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RADIANT REALITY

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This magazine is dedicated to the greatest and the last Prophet Sayyidna Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) on whom the succession of Prophethood ended and was sealed forever.

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Question.

Does the recital of the translation of a verse of Sajdah necessitate the performance of a Sajdah?

Answer.

If a word-for-word translation of a verse of Sajdah is read aloud, it will be necessary (Waajib) for the reader to perform a Sajdah Tilaawat. If a person hears a word-for-word translation of a verse of Sajdah read aloud and knows that this is a translation of a verse of Sajdah, then Sajdah is also necessary (Waajib) upon the listener. If the listener does not know that it is the translation of a verse of Sajdah, then Sajdah is not required.

If an explanation of a verse of Sajdah is spoken aloud, rather than its literal translation, then there is no Sajdah for the speaker or the listener. (Shaami 2/105)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

In a Qiraan, Tamattu' and Ifraad Hajj, is both; Damm-e-Shukr and the slaughtering of a Qurbani animal necessary?

Answer.

In a Qiraan and Tamattu' Hajj (an Umrah and Hajj performed in one Ihraam and two Ihraams respectively), one Damm-e-Shukr is Waajib (necessary). In the case of an Ifraad Hajj (a Hajj

performed in one Ihraam only), one Damm-e-Shukr is Mustahab (preferable). (Imdaadul Fataawa 2/197)

A Damm-e-Shukr refers to the slaughtering of a small animal for e.g. sheep/goat or one-seventh share of a big animal for e.g. camel/cow/ox/buffalo within the boundaries of the Haram. (Muallimul Hujjaaj 278)

On the other hand, Qurbani is Waajib (necessary) upon every Muslim person who is a Muqem (non-traveller) and who is the owner of Nisaab during the days of Eid (10, 11, 12th of Zul-Hijjah) (Hidaayah 4/355). Hence, if during the days of Eid, a person performing a Qiraan, Tamattu' and Ifraad Hajj is a Muqem (non-traveller) and he/she possesses the Nisaab, then apart from Damm-e-Shukr being Waajib (necessary) or Mustahab (preferable), the slaughtering of a Qurbani animal will be Waajib (necessary) as well upon him/her. In this case, the Qurbani can be done within the boundaries of the Haram or at one's country/home.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

If I gave Zakaat to a person who was not a recipient of Zakaat, is my Zakaat discharged?

Answer.

It is the responsibility of the Zakaat donor to identify an eligible recipient of Zakaat at the time of discharging his/her Zakaat. If after iden-

tifying an eligible recipient of Zakaat, the recipient is, in reality, an ineligible recipient, the Zakaat will still be discharged provided that he/she made the necessary endeavours to ascertain the same at the time. If he/she did not make the necessary endeavours at the time to ascertain the same, the Zakaat will not be discharged and will have to be discharged again to an eligible recipient. (Shaami 1/138)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

I have my note books with Ayaat and Ahaadith as I will be moving I'm unable to take them with me. I live in an apartment and they don't allow to burn as I'm concerned if I just leave them it will be a cause of disrespect. If I throw in the sea, I don't know what will happen as I live in a non Muslim country. What can I do? Further, I have collected Allah's name from every invitation we get, what's to be done with all this?

Answer.

In the enquired case, you should try to find a suitable place whereupon people do not commonly walk to bury your notes and invitation cards etc., which contain verses of the Quran and Ahadith. You should not leave it in a place where it is possible that it may be handled by non-Muslims. (Shaami 1/177).

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

I am an adopted child, I grew up learning that adopted children do not inherit after the demise of the parents who adopted them. I was recently told something else which brings me to the following question. If a couple has no children of their own and adopts children, is it true that those children would inherit upon the demise of the parents who adopted them as if they were the parent's biological children? And if parents have their own children and choose to adopt still then those children who were adopted do NOT inherit from the parents who adopted them?

Please clarify the fatwa on inheritance of adopted children relating to the question above.

Answer.

An adopted child does not inherit a fixed share of inheritance from his/her adoptive parents irrespective if their adoptive parents have biological children or not. However, the adoptive parents are entitled to make a bequest up to one third of their estate to their adopted child/ren after their demise or gift to him/her whatever they wish during their lifetime. The absence or presence of biological children does not hold any bearing of entitlement to a fixed share of inheritance for an adopted child.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Can a Muslim who is in debt be helped to pay of his debt with Zakaat? What if such a person has a house, car, jewellery, investments etc., can he/she still be helped to pay his/her debts with Zakaat money?

Answer.

In principle, if the debts of a person are equivalent to his/her surplus assets or more than that, he/she is entitled to accept Zakaat. Likewise, if his/her surplus assets are sufficient to clear his/her debts but after paying his/her debts, his/her remaining assets do not exceed the amount of Nisaab, he/she can also receive Zakaat. As an example, if Zaid's surplus assets are valued at R100 000 and his debt total is R100 000 or R150 000, Hamzah can assist Zaid with Zakaat.

However, if his/her surplus assets are such that even after clearing all his/her debts, they are equivalent to or more than the amount of Nisaab, he/she cannot receive Zakaat. As an example, if Zaid's surplus assets are valued at R100 000 and his debt total is R90 000, Hamzah cannot assist Zaid with Zakaat. (The Zakaat Nisaab in South Africa is R4549.83 as of 05/07/2018)

The term "surplus assets" includes money

and all those goods and property which are not required for one's day-to-day needs.

As such, a house and car are required on a day-to-day basis and are not regarded to be ones surplus assets, which will not be taken into consideration in determining ones Zakaat eligibility. On the other hand, jewellery and investments are regarded to be ones surplus assets, which will be taken into consideration in determining ones Zakaat eligibility. (Shaami 2/339)

N.B. The above ruling only relates to the permissibility of giving Zakaat to a person in debt. Apart from the permissibility, one must also consider whether the recipient is actually deserving to be given Zakaat or not. For example, a person creates debt by living extravagantly and then takes Zakaat without changing their living style. Giving Zakaat to such a person is a misuse of Zakaat.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Is a persons Salaah valid if the feet is lifted off the ground during Sajdah?

Answer.

To place at least one foot on the ground for the duration of approximately one or two seconds (one Tasbih) whilst making Sajdah in Salaah is necessary (Waajib). It should be noted that placing only one foot down and keeping the other foot in the air without a valid reason is disliked (Makrooh), though the Salaah performed will be valid.

However, if for the duration of the entire Sajdah, a person does not even place one foot down and keeps both feet in the air, the Salaah will have to be repeated (Waajibul Iaadah). (Ah-sanul Fataawa 3/398)

Mufti Ismaeel

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However, if for the duration of the entire Sajdah, a person does not even place one foot down and keeps both feet in the air, the Salaah will have to be repeated (Waajibul Iaadah). (Ah-sanul Fataawa 3/398)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

During a medical procedure, does anaesthetic break ones Wudhu?

Answer.

A medical procedure involving anaesthesia will result in the breaking of Wudhu. This is because an anaesthetic generally renders a person unconscious or in a state similar to being unconscious. Wudhu breaks when a person loses consciousness or falls asleep. (Hidaayah 1/18-Jadeed Fiqhi Masaail 1/64)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Abdullah, who is eligible to receive Zakaat, sold his damaged vehicle for R30 000 cash. His intention for selling was to buy another reliable vehicle for himself with that same money. So he keeps this money aside for the vehicle. About 2 months later Abdullah receives R2000 Zakaat from Ismail. Then, a week later, Abdullah finds a vehicle for himself for R30 000, and he buys it. Is the Zakaat discharged by Ismail to Abdullah valid?

Answer.

Zakaat can only be given to a person who is

not in possession of the threshold (Nisaab) of Zakaat.

In the enquired case, the Zakaat of Ismail to Abdullah will be valid if Ismail was unaware of Abdullah having R30 000 in his possession at the time after making the necessary endeavours to ascertain Abdullahs' Zakaat eligibility. However, if Ismail did not make the necessary endeavours at the time to ascertain the same, the Zakaat of Ismail to Abdullah will not be invalid and Ismail will have to discharge it again to an eligible recipient of Zakaat. (Shaami 1/138)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

My husband issued me with a divorce. I am currently observing my Iddah period and I have been accredited for my Fardh Hajj. Can I go for Hajj with a Mahram if I have not completed my Iddah period?

Answer.

The performance of Hajj is not compulsory on a woman if she is observing the Iddah period of death, divorce or an annulment of marriage.

In the enquired case, the performance of Hajj will not be compulsory upon you until you complete your Iddah period. In such a case, it will not be permissible for you to abandon the observing of your Iddah period before it terminates for the performance of Hajj. (Shaami 2/465)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

In many places, after a person passes away, family members view the face of the deceased. Is it correct for non-Mahram men to view the face of non-Mahram deceased women?

Answer.

It will only be permissible for a Mahram male to view the face of a Mahram female and vice versa. The prohibition of viewing/looking at non-Mahram males/females is general and is applicable to the living and the dead.

Hence, it will not be permissible for non-Mahram males to view/look at the face of non-Mahram deceased/living women. (Fataawa Raheemiyyah 7/121)

N.B. The burial of the deceased should not be delayed to view the face of the deceased and should take place as expeditiously as possible.

A Mahram refers to one with whom one is prohibited to marry, for e.g. parents, children, siblings etc. A non-Mahram refers to one with whom one is permitted to marry, for e.g. cousins etc.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

I am making up my Qadha fasts of Ramadaan which I did not keep because of my Haidh. This morning, my husband and I engaged in foreplay and climax/ejaculation took place. Do I have to keep another Qadha fast for breaking today's Qadha fast of Ramadaan because of my Haidh? What is the ruling of a Qadha fast being broken?

Answer.

A Qadha fast is only a substitute for the original fast. Hence, in the enquired case, you would only have to make up one Qadha fast. An additional fast is not required for breaking the Qadha fast. (Shaami 2/560)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

I'd like clarity on ladies performing the taraweeh salaah at home please. Can we make a single niyyat for 20 rakaats of taraweeh salaah or do we need to make a niyyat at the beginning of every 2 rakaats taraweeh ?

Answer.

It is not necessary to make an intention for every two Rakaats of Taraweeh Salaah. The intention at the beginning of the Taraweeh Salaah is sufficient. (Al-Bahrur-Raa'iq 1/294)

This applies to both males and females.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

If a woman performs Salaah with a few strands of her hair open, is her Salaah valid?

Answer.

In order for a women's Salaah to be valid, it is a prerequisite that her Awra is covered for the duration of the Salaah. The Awrah of a woman includes her entire body excluding her hands, feet and face.

If a few strands of woman's hair is exposed during Salaah, her Salaah will remain valid if the exposed area is less than one fourth of her head/hair.

If however, the exposed area is one fourth or more of her head/hair, and remains exposed for a duration of a posture in Salaah i.e. the duration it takes to recite the three Tasbeehs (approximately 3-5 seconds), her Salaah will be invalid. (Ahsanul Fataawa 3/402)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

I am confused about something regarding my zakaat. Say for purpose of explanation, I receive R20 September 2017. I work out my yearly zakaat in May every year thus working it out May 2018. I did not have the R20 for an entire year thus zakaat is not due on it (correct?) because I only had it for 8 months.

So do I start paying zakaat on this in may 2019 when I work out my zakaat and do I work out for one year or for 1 year and 8 months because of receiving it in October of 2017? Or do I have to pay zakaat on this in October 2018 as that will be the one year mark of me having this?

Answer.

Your understanding of Zakaat calculation is not correct. Whatever Zakaatable assets you hold on the day of your Zakaat calculation are Zakaatable whether they are in your possession for one year or less. Kindly refer to the article below for further explanation.

What is Hawlaanul Hawl?

In Arabic there is a terminology that occurs commonly when discussing Zakaat. This terminology, Hawlaanul Hawl, literally means the passing of a year. In the context of Zakaat, it refers to wealth being in a person's possession for the duration of an entire lunar year.

In our experience, this terminology is perhaps the most misunderstood concept when it comes to Zakaat calculation. Many people, based on the incorrect understanding of this concept, believe that wealth attained during the course of the year will not be Zakaatable unless one entire year passes with that wealth in one's possession.

An example to illustrate this is, Abdullah pays his Zakaat every year on the 10th of Ramadan (which fell on 27 June in the year 2015). In January 2015, Abdullah received a lump sum of R150 000.00 from a deceased relative's estate. When Abdullah calculated his Zakaat on the 27th of June 2015, he excluded the R150 000.00, which he had saved, as according to his understanding, that amount was not Zakaatable. Abdullah's understanding is incorrect.

Hawlaanul Hawl merely means that a person should have excess wealth that is more than the Zakaat Nisaab for the entire year. If this is found, then all wealth that accumulates during the year will be added to one's Zakaatable assets and Zakaat will have to be paid on it. Therefore, as Abdullah was already paying Zakaat, he will add the R150 000.00 in to his Zakaat calculation and pay Zakaat on that amount as well.

This ruling applies to all monies received prior to the date of one's Zakaat calculation as well as monies received on the day one calculates his Zakaat.

In essence, one will pay Zakaat on all money that one possesses on day of Zakaat calculation, irrespective of when that money was received.

Simply put, the Zakaatable amount is whatever amount you have on the day which you calculate Zakaat.

