins against man, at various stages of history. For selfish gain, one town had razed the other to the ground, and one country had ravaged the other countries.

Civilization would have been none the poorer without those cities. But without Makkah, humanity would have, certainly, remained unblessed with truths, beliefs, ideals and sciences that were its pride today. It was owing to it that the world regained the imperishable wealth of Faith and rediscov-

ered the true knowledge that lay buried under a thick crust of conjecture and speculation. It got back the dignity and nobility that had been trampled under the feet of cruel oppressors. In fact, humanity was reborn at Makkah, and history turned a new leaf.

But what am I saying? What do I mean when I ask: What would the world have been like had there been no Makkah? It had remained asleep, until the 6th Century, with its dry mountains and huge sand dunes, even with the House of Ka'aba and the Well of Zam-Zam, while humanity was caught in the clutches of death. Surrounded by its mountains and sand dunes, it went on leading a secluded life as if it had nothing to do with the larger human family, and was not a part of, but apart from the world that lay around it.

I should, therefore, not be enquiring what would have been the state of the world without Makkah, but without its illustrious son who turned the scales of history and showed a new path to mankind.

As I reflected on it, a few scenes emerged on the landscape of my mind. It appeared as if the leader of the Quraish was circumambulating around the House of Ka'aba, alone and by himself, and people were jeering at him and passing sarcastic remarks, but he was carrying out the circumambulation with supreme indifference to all hostility and opposition.

On finishing the circumambulation, he wants to go into the House of Ka'aba, but the key-bearer, Osman bin Talha checks him with a firm hand. The leader of the Quraish bears it, too, with exemplary fortitude, and says: "Oh Osman! What will it be like on the day when the key will be in my hand and I will give it to who I please?" "Will all the Quraish be dead on that day?" asks Osman in anger. "No", he replies. "On that day, they will attain real respect and honor."

I, then, see the same leader circum-

ambulating around the House of Ka'aba, on the occasion of the Victory of Makkah, and his Companions who had sacrificed their all for his sake gathering around him like moths. He sends for the keeper of the key, and says to him: "Osman! This is your key. Take it. Today is the day of showing kindness and keeping the promise."

As history tells, the celebrated son of Makkah did not only become the owner of the key with which he could open the door of the House of Ka'aba, but, with him, also, was the key with which he could open the locks of humanity no seer or philosopher had been able to do till then. It was the Qur'an that had been revealed to and the Apostleship that had been bestowed on him.

After performing the Hajj, I flew towards Madinah on the wings of eagerness. The hardships of the way seemed to be a blessing to me, and before my eyes was drawn the soul-stirring image of the earlier traveler whose camel had passed through the same route.

The first thing I did on reaching Madinah was to offer two Rak'ats of salat and express my sincerest gratitude to the Almighty for granting me the good fortune to be there. After it, I betook myself into the 'presence' of the Holy Prophet . How boundless was his favor upon me, really! I could never give thanks to him as was his due. I offered Durood and Salaam, and affirmed that he had conveyed the Message of the Lord to the world, proved true to the trust He had placed with him, showed the Straight Path to the Ummah, and strove till the last breath of his life in the way of God.

I, then, made the salutation to both the trusted friends of his whose selfless devotion was without a parallel in history. No one had discharged the duties of companionship or fulfilled the obligations of succession as they did.

The first thing I did on reaching

Madinah was to offer two Rak'ats of salat and express my sincerest gratitude to the Almighty for granting me the good fortune to be there.

From the Prophet's Mosque, I went to Jannat ul-Baq'ee. What a priceless treasure of truth and purity, of love and dedication is buried in this small plot of land! Asleep here are those who had sacrificed the life of this world for the life of futurity. These are the men who willingly abandoned their hearths and homes in the way of faith, and preferred to spend their lives at the feet of the sacred Prophet than with friends and relatives. "Among the Believers are men who have been true to their covenant with Allah." [Al-Ahzab 33:23].

