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RADIANT REALITY

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“The most beloved places on Earth to Allah are its mosques”
(Muslim)

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EDITORIAL

All thanks for Almighty, the most Merciful and Exalted

Believe in Islam, Not in Sects

If able to read, then you must have either directly read the Holy Qur'an or gone through its translation. What has been laid down in it in relation to salvation, forgiveness, pardon etc? Is there the mention of Islam, Iman, virtuous deeds only or something more? Is there an invitation to believe: in the unity of Allah, in all the prophets in short and the last Messenger in detail, in considering Qur'an the last testament, and in spending our whole life according to these beliefs; were you able to grasp only these things or something more passed by your sight? Are all the thirty sections of the Qur'an overflowing with the elaboration of these beliefs only or something more is decreed on you? Ponder deeper from the very first page of the Qur'an to the last and observe whether - apart from the belief on Tawhid, Risaalat, and the deeds rotating around these two - any other belief or deed is put forward before you?

After Qur'an, the Sunnah of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) holds the status. Go through the whole life history of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and see if you can find him but holding on to the correct beliefs regarding Allah and spending the life in worshipping Him and obeying His commands? Was the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) occupied with something else other than Salaah, Sawm, Zakaah, Jihad, Hajj, etc., the deeds every single Muslim accepts in confirmation? To earn Allah's limitless Mercy what did the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) present before us - love and fear of Allah, obedi-

ence to the Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), the rights of Allah and His bondsmen, or some other deed or action? If, from your end, the answer of all these things is in negative, if you also consider that the testification of Islam is nothing but the Word that, "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is His Messenger", if, for everlasting peace and pleasure, being a pure Muslim is enough before you - then why, putting aside such simply understandable things, you have created numerous intricacies in your religious life? Your Lord has asked to accept Him as 'One and Only' and draw near to Him by following the way of His Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam); the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has advised us to testify to the one true God and reach Him by following me, but you say and put emphasis on your this opinion that only being a Muslim is not enough, only being obedient to Allah is not sufficient, only being one of the followers of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is not enough, until and unless some other relations based on various sects/schools are necessarily added.

Did the Companions of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) discuss and debate the issues on which you people waste your precious time and energy? Does the Qur'an or the Prophetic Traditions invite you to focus your attention towards the issues of disagreement? If all this is not the case then take recourse to justice and address the notion - living simply a Muslim not being enough, but

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Question Answer

Question: Can cook take leftover food from the work, because this food will be thrown away.

Answer: If the management at work allows the cook to take the food home or it is an established fact that if he does not take it home, the food will be discarded and wasted, it will be permissible for the cook to take the food home.

Mufti Suhail

Question: 1. Is using tasbeeh is bidah & is this imitation of christianity.
2. Giving tasbeeh as a hadiyah is permissible in islam.

Answer: It is permissible to use a "tasbih" or "subhah" in order to aid oneself in performing dhikr. A tasbih helps in performing dhikr in two ways:

By holding it in the hand or seeing it, one is encouraged and reminded to perform dhikr. This is why it is also known as a "mudhakkir" (reminder).

It also helps one keep count.

Using beads or stones to help one with dhikr is supported by hadiths. Imams Abu Dawud and al-Tirmidhi narrated in their collections on the authority of Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas

(ra) that together with Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam) he came upon a woman with date stones or pebbles before her, with which she was reciting tasbih. The narration continued, but does not state Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam) reprimanded her or disapproved of what she was doing. Imam al-Tirmidhi and Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani graded the chain of narration hasan. This offers proof that taking assistance from something to help one to keep count of his dhikr is permissible.

Hence, if one uses tasbih for this purpose it will not be bid'ah. However, there should be no belief attached to the tasbih that it has intrinsic virtue or the one who recites dhikr using it is superior to one who does not.

The great scholars, Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (d. 911 H) and 'Abd al-Hayy al-Laknawi (d. 1304 H), have both authored treatises showing the permissibility of using a tasbih.

It is permissible to give a tasbih as hadiyah.

M. Zameelur Rahman

Question: We have at present substantial moneys sitting in the current account of the business.

We have made some investments in the Al Mabroor property and buffalo projects.

We do still have a large amount sitting in the current account which we do not know when we will use.

We want to invest these funds on call for maybe 30/60/90 day notice.

Would it be permissible to invest these in the so called Shariah compliant funds on call?

We do not intend using the profits earned for personal use but to pay taxes or give away in charity.