Mufti Moosa



Attributes of a Perfect Believer

Success is really attained by the believers [1] who are concentrative in their Salah (prayers) [2] and who keep themselves away from vain things [3], and who are performers of Zakah, [4] and who guard their private parts [5] except from their wives or from those (slave-girls) owned by their right hands, because they are not liable to blame. [6] However, those who seek (sexual pleasure) beyond that are the transgressors [7] - and (success is attained) by those who honestly look after their trusts and covenant, [8] and who consistently observe their prayers. [9] Those are the inheritors [10] who will inherit Firdaus (the Paradise). They will be there forever. [11]
(Sura al-Mu'minun)

The first and most important attribute which is fundamental and basic to everything else is that a person should be a true believer. The other seven attributes mentioned in the quoted verse are discussed as:

The first attribute is Khushu' (translated in the text as being concentrative) during prayers. The literal meaning of this word is "calmness", but in religious terminology it means "to bring about a state of perfect concentration in the heart" so that he does not knowingly allow any thoughts to enter his heart other than the remembrance of Allah. It also means that during prayers a person must abstain from moving his body and limbs unnecessarily (Bayan ul-Qur'an). He must, in particular, avoid those movements of the body which have been forbidden by the Holy Prophet and which the jurists have compiled under the general heading 'Makroohat' (things which are disliked during prayers). Tafsir Mazhari quotes the above definition of Khushu' from Sayyidna 'Amr Ibn Dinar. Other scholars have given different definitions of this word, but they are in fact further details of what the serenity of the heart and the body means. For instance, according to Sayyidna Mujahid, casting down one's eyes and keeping the voice low is Khushu whereas Sayyidna 'Ali said that Khushu is to refrain from casting sideways glances obliquely. Sayyidna 'Ali says that the word means "not toying with any part of the body". There is a hadith from Sayyidna Abu Dharr that the Holy Prophet once said, "Allah keeps an eye over His servant during prayers so long as he concentrates his attention on Allah, but when he turns his attention elsewhere and glances obliquely sideways, Allah also turns away from him." (Mazhari) The Holy Prophet is reported to have directed Sayyidna 'Anas to keep his eyes fixed at the spot which he touched with his forehead when performing sajdah (prostration) and not to look right and left during prayers.

Sayyidna Abu Hurairah says that the Holy Prophet saw a man praying who was toying with his beard and remarked, "If this man had Khushu' in his heart, his body and limbs would have remained

calm”.

Imam Ghazzali, Qurtubi and some other scholars are of the view that Khushu' during prayers is obligatory and a prayer offered without total Khushu' will be deemed not to have been performed. However there are others who believe that while Khushu' is the essence of prayers and its absence deprives the prayers of their true purpose, yet it cannot be regarded as an indispensable condition for the prayers to be valid and its absence will not render it necessary to repeat performance of the prayers.

Hakim ul-Ummah has written in Bayan ul-Qur'an that while Khushu' is not a necessary condition for the validity of the prayers, yet it is an essential element for the acceptance of the prayers by Allah and from this point of view it is obligatory. Tabarani in his book al-Mu'jim al-Kabir has related a hadith on the authority of Sayyidna Abu Darda that the Holy Prophet said, "The first thing that will be taken away from this Ummah is Khushu' so much so that a time will come when no one will be left to practice Khushu'".

The second attribute of a good Muslim is that he abstains from frivolous and vain things. Laghw, translated in the text as 'vain things' means useless talk and action which do not bring any religious reward and in its extreme form it may include sinful acts that are positively harmful and must, therefore, be avoided. And in its mild form laghw is neither useful nor harmful but it is very desirable to give up this habit. There is a hadith in which the Holy Prophet said, "It is a part of one's being a fair Muslim that he gives up all that is useless for him". For these reasons guarding oneself against useless acts has been described as an attribute of a good Muslim in this verse.

The third attribute is Zakah which, literally means "to purify" but in religious terminology it means giving in charity a portion of one's wealth subject to certain prescribed conditions and the word has been generally used in the Qur'an in

this sense. This meaning of the word can be applied in this verse also. However this meaning of the word in the present context has been questioned by some scholars on the ground that this verse was revealed in Makkah when Zakah was not made obligatory. (Zakah was made obligatory after Hijrah to Madinah). Ibn Kathir and other commentators have answered this objection by claiming that Zakah was in actual fact made obligatory in Makkah as will be evident from Surah Al-Muzzammil, which is by consensus a Makkan Surah, in which the words 'and pay zakah' occur alongside of the words 'concentrate in their salaah'. However arrangements for its collection and details regarding the determination of wealth liable to Zakah (nisab) were settled after Hijrah to Madinah. According to this interpretation of the verse Zakah was made obligatory in Makkah but rules prescribing its various details were formulated in Madinah. As regards those scholars who hold the view that Zakah was made obligatory after Hijrah to Madinah, they believe that the word must be interpreted here in its common literal sense i.e. to purify one's own self. There is an indication in the verse itself which supports this meaning of the word. It will be observed that wherever obligatory Zakah has been mentioned in the Qur'an the words used are *yutoona-z-zakat*, *eetaa-i-zakat* and *aatu-z-zakat*, which refer to the 'payment' of zakah, whereas here the words used are *li zakati faa'iloon* - who are performers of zakah, which clearly indicates that in this verse the word has not been used in its technical meaning. Besides, the word 'performers' is related to 'performance' and technically Zakah is not an act but a portion of wealth and the use of the word *zakah* for this portion of wealth needs suitable explanation. If the technical meaning of the word Zakah is adopted, then its being obligatory and binding on all Muslims is undisputed and if the word means purification of soul then that too is obligatory and to cleanse one's soul of impurities and sins such as polytheism, hypoc-

ris, vanity, jealousy, hatred, greed, miserliness is called (tazkiyah). All these things are forbidden and are major sins and it is obligatory to purify one's soul from them.

Forth Attribute is guarding ones private parts against unlawful liaison. And who guard their private parts except from their wives or from those (slave-girls) owned by their right hands - (23:5,6). They satisfy their needs with their wives and their legal bondmaids according to the prescribed laws and avoid unlawful liaison. About these people the Qur'an says - Because they are not liable to blame (23:6), which also means that the sexual desire must be kept under strict control and must not be allowed to become a means of gratification of one's passions 'However, those who seek (sexual pleasure) beyond that are the transgressors'. Satisfying one's desire with someone other than one's own wife or a lawfully acquired slave-girl is strictly forbidden and the ban includes adultery (marrying a woman whom one is not allowed to marry under the religious code is also adultery), having sex with one's wife or slave-girl when she is menstruating or is confined, or having unnatural sex with them, homosexuality and bestiality, while most jurists include masturbation also in the ban. (Tafsir Bayanul-Qur'an.Qurtubi, al-Bahr ul-Muhit, etc.)

Fifth Attribute of a good Muslim is that he should discharge his trust truly and faithfully. 'And [success is attained] by those who honestly look after their trusts and covenant' (23:8). The word 'trusts' covers everything which a person has undertaken to perform or which have been placed under his care as trust. Since it may be of many kinds, the word is used in plural, so that it may include all sorts of trusts whether they may relate to the rights of Allah or to the rights of human beings. To perform scrupulously all the injunctions and duties made obligatory by religious laws and to abstain from things which have been forbidden or declared undesirable is to look after the trust that relates to the rights

of Allah. As regards the discharge of trusts relating to the rights of human beings, these take numerous forms, and the most well-known is that a person must promptly return to the owner on demand any goods which have been in his custody as trust. Any information received in confidence is a trust and to reveal it to anybody else without the permission of the person who gave it is a breach of trust. Mutual settlement between an employer and an employee of the terms of employment, i.e. the work to be done and time to be spent in the performance of work, and the wages to be paid is a trust and binding on both the parties and a violation of this agreement by either party would constitute a breach of trust. Hence discharge of trust is an all-encompassing word.

Sixth Attribute of a perfect Muslim is to fulfill his covenant. The word 'covenant' has two connotations. One is a covenant between two parties specifying the duties and obligations of either party and is binding on both and a breach of this covenant by either party is a fraud and deceit and therefore forbidden in Islam. The other is where a person voluntarily promises to give something to someone or undertakes to do some job. This is known as (promise) and its fulfillment is also obligatory under the dictates of Shari'ah. There is a Hadith which says, "A promise is like a debt". It means that a promise is like a debt and must be fulfilled in the same manner as a debt must be discharged, the difference being that whereas the repayment of a debt can be enforced through a court of law, a voluntary promise is not enforceable likewise. Nevertheless the person making the promise is morally bound to abide by it and failure to do so would be a sin unless there is a religious ground for his inability to fulfill his promise.

Seventh attribute: 'And who consistently observe their prayers' (23:9). To observe one's prayers here means to offer them regularly at the appointed time, and the word 'Prayers' has

Cont'd on page 22

Lessons from Sahih Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

The Book of Salah

Chapter 97 : (Without Tarjamatul Baab).

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

The compilation of Bukhari by Usaili does not mention the word 'Baab' here, and therefore, it is said that the hadith mentioned below is in continuation to the previous hadith. But in some other compilations, there is mention of this word without any title, as mentioned at many other places in this book.

Hadith No. 479

Narrated Nafe'

whenever Abdullah entered the Ka'ba, he would walk straight ahead when he entered, with the door directly behind him. He walked on until there was about three cubits between him and the wall in front of him where he prayed, seeking the place where Bilal told him that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, had prayed. He said, "There is no harm in anyone praying in any part of the House he likes."

Comments

The hadith quoted above mentions that Ibn Umar entered the Holy Ka'ba and went straight towards the wall opposite to its entrance gate and offered salaah there at a distance

of three cubit from the wall. When Rasulullah (saws) entered the Holy Ka'ba, he was accompanied by Sayyidna Bilal and Sayyidna Uthmaan. Ibn Umar asked Bilal about the place where Rasulullah (saws) had offered salaah, this way he came to know the exact location, and whenever he entered the Holy Ka'ba he offered salaah at that particular location.

Chapter 98 : (To offer) Salaah towards a she-camel, any other camel, a tree or a saddle-bag.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

By establishing this chapter Imam Bukhari seems to be of the opinion that anything, living or a non-living thing, can be taken as sutra. Among the living things it can be camel etc., and among the non-living, tree etc., or manually fixed things like sticks, arrows etc.

It is reported that Imam Shafa'ee and Imam Maalik disliked taking an animal as sutra.

Abu Dawood quotes a hadith saying: "Rasulullah (saws) used to offer salaah toward his camel i.e. taking it as sutra".

This hadith clearly shows that it is permissible to offer salaah while taking an animal as sutra.

Allaama Ayni has quoted a narration from Nasa'ee on the authority of Sayyidna Ali,

which says:

“In the night of the battle of Badr I observed that all of us had slept except Rasulullah (saws) who was offering salaah while taking a tree as sutra, and he invocated till morning”.

This hadith also shows that it is permissible to offer salaah behind a tree i.e., take it as sutra.

Hadith No. 480

Narrated Nafe’

“The Prophet used to make his she-camel sit across and he would pray facing it (as a Sutra).” I asked, “What would the Prophet do if the she-camel was provoked and moved?” He said, “He would take its camel-saddle and put it in front of him and pray facing its back part (as a Sutra). And Ibn Umar used to do the same.” (This indicates that one should not pray except behind a Sutra).

Comments

Ibn Umar mentions that Rasulullah (saws) used to make his she-camel to sit across and then pray facing it i.e., take it as sutra. Nafe’ asked Ibn Umar what if the animal was provoked and it moved? Ibn Umar told him that Rasulullah (saws) used to make its saddle sutra and offer his salaah facing its rear part. This saddle used to have two wooden plates one in front which the rider would hold and one behind against which the rider would rest his back. The author of Eidhahul Bukhari has quoted from Musnad Abdul Razzaq that the height of the wooden plate of Ibn Umar’s saddle was one cubit. According to Allaama Kashmiri, it is from this narration that the Hanafite school has derived the conclusion that the height of sutra should be at least one cubit.

Can a line drawn on the ground suffice as sutra?

There is a hadith quoted in Musnad Ahmad and Ibn Maajah on the authority of Abu

Huraira which says:

“Whenever someone among you offers salaah he should keep something in front as sutra, if he doesn’t find anything he should fix his stick, and if hasn’t any then he should draw a line.” (Mishkaat)

According to Imam Shaafa’ee and Sufiyan bin Uyaimiya, this hadith is dhæef (weak). Maalikites and Hanafites also do not believe in drawing a line on the ground and take it as sutra. It is said that Imam Ahmad bin Hambal favoured this view. (Eidhahul Bukhari)

Chapter 99 : (To offer) Salaah towards a bed.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Earlier it was said that things like a stick or an arrow can be used to function as sutra, or some fixed things like trees etc., can also be taken as sutra. Now, further elaborating it here, it is said that the things like bed etc., can also be taken as sutra.

Hadith No. 481

Narrated Aisha

Do you make us (women) equal to dogs and donkeys? While I used to lie in my bed, the Prophet would come and pray facing the middle of the bed. I used to consider it not good to stand in front of him in his prayers. So I used to slip away slowly and quietly from the foot of the bed till I got out of my quilt.

Comments

During the period of ignorance (jahlilyyah) some people had the notion that if a woman, a dog or an ass passed in front of a musalli, his salaah is rendered invalid. Sayyida Aisha, while rejecting such a notion, warns against comparing any woman with a dog or an ass. She says that she used to lie on her bed while Rasulullah (saws) offered salaah facing it. This clearly shows that if a woman passes in front of a

musalli his salaah is valid, however, such an act is disliked by the Shariah.

Chapter 100 : A Musalli should push away one who tries to pass in front of him.

Ibn Umar pushed someone away while doing the tashahhud in the Ka'ba. He said, "If he will not stop without your using force, then use force."

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

The salaah is considered a bondsman's conversation with his Lord. It is very simple to distract the attention of a musalli by any means. The sutra is also used for the same purpose that nobody passes between a musalli and the sutra. People passing in front and beyond the sutra will not distract his attention much, but if someone tries to pass in front between him and the sutra, it will surely distract the musalli's attention. So, it is decreed that a musalli should stop the person trying to cross in front of him by his hand, and in case the person is still adamant, the musalli can apply a little force to stop him but, at the same time he should not do any such act which may render his salaah invalid.