Thereafter, I visited Uhud where the most spectacular drama of love and fealty was staged. It was here that the world saw living models of faith and steadfastness; it was here that it learnt the true significance of courage and constancy. On reaching there, it seemed that I heard Hazrat Anas bin Nazr, Radi-Allahu anhu, say: "I feel the sweet smell of Paradise coming from the side of Uhud." Or that on hearing the news of the martyrdom of the Holy Prophet , Sa'ad bin Mu'ad, Radi-Allahu anhu, was saying: "What is the joy of fighting and Jihad when the Apostle of God is no more?" And Anas, Radi-Allahu anhu, interjecting: "What is the joy of living after him?"

It was here, again, that Abu Dujana, Radi-Allahu anhu, had made his back serve as a shield for the Prophet arrows pierced his flesh, but he flinched not. Syedna Talha, Radi-Allahu anhu, in the same way, had taken the arrows aimed at the Holy Prophet on his hands until the arms were paralyzed. Hazrat Hamza, Radi-Allahu anhu, was killed on this very battlefield and his body was cut to pieces, and Hazrat Mas'ab bin Omair, Radi-Allahu anhu, was martyred in such a state that even a shroud could not be provided for

him, and he was buried in a blanket which was so short that if the head was covered, the feet became bare, and if the feet were covered, the head became bare.

Would that Uhud gave something of its treasure to mankind! Would that the world got a small particle of the faith and steadfastness of those glorious times!

Friends say: "You took us to Cairo and acquainted us with its important personalities; you have told us about Damascus and its people, and introduced us with its scholars; you have taken us round the Middle East. Now, tell me something about Hijaz and its distinguished sons." But what am I to do? To me Hijaz stands only for one man about whom I can go on talking forever. It is because of him that Hijaz is Hijaz, and the World of Islam is the World of Islam.

Our honor, indeed, is by Mustafa's name!

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New Muslims

*Penomee (Dr. Kari Ann Owen),
Ex-Jew, USA*

"There is no god but God, and Muhammad, (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), is his messenger."

These are the words of the Shahadah oath, I believe.

The Creator is known by many names. His wisdom is always recognizable, and his presence made manifest in the love, tolerance and compassion present in our community.

His profound ability to guide us from a war-like individualism so rampant in American society to a belief in the glory and dignity of the Creator's human family, and our obligations to and membership within that family. This describes the maturation of a spiritual personality, and perhaps the most desirable maturation of the psychological self, also.

My road to Shahadah began when an admired director, Tony Richardson, died of AIDS. Mr. Richardson was already a brilliant and internationally recognized professional when I almost met him backstage at the play Luther at age 14.

Playwriting for me has always been a way of finding degrees of spiritual and emotional reconciliation, both within myself and between myself and a world I found rather brutal due to childhood circumstances. Instead of fighting with the world, I let my conflicts fight it out in my plays. Amazingly, some of us have even grown up together!

So, as I began accumulating stage credits (productions and staged readings), beginning at age 17, I always retained the hope that I would someday fulfill my childhood dream of studying and working with Mr. Richardson. When he followed his homosexuality to America (from England) and a promiscuous community, AIDS killed him, and with him went another portion of my sense of belonging to and within American society.

I began to look outside American and Western society to Islamic culture for moral guidance.

Why Islam and not somewhere else?

My birthmother's ancestors were Spanish Jews who lived among Muslims until the Inquisition expelled the Jewish community in 1492. In my historical memory, which I feel at a deep level, the call of the muezzin is as deep as the lull of the ocean and the swaying of ships, the pounding of horses' hooves across the desert, the assertion of love in the face of oppression.