Do you know of any other avenue in which these funds can be invested in a halaal manner?

Answer: The investment fund scheme that you are referring to is commonly known as term deposits or time deposits. A time deposit is an interest-bearing deposit held by a bank or financial institution for a fixed term whereby the depositor can only withdraw the funds after giving notice.

The opposite, sometimes known as a sight deposit or "on call" deposit, can be withdrawn at any time, without any notice or penalty.

Time deposits and sight deposits (on call) are interest based investment schemes and thus, are not Shariah compliant.

It is also important to note that the contracts that represent the various modes of Islamic finance must be Shariah Compliant as well. They should not be Islamic modes of financing by name while they lack the true essence of the concept in the contract and in the implementation.

Musharakah and Mudarabah are ideal avenues for investment which you may consider in investing your wealth.

M. Ismaeel

Question: I have a store where I sell goods for cash and on credit. The goods that I sell on

credit are sold at a 10% markup due to the differed payment. Is this permissible?

Answer: It is permissible to sell items at a higher price if sold on credit. This will be on condition that the price is fixed at the time of the transaction; for example, the cash price of an item is R500 but on credit, it is for R600 payable over six months at R100 per month. (al-Hidaya, Fatawa Mahmudiyah, Vol: 24, Pg: 195)

Mufti Suhail

Question: I was told that the following is from a hadith:

1. At the time a rooster crows then it is at that moment seeing an angel.
2. When it Crows it is also a time of accepted duas.

Can this please be verified.

Answer: It is confirmed in the Hadith that when a rooster crows, it is due to seeing an angel and a person is encouraged to make Dua at this moment.

Sayyiduna Abu Hurayrah (RA) reports that the Prophet of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "When you hear the rooster crow, ask Allah from his grace for it has seen an angel. And when you hear the bray of a donkey, ask Allah for protection for it has seen a Shaitaan" (Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith #: 3303)

Mufti Suhail

Question: Whenever I intend to go out, my mother in law asks me where I am going. I am finding this very annoying. I feel she is being too nosey. Do I have to tell her?

There is no place my husband and I go to without her wanting to know where we are going. I find this very interfering in my marriage and feel she just wants to exercise her authority over her youngest son. Is it still his duty to answer her, or can we just say we are

going out, greet her and not tell her the actual places?

Answer: 1. Whilst, you do not have to inform her of your every movement, it is advisable that when you are going out, especially if it will be for a few hours, to let her know that you are going out, and that if there is any important message, she will be able to contact you on your cell-phone.

2. Ignore what you term as her being “nosey”. Parents generally incline to worry, apprehension and fear when it comes to their children – especially considering the dangerous times that we live in. Her questions should be attributed to that motherly concern.

Exercise patience and appease her worry, by informing her when you do go out. This will win her appreciation. And in this way, you will also get her du’aas for your safety and safe return home.

So, although there is no obligation, it is in the interest of maintaining a good relationship that you do so, moreover since you are living together.

3. Indeed as the mother her rights over your husband are great. Therefore though this as a big challenge, you should nevertheless be encouraging your husband to respond correctly in these matters, so that he is not disrespectful to his mother and does not hurt her feelings. In doing so, you will be very greatly rewarded.

M. Yunus

Question: I have question about using neighbours wifi, if by mistake their internet wifi connects on my devices and I use it without knowing its theirs, am I accountable for that, is that stealing and haram?

Answer: It is narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (RA) that the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said:

Everything of a Muslim is sacred to another
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*Muslim: his property, his honour and his blood.
It is enough evil for any man to despise his brother Muslim.*

It is clear from the hadith above that as Muslims, we should always take full caution when dealing with others and using anything that belongs to them, especially if it is without their consent.

In the enquired case, although you are not liable for accidentally using your neighbor's Wi-Fi, it is still important to inform your neighbor that you have been unintentionally using his Wi-Fi connection without his permission. If you decide to compensate your neighbor for using his Wi-Fi connection in the past, it will be an expression of your taqwa and Allah consciousness.

We also advise you to let your neighbor know that your devices tend to automatically connect to the nearest available Wi-Fi connection and there is a possibility that this will happen again in the future. By notifying your neighbor about this issue, you will be absolved from any accidental future usage of his connection without his permission.

Bilal Mohammad

Question: What is the doa of Ayub (AS) and what was his story of hardship that mentioned in Quran? Can we read the same doa?