Hadith No. 482

Narrated Abu Salih As-Samman

I saw Abu Sa'eed Al-Khudri praying on a Friday, behind something which acted as a Sutra. A young man from Bani Abi Mu'ait, wanted to pass in front of him, but Abu Sa'eed repulsed him with a push on his chest. Finding no alternative he again tried to pass but Abu Sa'eed pushed him with a greater force. The young man abused Abu Sa'eed and went to Marwan and lodged a complaint against Abu Sa'eed and Abu Sa'eed followed the young man to Marwan who asked him, "O Abu Sa'eed! What has happened between you and the son of your brother?" Abu Sa'id said to him, "I heard the Prophet saying, 'If anybody amongst you

is praying behind something as a Sutra and somebody tries to pass in front of him, then he should repulse him and if he refuses, he should use force against him for he is a satan.' "

Comments

Is there a need of sutra in Masjid Haram?

Nowadays it is commonly seen in the Masjid-Haram that people pass just in front of the musallis and don't seem to consider it a sinful act. Majority of these people consider it permissible, and not any kind of disturbance to a Musalli. Imam Bukhari has categorically mentioned that Ibn Umar stopped a person from passing in front of him during salaah in Masjid Haram. Only the person doing tawaaf round the Ka'ba is exempted from it, the reason being that such a person is considered akin to a musalli. It is evident from this hadith that Abu Sa'eed forcibly stopped the young man from passing in front of him while he was offering salaah.

More clarification by Allaama Taquiddin

Allaama Taquiddin has offered some more clarifications on behalf of the Maalikite jurists. He says that there can be different situations viz.,

1. A musalli is offering salaah behind a sutra and there is enough space beyond the sutra for people to pass: In this situation it is not permissible to pass in front of the musalli.
2. A musalli is offering salaah on the main path and there is no space left for others to pass: In this case the musalli is sinful and not the one who passes in front.
3. A musalli is offering salaah at a safe place using sutra, but the main paths are blocked (due to some other reasons) and only the place where the musalli is offering salaah is available for people to pass: In this situation none will be sinful, neither the musalli nor the passer by. (Allah knows the best).

(Eidhahul Bukhari)

Life and the Second Law of Thermodynamics:

*Straight
Talk*



An Unfinished Debate

The universe is, as a whole, in a high degree of disorder, which tends to increase, whereas life is in a high state of order. The elements and chemical molecules, for instance, found in nature are in a state of disorder. If they are placed in a container, they remain in that state of disorder. On the other hand, if the same elements or chemical molecules were to enter a living body, they are converted to some order; in fact, to precise orders. They take new forms of proteins, enzymes, DNA and so forth. Within a living cell they are in a superlatively high state of order. Thus, though not in the strict sense of the physicists, but, implicitly, life defies the second law of thermodynamics, writes

SYED IQBAL ZAHEER.

The Second Law of Thermodynamics is known for its elusiveness. Peter Atkins (former professor of Chemistry at the University of Oxford) wrote the following in his famous 2007 work, "Four Laws that Drive the Universe":

"The second law has a reputation for being recondite, notoriously difficult, and a litmus test of scientific accuracy."

Considered from various perspectives, the second law can be described variously, with none yielding a meaning clearer than another. Atkins himself defined it variously. Let us start with the simplest (not from Atkins):

"The second law states that physical bodies get more disordered over time."

A more technical definition would be:

"The Second Law of Thermodynamics says that

the state of entropy of the entire universe, as an isolated system, will always increase over time. The second law also states that the changes in the entropy in the universe can never be negative." (<https://chem.libretexts.org/>)

Another way is to define it as:

"The Second law of thermodynamics: The entropy of an isolated system not in equilibrium will tend to increase over time, approaching a maximum value at equilibrium."

And 'entropy' is defined as:

"...Entropy is the measure of disorder and randomness in a system." (<http://physicsforidiots.com/physics/thermodynamics/>)

To make it simpler:

"The degree of randomness or disorder in a system is called its entropy." (<https://www.khanaca->

demy.org)

In common man's parlance: entropy is a measure of disorder; the higher the entropy, the higher the disorder, and the lower the entropy, the lower the disorder. And the universe at large is in a high state of entropy.

Entropy and the Second Law of Thermodynamics

"The degree of randomness or disorder in a system is called its entropy. Since we know that every energy transfer results in the conversion of some energy to an unusable form (such as heat), and since heat that does not do work goes to increase the randomness of the universe, we can state a biology-relevant version of the Second Law of Thermodynamics: every energy transfer that takes place will increase the entropy of the universe and reduce the amount of usable energy available to do work (or, in the most extreme case, leave the overall entropy unchanged). In other words, any process, such as a chemical reaction or set of connected reactions, will proceed in a direction that increases the overall entropy of the universe." (<https://www.khanacademy.org/science>)

Heat can never flow from a cold body to a hot body.

From a yet simpler viewpoint: the universe is, as a whole, in a high degree of disorder, which tends to increase, whereas life is in a high state of order. The elements and chemical molecules, for instance, found in nature are in a state of disorder. If they are placed in a container, they remain in that state of disorder. Sometimes they will combine together, but that new combination is bound to disintegrate losing their order – if there was any.

On the other hand, if the same elements or chemical molecules were to enter a living body, they are converted to some order; in fact, to precise orders. They take new forms of proteins, enzymes, DNA and so forth. Within a living cell they are in a superlatively high state of or-

der. The cell itself, which contains them, is, as a whole highly ordered. To be sure, when the cell drops off the body as dead, it is overcome by the law of nature, which suffers from entropy.

Thus, though not in the strict sense of the physicists, but, implicitly, life defies the second law of thermodynamics.

Scientists with atheistic leanings, however, as afraid of anything that suggests the hand of a Creator as children of roaches, generally tend to disagree with the above conclusion. They argue that, "Entropy only increases in closed systems," whereas life is not a closed system. To give in out of some sympathy, they contend that life defying the second law of thermodynamics is – at best – only a metaphor.

To a superficial eye, there is some truth in the statement. But Atkins, whose "Four Laws that Drive the Universe" draws praise from a figure like Paul Davies, sees a far-reaching denouement of the Second Law of Thermodynamics. He writes:

"The second law is of central importance in the whole of science, and hence in our rational understanding of the universe, because it provides a foundation for understanding why any change occurs. Thus, not only is it a basis for understanding why engines run and chemical reactions occur, but it is also a foundation for understanding those most exquisite consequences of chemical reactions, the act of literary, artistic, and musical creativity that enhance our culture." (Four Laws that Drive the Universe, p. 49)

Now, if the above statement is true in the metaphorical sense, (after all, there are no equations to demonstrate how cultural enhancement, for instance, can be traced to the influence of the Second Law of Thermodynamics), then, our argument (about life defying the second law) could be similarly characterized, except that our deduction is cogently more accurate and closer to the truth.

However, is that all about it? Rather not. The

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The Blessings of Good Friendship

Tasnim Nazir

Much of our lives are spent interacting with family, friends and co-workers. All of these relationships are governed by codes of conduct, and the most important rule for a Muslim to follow in maintaining them is having ‘taqwa’ (being ever conscious of God).

If we try our best to acquire a higher state of taqwa in our hearts, we will analyze our every action to ensure that what we do is pleasing to Allah and that we maintain our relations with others in the best manner possible.

The Need for Good Company

Maintaining good company cannot be overstated as it plays a pivotal role in shaping who you are and influences you to choose either the straight path or a destructive one. It is important to reflect on the company that you keep both at work and in your leisure time.

Allah says in the Qur’an:

“And (remember) the Day when the wrong-doer will bite his hands and say: Woe to me! Would that I had taken a path with the Messenger. Woe to me! If only I had not taken so- and-so as a friend! He has led me astray from this Reminder (the Qur’an) after it had come to me. And Satan is ever a deserter to man in the hour of need.”
[Qur’an: Chapter 25, Verses 27-29]

Effects of Destructive Company

A Muslim who befriends another who prays five times a day is more likely to follow suit and pray with him. Similarly, befriending those who have bad habits will cause one to adopt their habits due to their constant presence and influence.

In an authentic Hadith, the Prophet Muhammad (saws) said:

“Do not keep company with anyone but a believer and do not let anyone eat your food but one who is pious.” [Abu Dawood]

In another Hadith, Prophet Muhammad (saws) said:

“The example of a good companion and a bad companion is like that of the seller of musk, and the one who blows the blacksmith’s bellows. So as for the seller of musk then either he will grant you some, or you buy some from him, or at least you enjoy a pleasant smell from him. As for the one who blows the blacksmith’s bellows then either he will burn your clothes or you will get an offensive smell from him.” [Muslim]

In his commentary of this Hadith, Imam an-Nawawi said that the Prophet (saws) compared a good companion to a seller of musk and spoke of the virtue of having companions who are good, who have noble manners, piety, knowledge and good culture. Such are those who grant

us from their virtue. And he (saws) forbade us to sit with those who do evil, commit a lot of sins and other bad deeds, as well as with innovators, backbiters, and so forth. Another scholar said:

“Keeping good company with the pious results in attainment of beneficial knowledge, noble manners and righteous actions, whereas keeping company with the wicked prevents all of that.”

Tips to Maintain Good Company

Life in this world is short and soon we have to answer for our every action, including the company we keep. Ask yourself: is the company you are currently keeping diverting you from Islam or keeping you on the straight path?

Here are some ways in which you can maintain productive ties in your life:

Keeping the Hereafter in mind, we should prioritize befriending righteous and virtuous individuals who will help us stay on the straight path. Inevitably, throughout life, there will be people in our environment from various backgrounds and those who do not share our values and aims in life. We should respect all individuals regardless of their background, but ensure that we are in the company of those who will help us stay on the straight path and not divert us away from the path of Allah.

Respect everyone at home and at work. Deal with everyone kindly and justly. Allah has created us all with different personalities, qualities and character traits and therefore there may be times when we do not share the same opinions with our fellow sisters and brothers. Yet, Allah is All-Merciful and if we maintain good relationships with our family and friends, adhering to the principles of Islam we can ensure that we are on the right track to a rewarding afterlife.

Listen to people attentively. Pay attention when someone is speaking to you and make sure you gather the full extent of their message. Give sincere advice that will benefit them, but do not

rush to do so in an overbearing manner. Abu Hurayra said,

“When he (the Prophet ﷺ (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him)) faced someone, he faced him completely. When he turned away, he turned away completely. I have never seen anyone like him and I will never see anyone like them.” [Al-Adab Al-Mufrad]

Give gifts frequently. You don't need a reason to exchange presents. Surprise your friends and loved ones by doing something nice every so often! Abu Hurayra reported that the Prophet (saws) said,

“Give gifts and you will love one another.” [Al-Adab Al-Mufrad]

Keep in touch with friends and relatives by visiting or calling to inquire about their well-being. Be there for them, at least by way of moral support during times of hardship. Accept their invitations and invite them in return. Abu Dharr reported Allah's Messenger (saws) as saying:

“Abu Dharr, when you prepare the broth, add water to that and give that (as a present) to your neighbor”. [Sahih Muslim]

Visit them when they are sick and supplicate for them. Thauban, the freed slave of Allah's Messenger (saws), reported that Allah's Messenger (saws) said:

“He who visits the sick continues to remain in the fruit garden of Paradise until he returns”. [Sahih Muslim]

As the saying goes, it is better to be alone than to fall into bad company. So if you are unable to find good companionship, keep yourself from falling under negative influences by engaging in other productive activities by yourself.

Insha'Allah I hope that we all can maintain fruitful relations which will benefit us in this life and the next and most importantly please Allah.

THE ONLY PATH TO GOD

Muhammad Ghilan

A feature of the modern approach to Islam is to historicize rulings and limit their applications to the imagined context in which they arose. This goes beyond recognition of the particularities surrounding a ruling to the degree that allows one to extract the principles upon which it stands in order to properly apply it today through analogical reasoning. Rather, it is to dismiss the application of the ruling altogether because it is assumed to fail the “relevance” test. Modern calls to reform Islam are based on the idea that as the world has “progressed” the religion has remained stagnant, which has resulted in the malaise that Muslims experience in the modern world. No source of Islamic law has received the onslaught of modernist attacks as the Sunnah of the Beloved (saws). This is sometimes done by rejecting reports as fabricated and sewing doubt into the reliability of the whole corpus of Hadith literature, or by attributing statements and behaviour of the Beloved to Arab culture or to the primitive nature of scientific knowledge at his time when the authenticity of reports is undeniable. At the heart of this is the assumption that the Beloved was acting out of his own whims when it comes to what he commanded, subject to societal standards and limits of material knowledge of his time, and should be viewed as a passive vehicle to deliver the Quran to humanity.