I felt the birth of a story within me, and the drama took form as I began to learn of an Ottoman caliph's humanity toward Jewish refugees at the time of my ancestors' expulsions. God guided my learning, and I was taught about Islam by figures as diverse as Imam Siddiqi of the South Bay Islamic Association; Sister Hussein of Rahima; and my beloved adopted Sister, Maria Abdin, who is Native American, Muslim and a writer for the SBIA magazine, IQRA. My first research interview was in a halal [meat regarded as lawful in Islamic law] butcher shop in San Francisco's Mission District, where my understanding of living Islam was profoundly affected by the first Muslim lady I had ever met: a customer who was in hijab, behaved with a sweet kindness and grace and also read, wrote and spoke four languages.

Her brilliance, coupled with her amazing (to me) freedom from arrogance, had a profound effect on the beginnings of my knowledge of how Islam can affect human behavior.

Little did I know then that not only would a play be born, but a new Muslim.

The course of my research introduced me to much more about Islam than a set of facts, for Islam is a living religion. I learned how Muslims conduct themselves with a dignity and kindness which lifts them above the American slave market of sexual competition and violence. I learned that Muslim men and women can actually be in each others' presence without tearing each

other to pieces, verbally and physically. And I learned that modest dress, perceived as a spiritual state, can uplift human behavior and grant to both men and women a sense of their own spiritual worth.

Why did this seem so astonishing, and so astonishingly new?

Like most American females, I grew up in a slave market, comprised not only of the sexual sicknesses of my family, but the constant negative judging of my appearance by peers beginning at ages younger than seven. I was taught from a very early age by American society that my human worth consisted solely of my attractiveness (or, in my case, lack of it) to others. Needless to say, in this atmosphere, boys and girls, men and women, often grew to resent each other very deeply, given the desperate desire for peer acceptance, which seemed almost if not totally dependent not on one's kindness or compassion or even intelligence, but on looks and the perception of those looks by others.

While I do not expect or look for human perfection among Muslims, the social differences are profound, and almost unbelievable to someone like myself.

I do not pretend to have any answers to the conflicts of the Middle East, except what the prophets, beloved in Islam, have already expressed. My disabilities prevent me from fasting, and from praying in the same prayer postures as most [Muslims].

But I love and respect the Islam I have come to know through the behavior and words of the men and women I have come to know in AMILA (American Muslims Intent on Learning and Activism) and elsewhere, where I find a freedom from cruel emotional conflicts and a sense of imminent spirituality.

What else do I feel and believe about Islam?

I support and deeply admire Islam's respect for same sex education; for the rights of women as well as men in society; for mod-

est dress; and above all for sobriety and marriage, the two most profound foundations of my life, for I am 21 1/2 years sober and happily married. How wonderful to feel that one and half billion Muslims share my faith in the character development which marriage allows us, and also in my decision to remain drug- and alcohol-free.

What, then, is Islam's greatest gift in a larger sense?

In a society which presents us with constant pressure to immolate ourselves on the altars of unbridled instinct without respect for consequences, Islam asks us to regard ourselves as human persons created by God with the capacity for responsibility in our relations with others. Through prayer, charity and a commitment to sobriety and education, if we follow the path of Islam, we stand a good chance of raising children who will be free from the violence and exploitation which is robbing parents and children of safe schools and neighborhoods, and often of their lives.

Provision for the Hereafter

A Person who reads the following dua once a day will be given two million rewards by Allah. (at-Targheeb)

لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له أحدا صمدا
لم يلد ولم يولد ولم يكن له كفوا أحد

"None is worthy of worship besides Allah; He is One and has no partner; the One; free from want; He does not beget nor is He begotten; and there is none like Him.

One who reads the following dua 27 times daily Allah will grant him the reward equal to the number of Muslims who came into existence from time of Sayyiduna Adam (AS) till the Day of Qiyaamah. (Tabrani)

رب اغفر لي ولوالدي وللمؤمنين والمؤمنات
يوم يقوم الحساب

O my Rabb! Forgive, me, my parents, the male and the female believers on the day of reckoning.

Cont'd from page 6
on you when you pay off what you are to give with fairness, and fear Allah, and be assured that Allah is watchful of what you do.