The Quran clarifies the nature of the Beloved’s

behaviour in Surah an-Najm:

“Your companion does not err, nor does he go astray, nor does he speak out of desire – it is naught but Revelation that is revealed.” [53:2-4]

Furthermore, when Lady Aisha RA was asked about the character of the Beloved she said,

“His character was the Quran.” [al-Mustadrak]

In other words, if one wants to see the Quran manifesting in a human life and live in accordance with its teachings, the Beloved is the literal embodiment that we must look to. As God declares in Surah al-Ahzab,

“Certainly you have in the Messenger of God an excellent example for the one who hopes in God and the latter day and remembers God much.” [33:21]

In his book *Islam and the Destiny of Man*, Charles le Gai Eaton expounds on the nature of the Beloved and the role he plays in the world as a means to connecting with God and attaining the necessary insight to understand the essential reality of existence:

Adam was taught the names of all things by God, and Adam was – according to the Islamic perspective – a Prophet; Muhammad received the Qurān from the same source, the only source from which true knowledge may be derived, and he was the

last of the Prophets to follow in Adam's footsteps. If the Muslim is to tap that same source and become 'one who understands', he has no choice but to model himself upon this 'perfect exemplar', imitating Muhammad so far as he is able, both in his character and his mode of action. Since the Prophet is 'closer to the believers than their [own] selves' (Q.33.6), it can be said that he is the believer's alter ego or – to take this a step further – more truly 'oneself' than the collection of fragments and contrary impulses which we commonly identify as the 'self'. [P 200]

The purpose of our presence in this world is to know God, which can only be attained through aligning ourselves with God's will through worship of Him. On the verse from Surah adh-Dhariyat,

"I have not created the hidden creatures and mankind except that they worship Me" [51:56],

Ibn Abbas RA stated that it means to know God. In Surah al-Isra' God describes the Beloved (saws) as His worshipper:

"Glory be to Him Who made His worshipper to go on a night from the Sacred Mosque to the al-Aqsa Mosque of which We have blessed the precincts." [17:1]

The indication from describing the Beloved (saws) in this verse as God's worshipper, a title that was not given in the Quran to any other Messenger or Prophet in this way, is that the ultimate purpose of existence was realized to its fullest potential in his being. To put it in the words of the Andalusian scholar Ibn 'Arabi (d. 1240 AD), the Beloved (saws) is the Complete Human Being (al-Insān al-Kāmil), and the Muhammadan Reality (al-Haqīqa al-Muhammadiyah) is where God's Divine Names manifest in perfect harmony in creation. To emulate the Beloved (saws) and seek his footsteps to walk on his path in this world is to align oneself with God's will and properly assume the role of vicegerency we were created for. Gai Eaton further elaborates on this point:

Al-Ghazzali (d. AD 1111), who is one of the most widely accepted authorities, wrote of the true Muslim as one who 'imitates the Messenger of Allah in his goings out and his comings in, his movements and his times of rest, the manner of his eating, his deportment, his sleep and his speech. So a man should sit while putting on his trousers and stand while putting on his turban, start with the right foot when putting on his shoes and, when cutting his nails, begin with the forefinger of the right hand; and al-Ghazzali mentions the case of a pious man who never dared eat a melon, much as he wished to do so, because he could not discover the precise manner in which God's Messenger ate melons. Did he cut them into segments? Did he perhaps scoop the flesh out with a spoon? We shall never know. But this outward observance is, of course, meaningless unless it both reflects and engenders a profound inward conformity to the perfect exemplar, given us by God as 'a mercy to mankind', a conformity of the believer's soul to the soul of Muhammad. [P 201]

The Muhammadan Reality serves as the support structure and direction to help us realize our real purpose in this life. We were not created to covet material things or attain ephemeral accolades to facilitate our basal desires for self-aggrandizement. Everything we attain in this world, whether it is in material wealth or in social status, will eventually perish and it will not benefit us in the grave if it was not employed towards the transcendent source of it all. The world is filled with signs directing us to the Divine. However, as Gai Eaton observes, it is overwhelming without guidance to navigate through it:

There are certain plants and shrubs which need to grow on a trellis or support of some kind if they are to grow to perfection; otherwise they sprawl on the ground, without direction, their leaves consumed by snails and slugs, their purpose unfulfilled. Man is a 'climber' too, and we do not need to seek far afield for examples of the human incapacity to grow – or even to function in a truly human way – without a support, a frame-

work, a model.

The Sunnah of the Prophet provides not only a framework but also, as it were, a network of channels into which the believer's will enters and through which it flows smoothly, both guided and guarded. It is not his way, the Muslim's way, to cut new channels for his volatile life through the recalcitrant materials of the world, against the grain of things. [P 201]

In our modern times of "forge your own way" and "just be yourself" one might find this off-putting, believing it to be cultish and a way that kills creativity and promotes homogeneity. We only need to take a quick survey of the Muslim landscape across the world to see how unfounded this fear is. No civilization has had the diversity and nurtured multiculturalism as the one seen across the Muslim world, where despite all their differences we still find Muslims sharing the same orientation towards God and reverence for the Beloved (saws). Contrasting the secular and profane with the potential of the Sacred and adherence to the Sunnah, Gai Eaton writes:

At first sight one might expect this to produce a tedious uniformity. All the evidence indicates that it does nothing of the kind; and anyone who has had close contact with good and pious Muslims will know that, although they live within a shared pattern of belief and behaviour, they are often more sharply differentiated one from another than are profane people, their characters stronger and their individualities more clearly delineated. They have modelled themselves upon a transcendent norm of inexhaustible richness, whereas profane people have taken as their model the fashions of the time. To put it another way; the great virtues – and it is the Prophet's virtues that the believer strives to imitate – can, it seems, be expressed through human nature in countless ways, whereas worldly fashion induces uniformity. In media advertisements one 'fashion model' looks very much like another.

None the less, occidentals see in all this an absence of 'spontaneity' and a process of 'depersonalization'. The word 'spontaneity', which by

its derivation, refers to action springing from the deepest source of our being, has been much misused in recent times. It has come to mean thoughtless and unconsidered reaction in response to outward stimuli, although the dictionary still defines it as action 'occurring without external cause', which is the very opposite to this. The Muslim way of life certainly discourages automatic reactions to the events which impinge upon us – as does the Muslim code of manners – but it is this, precisely, that makes possible the exercise of true spontaneity. This recalls a hadith quoted earlier concerning the virtue of 'slowness' and the satanic nature of 'haste'. Spontaneous action comes, not from the surface personality but from the deepest source of our being, and it is at that level that the Prophet is 'closer to the believers than their own selves'. [P 201]

The Sunnah is the application of the Quranic blueprint to align oneself with Divine Order. It is the practical confirmation of proclamations of loving God.

"Say: If you love God, then follow me, God will love you and forgive your sins, and God is Forgiving, Merciful." [3:31]

Rejecting it is a rejection of God.

"Say: Obey God and the Messenger, but if they turn back, then surely God does not love the unbelievers." [3:32]

Indeed, it is in acceptance and obedience of the Beloved (saws) that one can hope to find salvation

"And obey God and the Messenger, that you may be shown mercy." [3:132]

Although some of the calls to reexamine medieval scholarly works and return to the original sources to derive rulings that can more appropriately be applicable in our own time are warranted, what we desperately need is not a reformation of Islam but a reorientation of ourselves to the Divine.

The Selfless Disposition of the Mu'min

Under the heading

**“The Word of Allah, Mighty and Resplendent—
And they give them preference over their own
selves—even when they are in pressing need—
[Sûrat Al-Hashr, 59:9]”**

Bukhâri narrates the following:

... a man came to the Prophet (saws) [as a guest]. So he sent [a message] to his wives [asking them to prepare something for the guest]. They said: “We have nothing except water.” So the Messenger of Allah said: “Who will take in (or host) this [man]?” Then a man from the Ansâr said: “I.” So the Ansâri man departed to his wife with the guest and said to [her]: “Honor the guest of the Messenger of Allah.” His wife said [when the guest could not hear her]: “We have not but the staples of my children.” So the man said: “Prepare your food. Light your lamp. Then when your children want supper, put them to sleep.” So she prepared her food, lit her lamp, and put her children to sleep. Then she stood up and acted as though she were fixing the lamp, but she put out the light. So the man and his wife made the guest think they were eating [with him] and then spent the night curled up [in hunger]. When the man rose in the morning, he went to the Messenger of Allah, and he [the Prophet (saws)] said: “Allah laughed (or marveled) this night at what you both did.” Then Allah revealed: “wa yu'thirûn ala anfusihim...fa

‘ulâ’ika hum al-muflihûn: And whoever is safeguarded from the avarice of his own soul—then it is these who are the truly successful.

An Additional Narration

Muslim narrates in his sahih that the man who came to the Prophet (saws) asking to be hosted said to him: “I am, indeed, fatigued by hunger.”

The Time of the Occurrence

The time of this occurrence is not known. Yet the absence of basic staples from the house of the Prophet (saws) and the scarcity at the house of the host imply that this was before Khyber, after which the material condition of the Companions improved.

The Use of ‘Or’ in the Narration

The narrator says that the Prophet (saws) said: Who will take in (or host) this [man]? meaning that the narrator wasn't sure of the exact word the Prophet (saws) used, not that the Prophet (saws) actually used both words, which would not be befitting of the eloquence of the Prophet (saws). This style of ‘or’ is common in the narration of hadîth and shows the precision of the narrators. It does not impugn the reliability of a narrator if he relays the meanings of a hadîth rather than the exact words, since with hadîth it is the meanings that are important,

whereas with the Quran the words must be exact, since they are the words of Allah. Another narration states that the Prophet (saws) said: “Is there not someone who will host him this night, and [in return] Allah will have mercy on him.”

The Possibility That a Similar Story Occurred on Two Separate Occasions

Ismâil Al-Qâzî narrates in his book *Ahkam Al-Qur’ân* that a man was fasting [presumably in Ramadân] and the time for iftâr would come and he had nothing to break his fast on for three days. Thereafter, a man from the Ansâr became aware of his condition and took him to his house. Then the rest of the hadîth is the same. However, it appears that these may be two separate occurrences, but it is not impossible that this scenario was repeated twice, after which Allah revealed the verse about both of them.

Who Was the Host?

The name of the man and wife about whom this story recounted is not known for certain, although, as is apparent from the Text of the hadîth, they were an Ansârî couple. Yet Muslim’s narration says: “A man from the Ansâr called Abû Talha stood up [and offered to host the hungry man].” However, this does not definitively identify who he was, as there was more than one person called Abu Talha. It is, moreover, unlikely that it was the well-known Abu Talha Zayd ibn Sahl because it would be strange for him to be referred to as “a man called Abu Talha” [given his prominence]. Also, he was one of the wealthiest of the Ansâr. It is, therefore, unlikely that he did not have enough to feed the guest and his family.

What is Meant by “The Staples of my Children?”

The staples were for both the couple and their children, and in this case the “staples” refer to the provisions for “supper,” as is explicitly mentioned in this hadîth. Muslim’s narration

states that the host “did not have except his sustenance and the sustenance of his children.” The wife of the Companion referred to it as “the staples of my children” because the children were more in need of it than the parents, and to show her sense of duty to her children.

Another Possible Occasion for this Revelation

Ibn Mardawayh narrated on the authority of Ibn Umar that a man was given a sheep head as a gift, and he said: “Indeed, my brother [in Islam] and his children are more in need of this than me.” So he sent it to him, and then they kept sending it back and forth between the two of them until it came back to the first man after seven rounds. Then the verse [wa yu’thirûn] was sent down.

It is likely that the âyah was revealed about all three of the above-mentioned accounts.

Lessons Extracted From this Hadith

This account is meant to be a real, yet very clear, model of the ethic of giving preference to others over ourselves, an ethic nearly lost among us today. Know that there are four variables that created a situation wherein giving the guest the meal at the expense of the children made this case commendable:

The command to take care of this specific guest came directly from the Prophet (saws).

The guest was in an extreme state of hunger.

The Prophet (saws) stated (in Muslim’s narration) that Allah would have mercy on the one who hosted the guest.

It is understood that the children would be only slightly and temporarily affected by missing that one supper.

Islam is an even, or middle, way. Thus, it is not permissible for a man to take a decision that would bring real harm to his children. So the lesson from this hadîth is not that it is acceptable for one to be irresponsible or bring harm to one’s family. It is that one should put the needs of others ahead of one’s own needs, even if one’s

need is acute.

It can be taken from this hadith that it is preferable and noble for a wife to take care of the home while the husband should be the one, if possible, who takes care of the needs that require going out in public.

Also, it seems from the narration of this hadith that the husband and his wife both “ate” with the guest. Therefore, separation, while something good, need not be extreme, though it is to be noted that the wife had put out the lamp concealing her, to the degree that the guest could not discern that she and her husband, in fact, were not eating. This also shows the high station of a guest, since the host included him as part of the household.

A wife should be allowed to control her space and her domain without being made to feel inadequate, or as if she is being allowed to be in that space. This is taken from the husband in the hadith referring to the children, the lamp, and the food as her children, her lamp, and her food. Also, the wives of the Prophet (saws) said to him: “We have nothing except water.” In return, a wife should obey her husband and be patient without pressuring her husband if the material situation is not good.

It is shown in this hadith, that as long as a couple has regard for one another, if they follow the guidelines of Islam, each acting according to Islam’s guidelines for their role and responsibility, then they can have a harmonious and good relationship. In return, a good and harmonious couple then becomes capable of helping not only their own family, but others around them who have needs. On the other hand, if a society is made up of dysfunctional couples and families, it becomes very difficult for those in need to get help, further subverting an already weakened community.

The commandment in the Quran to rid oneself of the avarice of one’s own soul stands in contradistinction to the commercial mandate widely promulgated today to reward one’s self

and put one’s self at the center.

In a word, we should strive not to be selfish and to put the needs of others of the community ahead of our personal needs. In return, our communities will grow strong and provide us with guidance and wealth, and act as a safety net for those facing difficulties. And Allah knows best.

Source: Al-Jumuah

Cont’d from page 9

been used in the plural form to include all the five prayers. In an earlier verses the word ‘Salah: prayer’ was used in the singular because the emphasis was on Khushu’ which is the essence of all prayers whether they are fard, wajib, sunnah or nafl.

A careful study of the above seven attributes would show that they encompass all the duties which man owes to Allah and to fellow men, and all the laws governing those duties. A person who possesses these attributes and adheres to them is a complete mu’min and deserving of falah in this world and in the Hereafter. It will also be noted that these seven attributes begin and also end with a reference to prayers which suggests that if prayers are offered in the prescribed manner with all their requirements, the other attributes will appear automatically.

Those are the inheritors who will inherit Firdaus (Paradise) - 23:10,11.

The good Muslims who possess the attributes described above have been declared in this verse to be the heirs to the garden of Paradise. There is a suggestion here that just as the assets of a deceased person must devolve on his heirs, similarly the possessors of these attributes will, without doubt, enter Paradise. It should be noted that the possessors of these seven qualities have been mentioned in the beginning as those who attain falah or success, then after describing these qualities it is mentioned in this last sentence that possessors of these qualities will inherit Paradise. This indicates that the total falah (success) may be achieved in Paradise only.

Adapted from Ma’riful Qur’an by Mufti Muhammad Shafi (ra)

Outsmart Your Smartphone

We all know that the three most essential elements needed for human survival are:

Air

Water

Food

Right now, another element is rapidly gaining importance in the lives of humans and may soon become the fourth element essential for human survival.

That element is the smartphone.

Yes, the smartphone.

The human survival seems to be getting virtually impossible without a smartphone.

If you feel that the above statements are very harsh or too intense then consider this in a more lighter tone or in a more romanticized tone.

The smartphone has acquired a very special place in your life. It has come very close to you. Closer than even your own spouse!

Yes, this is a stark reality and you cannot deny it.

You are so much attached to your smartphone these days that you are never without it. Not even for a single moment.

According to a study, many smartphone users admit using their phones even in the shower or while they are in bed with their spouses.

You often caress it more lovingly than you caress your own spouse.

From your wash-room to your workplace, from the marketplace to a mall, from a hotel to a hospital, from a family gathering to a funeral (the list is incredibly long!) – Wherever you go you do not fail to carry your smartphone with you. You cannot resist carrying it even in the Masjid, the House of



Allah Most High!

Marriages have gone on rocks because of the smartphone. Research has confirmed this. Being attached to your phone seems to be sabotaging your attachment with your loved ones. A sweet conversation, a scrumptious meal, or a romantic moment is disrupted because of a WhatsApp message, an email or any other distraction caused by the smartphone. When you attend to the smartphone in the middle of quality time with your spouse, it feels like rejection — it hurts. Feeling ignored when your spouse is on their phone can feel as bad as being shunned.

This is all about the relation between the two humans. What about your relationship with Allah Most High? A smartphone can easily become an obstacle in your path leading to your Creator if you become too much attached to it or if you use it in a wrong manner.

When you are with your smartphone you waste your time in things that have no spiritual values. Quite often you get tempted to watch undesirable or obscene videos.

You see your child doing some unusual activity and you take his video and post it to your group with a fervent desire that it goes viral. Thus, you waste your time and you also become the means of wasting the time of those who watch it and post it to others.

At times you can post articles that have no bases at all with reality. Falsehoods spread like wildfire on social media, and the main culprit is the smartphone, researchers have reported.

When your kids see you getting attached to your smartphone they also get tempted to use it. And you never know what they might be watching when you are not around them.

Even a person waking up very early in the morning to offer Tahajjud or Fajr Salah (prayer) is sometimes not safe from its peril. The first thing he hears is the music, thanks to the musical alarm tone of his smartphone.

All these factors and many more can take you away from your Rabb, nauzubillahi (may Allah

be our refuge).

Above situations and circumstances sum up to one startling factor: Most of us are suffering from a malady called the 'Smartphone Addiction Syndrome'!

Yes, however much we try to dodge, we cannot deny the fact that the smartphone addiction is something that is there! It is a very real problem affecting, not thousands, but millions across the globe!

You almost go crazy if by any chance you are separated from your smartphone. You know that feeling when you reach into your pocket for your mobile phone – and get that immediate hot shock of panic when... it's not there!

Your heart races! Your stomach lurches! Your brain goes into overdrive! What to do? Confusion overwhelms you!

Do you go through this dilemma when you discover you do not have your phone with you? That means that you are already suffering from this malady!

At this juncture, some of you might say "Alhamdulillah, I am not so much addicted to my smartphone."

However, you might not be realizing that your assumption is wrong. What was stated above is just one aspect of the smartphone addiction. There are many more. Some of them are listed below:

You have your smartphone in your hand 24/7. You carry it even to the Masjid.

Not a day goes by that you are without it.

Your smartphone battery does not last even a day.

You check it constantly, in most cases without any reason.

The first thing you do after getting up in the morning, and the last thing you do before going to sleep at night, is check your smartphone.

While cooking and doing other household chores many women's concentration is captured by the smartphone.

Vacation and holiday time is more like an ex-

tended smartphone time for you.

You start feeling your phone vibrates just to find out later that it was a false alarm.

You obsessively check for emails, texts, and missed calls.

Getting ready for an important occasion can wait, but your smartphone cannot.

You get lost in your smartphone without realizing how much time you have wasted.

You attend to your phone even while driving.

Persistent desire and/or unsuccessful attempts to quit or reduce smartphone use.

If this is the situation today, then just imagine what may happen in next ten years' time when the technology will be far more advanced.

How to kick the smartphone addiction

What follows are some ways through which you can kick the smartphone addiction:

Define goals and set realistic timelines for kicking this addiction.

Use an alarm clock to help you wake up instead of your smartphone.

Practise going to the masjid without your smartphone.

Restrict the time you spend on your smartphone.

Try to increase your smartphone-free hours.

Give more attention to your spouse/family members than you give to your smartphone.

Never read your Qur'an from a smartphone if the Qur'an in Kitab form (hard copy) is available.

Make zikr of Allah and recite Durood Shareef more often.

Make meals a phone-free zone.

Have a phone-free day once a week.

Keep your smartphones far away from you while going to bed. If it remains beside your pillow it will keep you awake for sure.

Make it known to your friends and relatives during your casual talks that you sleep by 'this time' daily. This will discourage them from calling and texting unnecessarily, unless in an emergency.

You too must refrain yourself from calling or

texting others at their night times unnecessarily.

If possible, keep your smartphone off or on silent mode when you sleep at night. Nothing wrong will befall if you are not reachable for some 7-8 hours at night Insha Allah. And if something is destined to happen, it will happen even with your smartphone on.

When you have an urge to be with your smartphone shun that urge and read the Qur'an instead (not from your smartphone but from the Qur'an in its Kitaab form).

Last but not least, make constant Du'ah Allah believes you from this addiction.

It is absolutely an undeniable fact that the smartphone has made our lives very easy as far as communicating with our friends and family members is concerned, however far they may be. It also has tremendous capability of increasing our knowledge.

However, it has to be used diligently and with limitations. Do not let your smartphone dictate terms to you. Remember, between you and your smartphone, you are the master, and not vice versa! Use your smartphone, do not let it use you.

In other words, do not let your smartphone outsmart you!

May Allah Most High save the Ummah of His beloved Nabi (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) from all tech-motivated fitnahs. Amin.

And Allah Most High knows best.

Haqseeker

Cont'd from page 46

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

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

Why We Must Study Hadith Once Again

Ovampir Anjum

Why should we worry about authenticating the Hadith literature any more—given that we have the impeccable collections of sound traditions of the Prophet (saws) in Bukhâri and Muslim, among others?

Well, because in the light of new and increasingly damaging attacks against Islam from its enemies and critics, in addition to the efforts by world powers to rewrite Islam in accordance with their interests, it is essential that believing Muslims—who love Allah and His Din—also girdle up their defenses. Some of the most vehement attacks against the Din of Allah have been on the issue of authenticity of the Sunnah of the Prophet (saws) — which has been preserved in the form of ahadith (Prophetic reports).

Why are Ahadith Attacked?

There is a reason why the Hadith literature is often attacked both by the enemies of Islam as well as by those Muslims who are enchanted by other ideals and are trying to reinterpret Islam to fit their vision. To challenge the pure monotheism of Islam or its irrefutable appeal to good human nature is a lost cause; and the enemies of Islam know this well. To challenge the authenticity of the final Book of Allah—the Quran—is also hopeless for any reasonable person, even though attempts are now being made by some desperate

enemies. The only option left is to reinterpret the Message of Allah—by assigning its words arbitrary, self-serving meanings. This becomes possible especially if the Quran is reduced to a book in a vacuum, by attacking and making suspicious the entire corpus of Hadith literature that tells us when, how, and why the various Qur’anic passages were revealed. Of course, the Quran explicitly demands that we follow the additional and independent legislation and instruction of the Final Messenger.

If you detach the words of the Quran from the person of the truthful Messenger of Allah—from his example and his explanations—and suspend them in a vacuum—then of course a million interpretations of each verse are possible. Any word can have any number of meanings, so long as you can change its entry in your dictionary.

Without the guidance of authentic Sunnah, the verses of the Quran are no longer real, alive and concrete words that were understood, applied and explained by a real, living human being—known to us through richly documented history—and understood correctly by an entire community—a community, that, as a sign of God’s approval and blessing, soon became the world’s greatest power and civilization. Rather, they become reduced to enigmatic allusions whose meaning is anybody’s guess. In other

words, they become like words of the Bible and other scriptures whose original texts were lost or utterly disfigured.

The Rise of Western Scholarship of Islam and its Implications

For the last two centuries, while the best and most dedicated minds among the Muslims have been busy learning engineering and medicine from the West, thousands of Western scholars have been engaged in studying, evaluating, reinterpreting and questioning the entire corpus of Islamic sciences. Not all non-Muslim scholars are malicious towards Islam, and a good number of studies coming out of Western universities invite Muslims to rethink a lot of what they have been taking for granted and a lot of what they have by now forgotten. However, and to no one's surprise, most of these studies serve to cut at the roots of Islamic belief.

A brief history is in order. Since the nineteenth century, as the Muslim world encountered Western modernity and as Western scholars began to critically study Islamic sources based on the methods of textual study (philology) which they had developed in their Biblical studies, questions were raised about the authenticity of Islamic sources, especially about the Quran and the Hadith literature. These Western scholars of Islam, called Orientalists, were influenced by the 19th century trends in a secularizing Europe where religion was fleeing from the intellectual and public sphere and religious texts were being, for the first time in Christian history, studied critically and historically. These philological scholars found plenty of evidence that these Biblical texts were written a few centuries after the actual events they describe took place, and were distorted by political and other considerations that surrounded the writers. These biblical studies devastated claims of the Christian Church for all practical purposes, so that Christianity was to become a religion of the laymen or of those who could have faith against all evidence. It could not

be a faith of reason or history any more.

As the West colonized the Muslim world and came across Islam—a religion that the religious West had thus far feared and hated—the new kind of Western scholar, mostly secular and post-Christian, started to study Islam with a new interest, and for their own specific purposes. Those sympathetic to Christianity, like the famed Max Weber, wanted to show the superiority of their religion to Islam and give reasons why Islamic societies could not develop and modernize while the Christian ones could. Others wanted to study Islam for colonial purposes—to rule the Muslims better. Still others wanted to prove their atheistic theories about religion being a figment of human imagination and not based on God-sent message, and so attempted to show that Islam too, like Christianity, was a human product. To them, the Prophet was an intelligent man—someone who told brilliant lies to humanity for good intentions. This viewpoint is still widely embraced by Western scholars and writers today. Some others, who simply wanted attention perhaps, made claims that were laughable even to other Westerners, such as that Islam was created by the Arab imperialists to justify their rule.

At the heart of all these claims about the human origin of Islam lay the basic Orientalist bias: just as the Christian texts were 'invented' a few centuries after the appearance of Jesus, so must Islamic texts be shown to have originated a few centuries after Muhammad. Most of the attempts to discredit Islamic texts, however, have been frustrated, sometimes by other Western scholars who have pointed out serious problems with these kinds of claims.

These days, the heat against Islam is once again back on, and on high, and so are attempts to 'reform' Islam in the image of the Western religions and to show that the Islamic texts, particularly the Hadith literature, are not authentic. The Muslim response, for the most part, has been to wait for some revivalist, some scholar, or some miracle that would prove to the world, and the

coming generations of Muslims, that all the propaganda is baseless, fabricated, and incoherent. While there have been efforts by some scholars to engage the modern critics with reason, argument and historical research—and one brilliant example of that is Dr. Hamidullah’s work on ‘the Sahîfah of Hammâm’—generally, our response has been to ignore and neglect the challenge.

Hadith Studies: An Intellectual Challenge for the Muslim Ummah Today

Hadith is the only means by which we can know the Sunnah of the Prophet (saws) and consequently the full meanings of the Quran in its proper context. But since the Hadith literature, unlike the Quran, is not a single, well-known, bounded text, but rather a baffling amount of literature collected over several generations—its authenticity and organization have been a great challenge. This challenge, however, was taken up by the great scholars of Islam, who duly produced the most amazing large-scale efforts in history— as allowed by the technology of the time—to protect and preserve everything that the Prophet ever said or did.

The fact that some people tried to fabricate ahâdîth shows that the ahâdîth were deemed extremely influential and authoritative—nobody fakes a currency that has no value. All studies of early Islamic history, even by the most cynical and critical of non-Muslim scholars, have shown that the learning, teaching and preservation of Hadith were the focus of Muslim scholarship during the first few centuries of Islam. Because the ahâdîth of the Prophet had such great currency at the time, so then liars and opportunists—as have always existed in all societies—fabricated ahâdîth to accomplish worldly goals. History attests to the fact that our Pious Predecessors, who were chosen by Allah to be the recipients of His final message, did not fall short of their obligation to preserve the Sunnah: Colossal attempts were made to resist and eradicate this forging of ahâdîth by the scholars and leaders.

Thousands and thousands of scholars began to study, memorize, authenticate and preserve the Hadith literature.

What Happened to the Traditional Scholarship of Hadith?

It is still around: there are numerous scholars devoted to Hadith who have spent their lives memorizing, sorting and evaluating ahâdîth. However, in my humble opinion after taking stock of Hadith studies both by Muslims as well as non-Muslims, I venture to say that there is a lot that has not been done, and a lot that cannot be done without a serious revival of Hadith sciences and methodology. More rigorous historical research has unearthed even older manuscripts of Hadith than the canonical ones which we are used to as Bukhâri and Muslim—I mean specifically the collection of Abû Hurairah’s one hundred and forty reports that he dictated to his disciple, Hammâm ibn Munabbih. These ahâdîth are found in either Bukhâri or Muslim, which is a tribute to the accuracy and veracity of these two collections. More such discoveries are possible, and Muslim historians must labor hard for them.

Similarly, there is a lot that the scholars of today, both traditional and modern, do not know about the context, meaning and authenticity of many reports. For example, a tremendous amount of work is yet to be done in understanding the context of these ahâdîth, thereby resolving conflicts and disagreements about their meanings as well as authenticity.

What Can We—the Ordinary Muslims—Do about It?