[2:233]

126. The sense is that the mother should not be forced to suckle, if she has a valid excuse. Similarly, the father too, should not be forced to hire a wet-nurse if he is unable to do so, and the mother is able to suckle.

127. It means that if the father of the child has expired, the liability of the expenses of suckling lies on the guardian of the child who may become an heir of the child if the child dies. Reference to his being heir of the child is to indicate that benefits are always tied up with obligations. The one who gets some benefit should also bear some liabilities.

What Happens When People Actually Believe the Fox Network

If there is one American television network that makes consistent, hateful, anti-Muslim remarks, it is the Fox Network. Both the pundits on this American network and their counterparts in the British right-wing media also owned by Rupert Murdoch have consistently filled the airwaves with racist, hateful speech. They have often been called out for their lies, exaggerations, and misleading “news” reporting; however, they show no signs of stopping their campaign against Islam. While one understands to a certain extent that the Fox Network caters to a certain political view, the lies that some of their pundits and reporters consistently tell are so outrageous, that it is impossible to understand how any sane person can believe them.

After all, the picture of the world that the Fox Network paints is undoubtedly grim. If one were to believe these lies, it is a wonder they can get out of bed in the morning without being stoned to death by a horde of angry Muslims! They consistently have put together a narrative in which Muslims are an enemy, an “us versus them” mentality that is enforced with the strongest language. For most of their viewers, the Fox Network is simply an echo chamber, a friendly presence in their living room that simply repeats back to them the things that they already believe. In this regard, it is harmless. However, the level of discourse has become so hateful that it only takes a single person to believe the lies for something terrible to happen.

If what the pundits on the Fox Network say is true, then we are truly in a state of war. After all, imagine that president Obama is a “secret Muslim” and that, instead of being a religion of peace, Muslims are all vile terrorists that are intent on spreading Shariah law by force to every corner of the world. Imagine for a moment that what the pundits are saying is true, that Muslims are after you and your family. That Muslims are not building a community center in New York City because of they need it, but because they want to mock the victims of the September 11th attacks, that American Muslims fully support terrorists that are intent on bombing American society. In this case, wouldn't it be a moral imperative to go to war with every Muslim you know? While the idea should be ridiculous to everyone, as the massacre in Norway illustrates, it only takes a single crazy individual that truly believes the lies for terrible consequences to happen.

While the killings in Norway were directly the fault of the madman that perpetrated that hateful act, the hateful rantings of a dishonest, corrupt media have their share of the blame. They are playing with fire. They incite hateful, violent acts in order to gain viewers and line their pockets with cash. However, to believe their extreme lies fully will always result in extreme acts of desperation and violence.

Source: islamonline

Man has no right over anything except three: 1. A house to live in. 2. A cloth to hide the private parts. 3. Plain bread and water. (Mishkaat)

The Judicial System in Islam

Part 2

Dr. Abdur Rahman al-Muala

Defining the Judicial System and its Legal basis

The judicial system in Islam is a system for deciding between people in litigation with the aim of settling their disputes in accordance with the injunctions of the Divine Law, injunctions that are taken from the Quran and Sunnah.

All of the Messengers of God (may God praise them all) acted as judges. God says:

"And remember David and Solomon, when they gave judgment concerning the field when people's sheep had browsed therein at night, and We were witness to their judgment. And We made Solomon to understand the case. And to each of them We gave good judgment and knowledge." (Quran 21:78-79)

God also says:

"O David, verily we have placed you as a successor on Earth, so judge between people in truth, and do not follow your desires for it will mislead you from the path of God. Verily, those who stray from the path of God have a severe punishment because they forgot the day of reckoning." (Quran 38:26)

Prophet Muhammad, who came with the final and eternal Message, was ordered by God to pass judgment in disputes just as he was ordered to spread the word of God and call people to Islam. This is mentioned in the Quran in a number of places. God says, for instance:

"So judge (O Muhammad) between them by

what God has revealed and do not follow their vain desires, but beware of them lest they turn you away from some of what God has sent down to you." (Quran 5:49)