For the ordinary Muslim, it is no longer possible to turn a blind eye to this challenge, because it is no longer only a battle in the academy—in the echelons of Orientalism far removed from Islam and Muslims. It is rather a very pertinent, a very real-life battle. More and more young Muslims, in the West but ultimately everywhere

in the world, are growing up reading, learning, discussing and internalizing these attacks on Islam and skepticism towards its authentic sources. The questions raised by skeptics, out of antipathy or apathy, are becoming political weapons in some hands, and a means of social and financial gain in others. Legions of pseudo-Muslims and pseudo-scholars and pseudo-experts have mushroomed, and it is becoming an uphill battle, for unaware Muslims as well as non-Muslims, to figure out the true teachings of Islam.

What can ordinary Muslims do about this? Doesn't Hadith scholarship require a lifetime of study? No—not at all. It requires not one lifetime, but in fact many, many lifetimes. And that is precisely why we need ordinary Muslims, all Muslims, to worry about it. True, we need the piety and rigor of Al-Zuhri, Shuhbah, Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, and the painstaking precision of those like Imams Bukhâri and Muslim in the science of Hadith. But all excellence and success can start with ordinary Muslims: There is no clergy in Islam.

As long as resourceful and educated Muslims keep sending their best and most productive young minds to the sciences of this world for seeking money, status and comfort, and as long as they abandon the sacred sciences for the drop-outs and the have-not to take on—or, worse yet, for non-Muslims to distort or misuse—we will never regain the intellectual superiority and convincing power of our faith. So long as these trends of neglect and negligence continue, we will keep losing both intellectual ground as well as our coming generations.

The history of Islam, which I have drawn upon in posing the challenge, also gives us hope. As the great Indian scholar Abû Al-Hasan Ali Al-Nadwi said, Allah has always raised among Muslims those who have protected Islam against its enemies and awakened Muslims from their slumber. This time around, the task is big. I cannot emphasize enough that this work must be done by Muslims—believing, dedicated, and

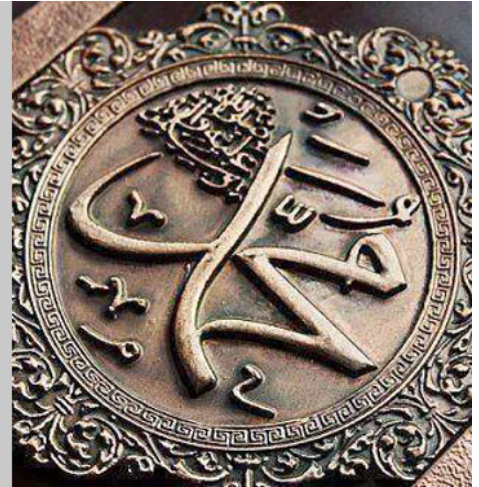
brilliant Muslim scholars. These must outdo all others in using the best historical and analytical tools. No science is completely objective, but especially the science of interpretation and historical criticism is deeply connected to one's beliefs and worldview, to how much one understands or identifies with the texts or to the people whom one is writing about. Accordingly, things like interpretation of Quran and Hadith, or like their historical criticism, can never be correctly accomplished at the hands of non-Muslims or non-committed Muslims. Knowledge and certainty are inspired by Allah, as are arguments and counter-arguments about interpretation and authenticity, and so the belief and piety of the scholar are critical to his or her credibility. Muslims must reclaim in the light of modern methods and sciences once again the sciences that they pioneered: criticism, authentication and interpretation of reports.

It is necessary that not only the foremost historians and interpreters of Islamic texts be Muslims, but that they be true Muslims—connected with the Muslim Ummah, and engaged with the struggle to establish Allah's Din. This is precisely what our pious predecessors meant when they said: such and such scholar was “*âlimun âmil*” and a “*mujâhid*”—that is, a righteous scholar, one who upheld the truth even against oppression and tyranny, and struggled in the way of Allah with a pure soul. Only then did the light of Islamic knowledge shine upon him. It is a historical fact, and an example of the amazing collected wisdom of the Ummah, that it never followed, revered as Imams or took its knowledge from non-Muslims, sell-outs or hypocritical scholars.

My purpose in writing this article will have been accomplished if even one father or mother decides, upon reading this, that they are going to devote their most brilliant child, boy or girl, to the study of the Hadith of the Final Prophet (saws).

Compassion Towards Abuser

Majd Arbil



Prophet Muhammad started the message of Islam in Arabia at a time when human rights had no meaning, might was right and the society was entrenched in paganism. In this environment, Prophet Muhammad taught a message of justice, peace, human rights, animal rights and even environmental rights as ordained by God, the One True Creator of all that is in the universe.

God has shown us in the character of Prophet Muhammad the model of a companionate person. He treated everyone, friends and foe, man and woman, young and old, with kindness and respect.

Even when the pagan Arabs reacted to the message of the Prophet with extreme hatred he showed love and kindness.

The following examples from the life of the Prophet show us how we should react when faced with hatred.

We can see one of the most patient and tolerant aspects of the Prophet's character in the incident of an old woman who made a habit of throwing trash in the way of the Holy Prophet Muhammad whenever he passed by her house.

The story related about this incident, mentions a neighbor of the Prophet that tried her best to irritate him by throwing

garbage in his way every day. One day, when he walked out of his home there was no garbage. This made the Prophet inquire about the old woman and he came to know that she was sick. The Prophet went to visit her and offer any assistance she might need. The old woman was extremely humbled and at the same time ashamed of her actions in light of the concern that the Prophet showed her.

By seeing the example of compassion of Prophet Muhammad, she became convinced that Islam must be a true religion that the Prophet was preaching. 1

Another incident that is reported from the life of the Prophet is when the Prophet traveled to a neighboring town of Taif.

In Taif he thought he might find people who might be respectable to the message of Almighty God. The people of Taif turned out to be as hateful as the people of Makkah. The elders of the town planned an organized campaign to ridicule the Prophet. To escalate their disapproval of the Prophet and prevent him from preaching Islam, they set a group of children and vagabonds behind him. They pestered him and threw stones at him. Tired, forsaken and wounded, he sought refuge in a nearby garden. It belonged to Atabah and Shaibah, two wealthy

chiefs of Quraish.

They were both there when Prophet Muhammad entered and sat under a distant tree. The Prophet raised his face towards heaven and prayed: "O Almighty! I raise unto you my complaint for my weakness, my helplessness, and for the ridicule to which I have been subjected. O Merciful! You are the Master of all oppressed people, You are my God! So to whom would You consign me? To the strangers who would ill-treat me, or to the enemies who have an upper hand over me? If whatever has befallen me is not because of Your wrath, then I fear not. No doubt, the field of Your security and care is wide enough for me. I seek refuge in Your light which illuminates darkness and straightens the affairs of this world and hereafter, that Your displeasure and wrath may not descend upon me. For the sake of Your pleasure, I remain pleased and resigned to my fate. No change in this world occurs without Your Will."

Atabah and Shaibah were watching. They sent for their servant named Adaas and gave him a plate full of grapes. "Take this to that man under the tree," they ordered. So he brought the grapes to Prophet Muhammad.

As the Prophet picked the grapes he said: "Bismillahir Rahmaanir Rahim" (In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate). Adaas had never heard this before. He was impressed by it, because the Prophet was invoking mercy and compassion of Almighty in spite of all the hardship he was subjected to.

"Who are you?" Adaas asked. Muhammad replied, "I am the Prophet of God. Where do you come from?"

The servant said: "I am Adaas, a Christian. I come from Nainava."

"Nainava? You come from a place where my brother Yunus bin Mati (Jonah son of Mati) lived," the Prophet said.

Adaas was surprised to hear the name.

"What do you know of Yunus? Here no one seems to know him. Even in Nainava there were hardly ten people who knew his father's name."

The Prophet said: "Yes, I know him because just like me, he was a Prophet of Almighty God."

Adaas fell on his knees before the Prophet, kissed his hand and embraced him.

It is further reported that after the Prophet took refuge from the stone throwing mob, Angel Jibrael came to the Prophet and asked him if he so wished Jibrael would give the command to bury the city between two mountains. Although the prophet had suffered a great deal at the hands of these people, he replied that he did not wish destruction for the people of Taif because maybe their offspring would proclaim the religion of truth. 2

The Islamic scholar Imam Ghazali (1058 - 1111 C.E.) summarizes the information he collected in the hadith regarding our Prophet's compassionate attitude to all those around him as follows:

"He was far from knowing anger and quickly showed compassion for things. He was the most loving of men toward other people. He was the most auspicious of men and did the most good to others, and the most useful and beneficial to others." 3

The Quran says that Prophet was sent as a mercy to humankind. If we are to honor the Prophet, it will be by adopting the sublime character of our Prophet and not through the emotions of anger and hate.

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Authentic Sufism

A Real Product of Islam

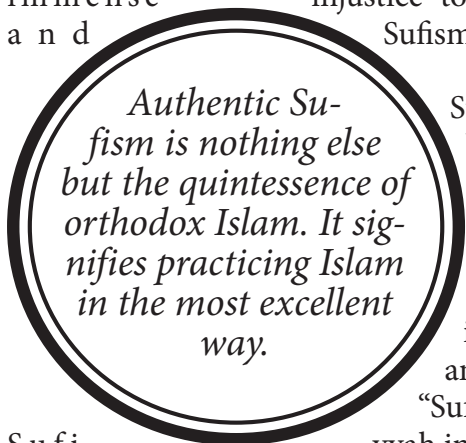
Dr. Shafiq Umar

There are two types of Sufism: authentic and pseudo, or theosophical.

Authentic Sufism is a product of Islam alone, and hence must be studied primarily against the backdrop of the Islamic message as a criterion and standard.

It is because of this, essentially, that we have earlier rejected the notion of equating Sufism with mysticism, the latter being a product of some alien-to-Islam cultures, worldviews and traditions, especially those of Christianity.

Sufism is never to be interpreted as Islamic mysticism, or mysticism in Islam, thus doing immense injustice to both Islam and Sufism.



Authentic Sufism is nothing else but the quintessence of orthodox Islam. It signifies practicing Islam in the most excellent way.

Sufi -

There are many definitions of authentic Sufism. Most of them revolve around the concepts of inclusive sincerity in faith and worshipping Allah, whereby the truth of divine love and knowledge through direct personal experience of Allah, is sought.

Sufism is also synonymous with rigid introspection, mental struggle, purification of baser self, purity of intentions and acts, trust in God, approach to God through love and voluntary suffering resulting from ascetic ways of life and rigorous obligatory and voluntary worship.

The following two traditions (hadith) of the Prophet are often cited as the best description of the true Sufi path.

Firstly, a companion Abu Hurayrah narrated that Allah's Messenger had said:

"Allah said: 'I will declare war against him who shows hostility to a pious worshiper of Mine. And the most beloved things with which My slave comes nearer to Me, is what I have enjoined upon him; and My slave keeps on coming closer to Me through performing nawafil (praying or doing extra deeds besides what is obligatory) till I love him. And when I love him, I become his sense of hearing with which he hears, and his sense of sight with which he sees, and his hand with which he grips, and his leg with which he walks; and if he asks Me, I will give him, and if he asks My protection (refuge), I will protect him; (i.e., give him My refuge) and I do not hesitate to do anything as I hesitate to take the soul of the believer, for he hates death, and I hate to disappoint him.'"
(Sahih al-Bukhari)

Secondly, Abu Hurayrah also narrated that Allah's Messenger had said:

"Allah said: 'I am just as My slave thinks I am,

(i.e., I am able to do for him what he thinks I can do for him) and I am with him if He remembers Me. If he remembers Me in himself, I too, remember him in Myself; and if he remembers Me in a group of people, I remember him in a group that is better than they; and if he comes one span nearer to Me, I go one cubit nearer to him; and if he comes one cubit nearer to Me, I go a distance of two outstretched arms nearer to him; and if he comes to Me walking, I go to him running.” (Sahih Al-Bukhari)

The “union” between God and man implied in the above mentioned hadiths is a union representative of a single will, purpose and objective, which is devoid of any ingredients of anthropomorphism and divinization alike, and of any other unorthodox connotations and judgments. It is the only type of union that Islam recognizes. It is the only union that authentic Sufism espoused.

Authentic Sufism is nothing else but the quintessence of orthodox Islam. It signifies practicing Islam in the most excellent way. Sufism is the final and most accomplished phase in a believer’s spiritual development. It is the final phase, a culmination, which emphasizes the inner dimensions of worship more than anything else, but which must be founded upon, and saturated with, Islamic genuine faith and submission.

The former is conditioned by the latter, in that it is a general tenet in Islam that no action is good enough and acceptable unless done sincerely in the name of God and according to the precepts of the Islamic Shari’ah (Law). For some, therefore, Sufism simply means “interiorization of Islam”.

Hence, many Sufi authorities were always quick to point out that any conflict between Sufism and the main body of Islamic beliefs, principles and values is intolerable. For example, Ahmad al-Rifa’i (d. 578 AH/ 1182 CE), whose life example served as the foundation for the modern Rifai Sufi Order, is reported to have

said: “Every Sufi order which is at odds with the Shari’ah is a form of heresy.”

Also, Abu Yazid al-Bistami (d. 261 AH/ 875 CE), one of the early Sufi masters, said that if a person performed such great miracles (karamat) as ascending the sky, people should not be fooled into believing him until they made certain that his relationship with the Shari’ah was right. Otherwise, such would be but Satan’s swindle.

Fully concurring with their fair-minded Sufi counterparts, and so, displaying a strong sense of spiritual and intellectual unity as well as reciprocal respect, various mainstream Muslim scholars too hastened to approve the subject matter from their own point of view.

Thus, for example, Layth b. Sa’d (d. 175 AH/ 791 CE), a leading scholar of his time, is reported to have said that if people saw a man walking on water, or flying in the air, as a demonstration of his miraculous power, they should not be hoodwinked into believing him until they measured his whole case against the Quran and Sunnah. Other scholars, both his contemporaries and those who came after him, followed in the footsteps of Layth b. Sa’d endorsing the same pattern.

Once the Prophet explicitly referred to the spiritual progression and growth from outward submission (islam) common to all Muslims, to faith (iman) where a person becomes a believer (mu’min), and finally to ihsan, a stage where the unseen becomes as if seen (Sahih al-Bukhari) – and that is exactly what authentic Sufism stands for and tries to accomplish.

“Search for your rizq (sustenance) in the morning because the morning is a time of blessing and success”

(Bazzaar & Tabraani)

Healthcare Practitioner and *al-Shaafi*

By Mawlana Dr. Mateen A. Khan

Our personal du`as are spoken humbly and quietly (tadarru`an wa khufyatan) between ourselves and Allah. We do not teach them to others – not our children nor our students. However, the prophetic (masnūn) du`as were not like that. Unlike the du`as of other people, his were memorized and passed down by his companions to the subsequent generations. So special were the prophetic du`as that they habitually recited them and many even excluded any other du`a from being recited in salāh. He spoke them aloud as if to be simultaneously address-

ing his Lord and his ummah. His du`as give us a glimpse into the incomprehensible relationship between Allah and His Messenger. Prophetic du`as are not just in-the-moment requests from Allah, but they are also teaching points meant to be contemplated. They shed light on a natural mindset meant to be adopted. Let's take a brief look at one such du`a in which he calls upon Allah, the Healer (Al-Shāfi).

The beloved wife of the Prophet (saws) and our mother, Aishah (ra), said that whenever the Prophet would visit a patient, he would ask Allah:

O Lord (Rabb) of humanity, remove the hardship. Cure him such that no disease remains, for You are The Healer. There is no other cure besides Yours.

Whatever your role in the healthcare field – from physician to technician to cleaning staff – this hadith is worth contemplation. The



Prophet (saws) asks Allah by first addressing Him as Lord (Rabb). Rabb is the one who does tarbiyah – the One who Nourishes and Sustains every aspect of our being; mentally, physically, and spiritually. In addressing Him as the ‘Rabb of humanity’ and not just the ‘Rabb of the Believers’, he indicated to his ummah that one can and should expect Allah’s Pleasure in assisting any human being in need. His removal of hardship is not limited to Muslims and nor should our service be to them alone. The Qur’an contains “that which is a cure and a mercy for the Believers,”[1] but this cure is not restricted to the Believers. Rather, it reaches beyond, evidenced by one of the Companions who successfully treated an envenomation of a non-Muslim bedouin through Surah al-Fātihah. Subsequent generations advanced this field through trial and experience.

However, do not be mistaken into thinking that the practitioner, the Qur’an, or any other medication intrinsically contains the ability to heal. These are merely conduits to a cure from Allah. This prophetic du`a draws attention to an important point of `aqidah. Allah is the source of healing and thus, He is the true Healer. It is our belief—one the scholars of kalām have rationally explained as well—that diseases do not afflict a person nor are they removed except that they afflict or are removed by Allah. No electron changes state nor any action takes place except that Allah is the true Doer. Viruses, bacteria and other vectors are merely the means through which these diseases occur. Similarly, medications do not work except that He heals through them. As Sayyiduna Ibrahim (May Allah give him peace) said to his people, “And when I become ill, then He cures me.”[2] Anecdotally, every practitioner will have stories of someone

who should have succumbed to their disease but did not. And individuals that should have survived their minor illness but did not. “There is no other cure besides Yours.” When we see a patient, we do not just see biology, but rather we see beyond that to a cosmology and a deeper reality. The Prophet (saws) conveyed the healthcare practitioner’s role and mindset explaining, “Indeed, Allah has sent down the disease and the cure. For he made a cure for every disease. So seek it.” The cure which you seek comes from Allah, but become the means for it!

In this last point is the beauty and honor of being a healthcare practitioner. It demands from us a constant connection with Allah. A health practitioner, who loses his or her connection with Allah, has lost his or her connection with the source of treatment and health. It is entirely up to Him if He wishes to guide you towards a cure or to allow you to move away from it. Whereas a healthcare practitioner, who retains this connection, will always benefit not only him or herself but the patient and community.

What greater honor can there be than to be Allah’s agent in healing? A practitioner who learns Medicine and benefits people is an agent of Allah. Although Allah is al-Shāfi, the practitioner is the agent through whom He heals. The Prophet said,

“He who alleviates the suffering of a brother out of the sufferings of the world, Allah would alleviate his suffering from the sufferings of the Day of Resurrection.”

Inshā’Allah, approaching patients with this mindset will give us a better understanding of our proper place and make our efforts a form of worship.

[1] Surah al-Isrā’: 82

[2] Surah al-Shu`arā’: 80

“To smile in the company of your brother is charity.”
(Sukhari)

The Wealthy Companion

Sister Aisha

The man who would be the third caliph (or leader) of the Muslim nation was born in approximately 574 CE.

His name was Uthman ibn Affan and like Prophet Muhammad, he was born into the tribe of Quraish.

Quraish was the dominant tribe in Mecca and Uthman and Prophet Muhammad each belonged to one of the two most prestigious clans.

Prophet Muhammad was born into the Banu (clan) Hashim. Their responsibility was to provide food and water to the pilgrims visiting the Ka'bah, the sacred house of God.

Uthman's Background

Uthman on the other hand was born into the clan that came to be called Banu Ummaya. They were the strongest and wealthiest clan in Mecca.

Uthman was the golden child of Banu Ummaya. He grew up to be the most beloved of their young men.

He could read and write, and was a very successful merchant and trader. Uthman had traveled widely and had a reputation for being kind, compassionate, generous and pious.

Prophet Muhammad was also a successful businessman, trader and merchant. He was known amongst the Quraish as a trustworthy and honest man.

In Muhammad's fortieth year he was given

the revelation and began to spread the message of Islam.

At that time the many Meccans lived lives of abundance and their wealth was fiercely protected. Islam threatened that wealth.

The leaders of Mecca considered it their duty to put a stop to Islam because it seemed likely to cause disunity and hamper economic growth. Therefore when Prophet Muhammad began preaching his message it was done so in great secrecy but nevertheless people began to convert to Islam.

Prophet Muhammad gathered a small but loyal band of followers. Uthman ibn Affan was among a group of physically fit and successful men who were introduced to Islam by Abu Bakr, himself a wealthy and influential person.

Uthman's Dream & Conversion

Uthman accepted Islam easily partly because of the dreamlike vision he had experienced whilst on a journey home from Syria.

While trying to fall asleep Uthman had heard a voice calling out, "O sleepers arise because Ahmad has emerged in Mecca" it said.

Until his return he had heard nothing about the new religion.

Uthman contacted Abu Bakr who told him that he had taken an oath of allegiance to Prophet Muhammad and had accepted the new

religion. He then took Uthman to see Prophet Muhammad.

Uthman listened to the account of Prophet Muhammad's experiences and the circumstances under which his prophethood was revealed. He immediately accepted Islam and then moved very easily into Prophet Muhammad's inner circle.

When Prophet Muhammad's message became public it threw Mecca into a state of unrest.

Many of the leaders were fearful about a loss of income. The message of only One God meant that the flow of pilgrims coming to the Ka'bah to worship the many idols would now slow down or even stop altogether.

Challenges After Conversion

As the ranks of Prophet Muhammad's followers began to swell, the Quraish began a campaign of persecution and harassment against the new Muslims.

The Quraish were prepared to fight in defense of their idols and also in defense of the economic and social lifestyle. The campaign swiftly escalated to violence and abuse and not even members of their own families were safe.

The acceptance of Islam by Uthman led to a violent reaction within his own family.

Uthman's father was dead but his uncle took it upon himself to try to restrain Uthman. He bound his arms and legs and locked him in a cupboard.

Both his mother and uncle wanted him to recant his conversion to Islam but he refused. His resolve was strong and eventually they had to release him.

Uthman also faced tough choices in his marriage. His wives refused to accept Islam and although he tried to convince them of the beauty of Islam eventually he had to divorce them.

Uthman was there at the birth of Islam and over 1400 years ago he was facing the same dilemmas that some new converts face today.

His extended family was violently opposed to his choices; his close family refused to accept the changes in him and his lifestyle was severely disrupted.

Uthman faced many challenges and was confronted with trials and tribulations seemingly designed to test his faith and conviction. He remained steadfast and accepted that God would replace his once contented life style with something better.

Marriage & Migration

Prophet Muhammad was impressed with Uthman's conviction in the face of so much opposition.

He rewarded Uthman's faith by allowing him to marry his own daughter Ruqayah. That was a cause for celebration but there was very little else to celebrate.

The relations between the new Muslims and the leaders of Mecca continued to deteriorate.

The weaker members of the Muslim community were subjected to torture and shocking abuse. And there seemed to be no end in sight. Prophet Muhammad then decided to send a small group of new Muslims to Abyssinia for their own protection.

Uthman and his new wife Ruqayah were among the group of 12 men and four women who made the first migration to Abyssinia. The King of Abyssinia was known to be a just man. Muslims lived easily under his patronage for approximately 12 months.

At that stage they heard rumors that all of Mecca had accepted Islam so they made the journey back only to find that that was far from the truth. The persecution had in fact escalated. Thus they had to return to Abyssinia this time taking many more new Muslims with them and many were the weaker members of the new religion.

From Abyssinia to Medina

When Uthman and the other migrants jour-

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Peace Treaty

Adil Salahi

When Islam, as the case with any new religion or a new comprehensive ideology, was preached only a small number of people respond to it at the initial stage.

They are those who are endowed with the type of insight which helps them identify the evil in the life of their society and discern the benefits which the new religion is bound to give.

Also few are those who actively oppose the new religion, normally the people who fear for their vested interests as a result of the spread of the new faith. The majority of people remain neutral. They prefer to adopt an attitude of 'wait and see'.

Before the advent of Islam, among all tribes in Arabia the Quraysh enjoyed the highest position of honor and authority.

When they saw the Quraysh actively taking a hostile position towards Islam and Prophet Muhammad, almost all the tribes either joined the Quraysh in their hostility to the new faith or remained neutral.

After returning from the expedition of Tabuk, the Prophet sent his closest companion, Abu Bakr, to lead the pilgrimage and his cousin, 'Ali, to claim total and religious authority over Makkah so that no unbeliever was able to offer pilgrimage according to the old practices of ig-

norance.

The time had come for all Arabian tribes to realize that there was no longer any power in Arabia to challenge the authority of the Islamic state in Madinah with them now followers of the Prophet. Hence, it was only to be expected that the Arabian tribes should start to review their position.

Delegations followed one another to Madinah, either to inquire about the essential elements of the faith of Islam or to pledge their loyalty to the Prophet and declare their belief in God's oneness and the message of Muhammad.

Najran Case

Many delegations of major Arab tribes are now reaching Madinah, some asking for power others for friendship with whole tribes declaring acceptance of Islam. One with a special significance was from Najran.

At the time of the Prophet, Najran and its surrounding area, in the south of Arabia, was a Christian valley. It had a Bishop called Abu Harithah ibn 'Alqamah who was considered an authority on the Christian faith. He was in touch with Byzantine emperors who respected him, sent him financial aid and helped build a number of churches in the area.



In response to a letter sent by the Prophet inviting them to Islam they sent a delegation of 60 people to Madinah in order to get first-hand information about the Prophet.

When meeting with the Prophet he, after returning their greetings, spoke to them in his friendly manner. As their discussion with the Prophet in the mosque took quite a long time, it was time for their evening prayer as they prepared to pray, but some of the Prophet's followers wanted to prevent them from doing so.

The Prophet ordered them to let them offer their normal prayer then the discussion would be resumed. They eventually asked the Prophet:

“What do you say about Jesus? Since we are Christians, we would love to know your opinion so that we may be able to tell our people.”

The Prophet said:

I have nothing to say about him today. You have to stay until I can tell you what will be said to me about Jesus (peace be upon him).

Next morning, the Prophet received fresh Quranic revelations which stated:

Jesus, in God's view, is the same as Adam, whom

He had created from dust and said to him: ‘Be’, and he was there.

This is the truth from your Lord. Be not, therefore, one of the doubters.

Should anyone argue with you about him after what has been given to you of true knowledge, say to them: let us call in our children and your children, our women and your women, and ourselves and yourselves. Let us then all pray God and ask that God's curse overwhelm the liars. (3: 59-61)

When the Prophet told the Najran delegation the following day what information he had received about Jesus, they refused to accept it.

The Prophet then offered them the challenge which was outlined in the Quranic verses quoted above. It was a serious challenge. It meant for the Najran people that they risked being cursed by a Prophet and a Messenger of God. Such a prospect was not to be trifled with.

A Peace Treaty Signed

The following morning the Prophet met with

them as Shurahbil offered to accept the Prophet's judgment without question, giving him 24 hours to make it known to them, what meant that they wanted a peace treaty with the Prophet, and left it to him to specify the terms of that treaty, promising to accept those terms whatever they were. They relied on what they knew of his absolute fairness.

The following day they went to the Prophet as he caused the terms of the peace agreement to for them. The agreed provisions were as follows:

"In the name of God, the Merciful, the Beneficent.

This is what Muhammad, the Prophet and God's Messenger, has written down for the people of Najran when he has the authority over all their fruits, gold, silver, crops and slaves.

He has benevolently left them all that in return for 2,000 hullas every year, 1,000 to be given in the month of Rajab and 1,000 in the month of Safar. Each hulla is equal to one ounce [a measure equal to 4 dirhams].

The Najran are also required to provide accommodation and expenses for my messengers, for up to 20 days. None of my messengers shall be kept in Najran more than one month. They are also required to give, as a loan, 30 shields, 30 horses and 30 camels, in case of any disorder and treachery in Yemen.

If anything is lost of the shields, horses or camels they loan to my messenger, it will remain owing by my messenger until it is given back.

Najran has the protection of God and the pledges of Muhammad, the Prophet, to protect their lives, faith, land, property, those who are absent and those who are present, and their clan and allies.