God also says:

"...And if you judge (O Muhammad), judge between them with justice. Verily, God loves those who act justly." (Quran 5:42)

And He says:

"But no, by your Lord, they shall have no faith until they make you (O Muhammad) judge in all their disputes and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions and accept them with full submission." (Quran 4:65)

The Sunnah also provides for the legal basis of the Islamic judicial system. It is related by Amr b. al-Aas that the Prophet said:

"If a judge gives a judgment using his best judgment and is correct, then he receives a double reward (from God). If he uses his best judgment but makes a mistake, then he receives a single reward." (Ahmed)

God's Messenger said:

"You should not wish to be like other people, except in two cases: a man who God has given wealth and he spends it on Truth and another who God has granted wisdom and he gives verdicts on its basis and teaches others." (Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim)

Many scholars have related to us that there is consensus among Muslims on the legal status of the judicial system in Islam. Ibn Qudamah says:

"The Muslims are unanimously agreed that a judicial system must be established for the people."

The Islamic Ruling Concerning the Judiciary

The jurists agree that the duties of the judge are an obligation that must be carried out by society. If some members of society carry out this duty, it is sufficient for everyone. If, on the other hand, everyone neglects it, then everyone in society is sinful.

The proof that these duties are obligatory comes from the Quran:

"O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice..." (Quran 4:135)

It is only necessary for a small number of individuals to perform judicial duties since judicial concerns come under the broad duty of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. It is not obligatory for every individual to carry out this duty as long as some people are doing so.

The affairs of the people will not be correct and upright without a judicial system. It is, consequently, obligatory for one to exist, just like it is necessary to have a military. Imam Ahmad, one of the greatest and most well-known scholars of Islam said:

"People have to have a judicial authority or their rights will disappear."

The duties of the judiciary include enjoining what is right, helping the oppressed, securing people's rights, and keeping oppressive behavior in check. None of these duties can be performed without the appointment of a judiciary.

A judicial system is a necessity for the prosperity and development of nations. It is needed to secure human happiness, protect the rights of the oppressed, and restrain the oppressor. It is the way to resolve disputes and ensure human rights. It facilitates enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and curbing immoral behavior. In this way, a just social order can be enjoyed by all

sectors of society, and every individual can feel secure in his life, property, honor, and liberty. In this environment, nations can progress, civilization can be achieved, and people are free to pursue what will better them both spiritually and materially.

Concluded

Cont'd from page 8

Narrated 'Abdullah bin 'Umar (RA)

People say, "Whenever you sit for answering the call of nature, you should not face the Qibla or Bait-ul-Maqdis (Jerusalem)." I told them. "Once I went up the roof of our house and I saw Allah's Apostle answering the call of nature while sitting on two bricks facing Bait-ul-Maqdis (Jerusalem) (but there was a screen covering him. '

Comments

In earlier chapters we have seen that it was not permissible to face Qiblah in toilets. The people of Madina were of the opinion that probably it was also not permissible to face Bait-ul-Maqdis (i.e., Masjid Aqsa) while sitting for toilet purposes. Ibn Umar (RA) in this Hadith clears that confusion saying that he had seen Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) facing Bait-ul-Muqdis while sitting for toilet purposes on two bricks.

Cont'd from page 2

'honour' does not tolerate patience and selflessness. Cultivation or small scale trade is to blemish the honour of elders. On one side, such is the courage against breaking the laws of Allah, and on the other, there is hue and cry that Muslims are being disgraced and erased.

Whenever Nabi (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) happened to face any difficulty, he would at once resort to Salaah. (Abu Dawood)

Why We Must Learn America's Islamic History

Engy Abdulkader

"In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue..." So we were taught in primary school. But, did you know that the captains of two of the three small Spanish ships comprising Columbus's fleet were in fact Muslim?