They need not change anything of their past customs. No right of theirs or their religion shall be altered. No bishop, monk or church

guard shall be removed from his position.

Whatever they have is theirs, no matter how big or small. They are not held in suspicion and they shall suffer no vengeance killing. They are not required to be mobilized and no army shall trespass on their land.

If any of them requests that any right of his should be given to him, justice shall be administered among them. He who takes usury on past loans is not under my protection. No person in Najran is answerable for an injustice committed by another."

Reference:

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following illustration should make it clearer: there is a property called life. Living bodies take in substances, otherwise disorganized, and organize them. Atoms and molecules are tuned to amino acids, proteins, DNA, and so on. These take highly organized forms; in fact, they are organized to stupendous levels that no human effort can match. What happens to the same molecules once the cell completes its cycle and drops out minus the property of life? The universe takes over and applies its law of entropy to disintegrate them. Those various highly organized molecules lose their order.

Not only are the disordered materials brought to order inside a cell, the cell itself is a highly organized governing body – organizing the machineries within it to carry out specific functions, within time – and place targets.

It is this "disorder to order" property of life which defies the Second Law of Thermodynamics.

Neurology & Qur'an Speak About Smartest Bird on Earth

Sahar al-Nadi

Birds are not generally perceived to be smart animals; in fact, it's demeaning to call someone "bird-brained". But one day, I was reading a verse of the Quran involving a bird teaching early humans an important practice, which made me stop and think of the significance of the verse and the qualities of this specific bird, leading me to an interesting learning experience.

Here is the verse which is part of the story of the sons of Adam, Cane and Able:

"The (selfish) soul of the other led him to the murder of his brother: he murdered him, and became (himself) one of the lost ones. Then Allah sent a raven, who scratched the ground, to show him how to hide the shame of his brother. "Woe is me!" said he; "Was I not even able to be as this raven, and to hide the shame of my brother?" then he became full of regrets-" (Qur'an, 5:30-31).

My experience with the Quran is that when it singles out a creature, it means it literally and specifically, not broadly. It gives us a hint to look closer and study it deeper for a well of untapped knowledge. So I assumed this should be the case with ravens since the verse clearly appoints this bird as a mentor for hu-

mans, and clearly shows that humans would be humbled by the solutions found by ravens for some of their critical problems.

As a result, I wondered: which animal is the most intelligent after human beings? Like many people, I thought of the dolphins for that honor, but after a very enjoyable online search, I was in for a big surprise.

Unexpected Candidate

Latest research shows a very unexpected candidate for the top position in animal intelligence, the black bird, which many cultures consider as a harbinger of ill fate and death (maybe because of its solemn role of burial in the story above?), this super intelligent bird is the raven!

The Scientific American magazine published research results of scientists Bernd Heinrich and Thomas Bugnyar – Vermont University, Canada and St Andrews University, Scotland – which show the exceptional mental abilities of the ravens. 'These birds use logic to solve problems and some of their abilities even surpass those of the great apes,' they say.

In these experiments, ravens were given very complex tasks which they have never encountered before and they're not programmed for doing naturally, yet they managed to suc-

ceed every time, finding creative, logical solutions to the tasks. More surprisingly, they did it right the first time, every time, with no trial and error process whatsoever!

The experiments show that ravens were able to test possibilities in their minds in record time, select the most effective solution, and apply it correctly the first time they tried it, something that most intelligent creatures, cannot match.

Some experiments show that ravens are cunning enough to make other animals work for them to make their food scavenging easier, and to secure more than 90% of the prey others have hunted for them. Some have even learnt and taught others to make hunting tools.

Lessons to Learn

In one experiment, a raven fashioned a hook out of a piece of straight wire to fish the food out with it. In another experiment, where the food inside the tube is floating on a small amount of water at the bottom of the long tube, the raven first measures the tube using its beak, then drops the exact number of small pebbles in the tube needed to raise the water level enough for its beak to reach the food.

Seeing a video of the above experiments, I decided to try my own little experiment – on humans: I played the video where the raven uses the pebbles to a number of people of different ages, and stopped it right before it showed the raven's brilliant solution, and then asked my audience what they would do if they were in its place? the unanimous answer was “tip the tube, spill the water with the food, and grab the food” but they were amazed and humbled (exactly like the son of Adam in the Qur'anic verse) when they saw that the raven didn't take the easy way out of spilling the water; but made sure that it got its food without disturbing or damaging the environment where it found it; a precious lesson that many humans need to learn..

Another incredible video shows the ravens in Japan which have been caught on CCTV cameras. First, they learnt to throw hard-shelled nuts -that were too tough for them to crack- from high trees to the streets to crack them open and eat them, then they developed the process into throwing the nutshells in the path of speeding cars to crack them faster, and to avoid the risk of getting run over by heavy traffic, they refined their technique even more, learning to wait for the traffic lights to turn red keeping the cars at bay, then diving down quickly from treetops to snatch their food, all the while keeping an eye on the lights, and flying away safely as soon as the lights changed.

Social Clever Crows

Ravens are also capable of teaming up to trap and kill a prey: two of the ravens would fly to the ground to block its escape route, while the others attacked it. This behavior suggests that they know what each other and the lizard are thinking, which is known as a ‘theory of mind’, say the scientists at Tel Aviv University. Crows would even team up to solve problems set for them during experiments, and would recognize themselves when they looked in a mirror.

Another sign of their high intelligence is that they adapt to very different terrain, from deserts to mountains. They learn to find food even in the harshest conditions, and they know how and when to use other animals to help them get a meal they couldn't otherwise reach. “Ravens are cognitively equal to a two-year-old child,” says biologist Thomas Bugnyar.

Crows are very social species and live in large extended family groups, yet their few fights within a family are usually short and involve only a few pecks, they would only fight to death enemies endangering their families. Compare that with the behavior of the son of Adam who killed his own brother!

As they watch ravens pass test after dif-

difficult test, the researchers are wondering what purpose all this cleverness serves, since other birds get through life just fine with far less intelligence? Well, perhaps ravens have a higher purpose in nature than their simple bird life?

The Quran opens a great door of learning by showing the raven as a mentor to man. Ravens seem to be good teachers of logical thinking, creative problem solving, team work, strategic planning, and effective resource management – all while showing utmost respect to the environment. So, perhaps this is the right time for us to learn from these intelligent creatures, as we seem to need their brain power the most to bring us back to our senses as peaceful guardians of planet Earth.

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-neyed from Abyssinia to Medina, Uthman earned the nick name ‘the assistant’ because of the time he spent with Prophet Muhammad helping him to establish the new Muslim nation.

Uthman therefore understood the details of many Islamic rituals and thus was able to instruct others. He narrated 146 traditions directly from the Prophet himself.

It is said that he gave freely from his wealth and that every Friday Uthman would buy slaves for the purpose of setting them free.

Uthman Ibn Affan was a witness at the birth of Islam. He is a role model for those who convert to Islam today because of his actions and steadfastness in the face of constant harassment.

Outstanding Respect

If Hazrat Moulana Maseehullah Khan Sahib (ra) saw any piece of paper lying on the floor, he would immediately pick it up with respect and place it in some respectful place. Dr. Tanweer Ahmad Khan Sahib (ra) once mentioned that Hazratjee (ra) used to say: “We must respect paper because it is a means of us attaining knowledge.”

In fact, the entire theme of his life was adab (respect). He used to often say: “Everything in this world is engaged in the zikr of Allah. When something is making the zikr of Allah then it is worthy of respect. Remember! Never throw anything down as this is contrary to adab.”

A student once mentioned that Hazratjee (ra) would not even throw or fling dirt into the bin. He would place it inside with utmost care saying: “This was a favour from Allah which we enjoyed for some time. Now that there is no use for it, do not just throw it away. Instead place it in the bin in a respectful manner rather than just throwing it away.”

Muslim Identity

From China in the east to Chile in the west, and Bulgaria in the north to Botswana in the south, throughout history, each and every nation, tribe and people had their own distinct culture and way of life. In some cultures, the cuisine was different, while in others, the clothing was different. In most cultures, the language was different and, in many cases, the ideals, values and approach to life was different as well.

The Global Culture

Enter the twenty-first century, and a strange, unprecedented phenomenon, never before witnessed, began to occur around the globe – deculturation. As time passed, whether one travelled to Hong Kong or Hungary, or even whether one braved the wilderness to venture into the heart of rural Africa, one found a global culture replacing every native and indigenous culture. The hallmark and trademark of this new culture was the shirt and pants, suit and tie or jeans and t-shirt. With this culture clearly having its roots in the west, one began to ponder over how this culture spread across the globe so rapidly, and how it replaced centuries-old cultures in a matter of a few decades. One began to wonder, “What was the link between these far flung foreign lands and the ways of the west?”

Hollywood Culture

The answer was not far off. Even in a rural township, assumed to be ‘cut off’ from the rest of civilization, adorning trees were not leaves. Instead, there were satellite dishes. As technology progressed and the internet entered the scene, people no longer required satellite dishes as they were able to stream all the content they required. Via these technologies and devices, people were being subjected to a subtle yet

strong psychological and cultural attack. With Hollywood as its headquarters, the western lifestyle was portrayed as the ideal lifestyle – nay the only ‘civilized’ and ‘acceptable’ lifestyle. Via movies, people were brainwashed into revering anything even remotely associated with the west. This was not merely an effort to deculture – it was a concerted effort to enculture the world with the ways of the west. People now regarded their traditional ways as backward and sought to become ‘progressive’. When a soccer star styled his hair in a certain (comical) way, thousands of fans followed suit, and when a movie star spoke in defense of the terribly sick “gay rights”, people sagely nodded their heads in agreement. In essence, people became disillusioned with their values and cultures and chose to buy into this new culture which was promoted by every protagonist portrayed on the big screen.

The Islamic Culture

The Deen (religion) of Islam is not merely a set of beliefs. Similarly, Islam is not confined to certain acts of worship. Rather, Islam is a complete code of life, guiding a Muslim through every situation, whether domestic, financial, spiritual or otherwise. Hence, the Deen of Islam has its own ‘culture’ which defines the identity of each and every Muslim. This identity and culture is defined by the mubaarak (blessed) lifestyle of Rasulullah – the Messenger of Allah (saws), as he is the sole role model for the Ummah at large. It is only through following him and emulating his blessed example that one will gain acceptance in the court of Allah Most High. Hence, a Muslim’s values are the values of Islam and his way of life, whether in dress, behaviour, interaction, business or any other sphere of his

existence revolves around the blessed lifestyle of Rasulullah (saws). When a Muslim understands that the key to eternal success lies in the adhering to Islam and the sunnah, he will not sacrifice his Islamic identity for anything. He will regard his Islam to be invaluable and will be prepared to die rather than abandon the way of Islam.

When in Rome..?

On the occasion of Hudaibiyah, Rasulullah (saws) sent Hazrat 'Uthmaan (ra) to Makkah Mukarramah as his representative to explain to the Quraish that the Muslims had only come to perform 'umrah. Hazrat 'Uthmaan (ra), entered Makkah Mukarramah dressed in his usual manner with his pants raised between his ankles and knees, whereas the disbelievers regarded wearing the pants below the ankles to be a mark of dignity and respect. Hence his cousin Abaan bin Sa'eed asked, "What is the matter? Why are you dressed in this inappropriate and undignified manner?" Hazrat 'Uthmaan (ra) replied, "This is how Rasulullah (saws) wears his lower garment." (Musannaf Ibnu Abi Shaibah #38007)

Today, we are told to 'go with the flow' and not 'against the grain'. We are taught 'when in Rome, do as the Romans do'. However, in this incident, Hazrat 'Uthmaan (ra) taught us that no matter where we may be, we should do as Rasulullah (saws) did. Whether we are on holiday or at home, in the workplace or at a social gathering, we remain the same Muslims and follow the same Deen. Hence, at all times, we should reflect the identity of a Muslim.

Remaining Steadfast

The Sahaabah truly understood the value of Islam and the sunnah and thus rigidly adhered to the way of Rasulullah (saws) at all times. Regardless of where they went in the world or which people they encountered, they did not change in the least. Rather, they continued to be shining examples of Islam. In fact, the Sahaabah were such that instead of them being changed by others – their lifestyle, which was radiant with the beauty of Islam, inspired others to ac-

cept Islam and become like them.

Abandon the Sunnah???

On one occasion, Hazrat Ma'qil bin Yasaar (ra) picked up a morsel of food that had fallen to the ground, cleaned it and ate it, adhering to the teaching of Rasulullah (saws). However, some 'nobles' of the disbelievers were present and took offense to his behaviour, as they deemed it inappropriate for a person of dignity to 'eat from the floor'. In response to their taking offence Hazrat Ma'qil (ra) declared, "I will not sacrifice the sunnah of Rasulullah (saws) on account of these disbelievers." (Sunan Ibnu Maajah #3278) This is the spirit that we need to adopt with regard to the sunnah.

Need of the Hour

Rasulullah (saws) has mentioned,

"The best servants of Allah Most High are those whom when they are seen, Allah is remembered." (Musnad Ahmad).

This hadeeth teaches us that the best Muslims are those who on merely being seen, inspire people with the remembrance of Allah Most High. Obviously, for a person to remind one of Allah Most High, he will have to have the appearance of a Muslim. However, with the present loss of Islamic identity globally, it has even become difficult to distinguish Muslim from non-Muslim. Some are such that on looking at them, a soccer star comes to mind on account of his name being printed on the shirt.

Rasulullah (saws) has given us glad tidings saying,

"The one who holds firmly to my sunnah at the time of the degeneration of the condition my Ummah will receive the reward of one hundred martyrs." Hence, the need of the hour is for each and every Muslim to hold firmly to the blessed way of Islam and lifestyle of Rasulullah (saws). (At-Targheeb wat Tarheeb vol. 1. pg. 80)

Courtesy: Al-Haadi



Abid Ahmad

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

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

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

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

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

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Appeal

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