Martin Alonso Pinzon the captain of the Pinta and his brother Vicente Yanex Pinzon the captain of the Nina helped organize Columbus' voyages which introduced Europeans to the New World. The Pinzon brothers were in fact Muslims related to Abuzayan Muhammad III, a Moroccan Sultan.

I note this because American Muslims are often misperceived as foreigners unwilling to assimilate. Yet, a survey of modern Islamic history and early American religious history reveals a uniquely different reality: the presence of Muslims in what would become the United States of America dates back to the earliest arrivals of Europeans in the Americas.

Some Muslims, such as Estevanico de Dorantes, arrived here as explorers. Originally from Morocco, in the 1550's Estevanico was the first Muslim and the first African to travel to the continental U.S.

Many Muslims arrived here as slaves from Africa. In fact, scholars estimate that "tens of thousands" of African Muslims lived in colonial and antebellum America. During the 1730s, several such Muslims who were taken into slavery became well known.

Among them was Yarrow Mamout, for instance, an indentured servant in the South who was set free after he finished making all the bricks for a house his master planned to build. Mamout became a property owner, held stock in the Bank of Columbia,

and even had his likeness painted by the famed artist Charles Wilson Peale in 1819 and again in 1822 by James Alexander Simpson.

Peter (Saleem) Salem is another such prominent American Muslim slave. Born into slavery in Massachusetts, Salem fought in the Revolutionary War and was subsequently honored for his valor. Specifically, he shot and killed British Major John Pitcairn when the colonial troops were near defeat and Pitcairn ordered them to surrender. In 1882, a gravestone monument was erected in his memory and he is also depicted in John Trumbull's famous painting of the Battle of Bunker Hill.

Other Muslim slaves never had their likeness painted in such an illustrious fashion but they were featured in runaway slave advertisements. In fact, in September 1774, one such advertisement in the Savannah Georgia Gazette called for the capture of "Mahomet." Another advertisement in the Gazette which ran in April 1789 sought the capture of "Amer." In 1790, the Gazette also advertised about "Osman."

An inextricable aspect of the American Muslim slave experience was their Islamic practice. Indeed, a number of Muslim slaves continued to worship the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob while toiling on plantations.

Job Ben Soliman, for example, was a Muslim slave who was known to "often leave the Cattle, and withdraw into the Woods to pray; but a white Boy frequently watched him, and whilst he was at his Devotion would mock him, and throw Dirt in his Face."

Salih Bilali was a Muslim slave on a

Georgia plantation who was described by his Master as a "strict Mahometan; [who] abstains from spirituous liquors, and keeps the various fasts, particularly that of the Rhama-dan. He is singularly exempt from all feeling of superstition; and holds in great contempt, the African belief in fetishes and evil spirits."

American Muslims have historically practiced their faith peacefully in the U.S.

Even more Muslims arrived in America in the 1700s, occupying diverse professions as teachers, cavalry leaders, religious leaders and students of law. Consider, for instance, Paul Cuffe who was a Muslim ship-builder, captain and philanthropist. Cuffe's family was originally from Ghana; his father's name was Haiz (Saiz) Kofi. Cuffe was the first African American man to petition the U.S. government to free the slaves and to allow every African man desiring to leave America the opportunity to do so.

Ponder Hajj Ali, a native of Syria who was hired by The United States Cavalry in 1856 to experiment with raising camels in Arizona. He experimented with breeding camels in the desert and was a local folk hero in Quartzsite, Arizona, where he died in 1902.

Mohammed Ali ben Said, also known as Nicholas Said, is similarly worth referencing. Said fought in the American Civil War as a Union soldier. Serving in Company 1 with the "55th Regiment of Massachusetts Colored Volunteers," Said quickly rose from corporal to sergeant. According to his army records, he died in Brownsville, Tennessee in 1882.

And, then there is ... well, I am sure you get the picture: American Muslims are an inextricable part of early American history even before our nation's founding -- an apt reminder to all those who use religion to sow hatred and division among us.

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Source: The Huffington Post

Straight Talk

BEWARE: Curvy Road Ahead

Tell me this: Why is it that everywhere you look nowadays, young girls are wearing low riding Jmcj butt pants that expose glimpses of bright and lacy undergarments? Is it attractive to see someone else's under-wear peeking out from too-small pants? Is it supposed to look sexy?

Well, if that is the case and it is true that young adults all across the nation are doing everything possible to look sexier, I just want to know why? Is it to ultimately have sex? I mean, why try to look sexy if you are not trying to lure a member of the opposite sex into inter-course? Are we simply trying to look sexy, and we just draw the line at sex itself?

No Muslim will disagree that zina (for-nication) is prohibited in Islam. It is a fact that we all know. But what about all things sexy? The truth is that there is nothing prohibited about feeling good and looking good. Muslim women the world over enjoy dressing attractively for their husbands; they shop at Victoria's Secret and Forever 21 just like their non-Muslim counterparts.

The difference is that a Muslim woman struts her stuff at home, not on the street (or in the classroom). Ironically, in America we have got that backwards. We wake up and look our worst until we have showered, put on our face, and dressed in cool clothes. Then it is the rest of the world that gets to see us in all our glory And of course, when we get home, we put on sweats and wash off the makeup.

What is it in us that wants to show the world how sexy and attractive we can be? Don't we see that all of those things ultimately allude to the one thing that we are trying to avoid? Think of it this way. Imagine yourself walking the vel-low brick road, only this time the path leads to zina and not the Emerald City. It is a curvy road, this path to sex, and you are on it. Because of its twisty nature, you can't see when the road ends or which curve will be the last. You don't know when you will be smacked in the face of zina. You keep walking and you get closer and closer. Now, what do you suppose is going to happen when you turn the corner and see that big monster called zina sitting at the end of the road? There you are with it staring you right in the face. You turn around to see if you can make it back. "It is too far, I will never make it," you think.

That is how these other acts of sexiness work. Each step takes you closer and closer to the end of the road, then one day, you are there and you don't know how to get back.

And ask yourself honestly, how do you feel with each step you take? When you are dressed in your tight jeans, do you feel as if you look good and you want everyone to know it? Do you like the attention? And what about you guys who hook up with a girl at Starbucks for coffee? Are you just hanging out with her because you have great conversations on the rising cost of gas at the pumps? Probably not.

The reality is that there is no gray area in Islam regarding sex. It doesn't just refer to the act of intercourse. Since much of Islam is based on intentions, we always have to keep ours in check. Also, the reality of sex is that it doesn't just happen. Wham Bham. There are usually steps that lead up to it. Why take those steps when you know what they lead to, even if you have promised yourself you won't let youi'scli get that far? And why take those steps if they them-selves are prohibited? Why choose the lesser of" two evils when you can simply avoid both evils?

Not just as Muslims, but as role models for our younger siblings, as the parents that we will one day become, we have to each take a stand and determine where we draw our lines of morality. How much is too much?

The beauty of Islam is that, when you decide enough is enough, it is never too late. You could be staring at that mon-ster at the end of the road and you can still turn back. It might seem like a long walk, you might say "I can't make it,"but it's doable. In fact, even if you have been tempted by the monster, you can turn back. We have to believe that Allah never refuses a sincere repentance. Say you are sorry and don't do it again. In school, we teach toddlers that; in life, it works for adults as well.

Salma Sanwari, al-Jumuah (Vol. 18, Issue 08)

Notable Quotes

....The two legs commit zina and their zina is walking. And the mouth commits zina and its zina is kissing. And the heart wishes and desires, and that is proved (adultery occurs) or disapproved (adultery doesn't occur) by the genitals.

(Bukhari)

Whosoever reigns in his desires, lowers his gaze and always eats lawful things, his insight shall never be wrong.

(Ibn Shuja' al-Kirmanee)

A person's desire to commit a sin will only be abated when he realizes that Allah is looking at him, feels ashamed and, consequently, discards the sin.

Ibnul Jawzi