Answer: Ayub (AS) was the prophet of Allah during the era between Musa and Yaqub (AS) which was between 1300-1500 B.C. Some scholars are of the opinion that he was originally Roman from the bloodline of Ibrahim (AS) whilst others say he was an Arab. It is also mentioned that his mother was the daughter of Lut (AS). Allah blessed him with abundant wealth land, livestock, slaves and many children etc.

Allah tested Ayub (AS) by taking away everything he had to such an extent that even his health was taken away from him. Histori-

ans and commentators write that not a single limb of Ayub (AS) was safe from disease except his tongue and his heart through which he would remember Allah.

Difficulties worsened to such an extent that people cut their ties with him due to his illness and had him expelled from the city to a place outside the city. The only person that was there to support him was his wife, Rahmah bint Ibrahim.

Despite all the difficulties, Ayub (AS) was patient, persevering, and grateful. He was also constantly engrossed in the remembrance of Allah day and night. It was after years of forbearance and difficulty that Ayub (AS) wife told him "oh Ayub why don't you ask Allah to help you". He replied "I lived for seventy years in prosperity why shouldn't I be patient for the sake of Allah for seventy years." It was after this that Ayub (AS) made the following dua which is in the Qur'an:

And when Ayub (AS) prayed to his Rabb saying, "Difficulty has certainly afflicted me and You are the Most Merciful of those who show mercy". (Surah Ambiya-83)

Allah mentions in the Qur'an how Ayub (AS) was healed:

(Allah said) Strike your foot on the ground (Allah caused a spring to gush out) This is cool water for bathing and drinking (after which you will be cured) (Surah Saad-42)

Allah then mentions:

(After curing him) We gifted him with his family and as many of them in addition (twice as many) As a mercy from Us and a reminder for the people of intelligence (to remind them that Allah rewards the patient ones and restores their losses. (Surah Saad-43)

a. Allah tests those that are close to him to elevate their ranks.

b. It is easy to thank Allah in the state of prosperity, but praising and remembering Allah during difficulties and accepting his decree is

most beloved to Allah and draws his mercy.

c. No matter the situation, one should never be despondent of the mercy of Allah.

d. Being thankful and humble during prosperity and being steadfast and patient during difficulty are two great bounties a person can have and inculcate.

2. It is advisable to recite the dua of Ayub (AS) when faced with difficulties.

M. Ismail

Question. We want to have a Qur'an competition at our school for little kids as encouragement. The proposed plan is to give umrah tickets as the prize and charge each participant a fee of R100. I just wanted to check if this is permissible.

Answer. To structure the competition in this manner whereby participants have to pay a fee in order to be part of the competition and eligible for the prize is a form of gambling and is not permissible. The competition should either be held free of charge or if there is a charge, the fees should be in lieu of a fixed and specific exchange; for example, a copy of the Qur'an, Islamic book or a specified service (e.g., additional Madrasah classes). There should be no fee attached to the prize-giving competition itself.

Mufti Suhail

Question: My friend borrowed my vehicle for personal use. The vehicle is a luxury vehicle and just for driving around with family. Its sad to say that this so called friend was using my vehicle for the transport and delivery/ collection of his hardware goods which has left significant damage on my car seats. Is he liable to pay me for the damage that he has caused? He's saying he will compensate me at the price of replacing the seats second hand from a backdoor auto-furnisher. My car is only a few months old and I want the seats replaced by

brand company but he is saying that I am demanding too much

Answer: Your friend is guilty of negligence if he had used your vehicle to transport his hardware goods without your consent as the normal usage of a luxury vehicle is not for the frequent collecting and delivering of hardware goods. Considering that the seats in your car are recently factory fitted seats that he has damaged, he is liable to compensate you at the cost of replacing the seats by brand company.

Mufti Suhail

Question: My father is battling and I know for a fact that he is always short every month as he is a pensioner and does not have any other source of income. Can I give him my Zakaat?

Answer: A person cannot give his/her parents Zakaat and vice versa. You cannot assist your father with Zakaat funds. You can assist him with funds with the intention of optional Sadaqah if you wish or other family members (eg, his brothers, nephews etc) can assist him with Zakaat. A wife may not give her Zakaat to her husband and vice versa.

Mufti Suhail

Question: I always knew we can read Qur'an and give the sawab to the deceased and I do this all the time for my late father. Recently I was told this is wrong and the dead cant benefit from my reading. Please clarify as I'm now confused

Answer: There are numerous Ahadith to prove that the rewards of the Qur'an and good actions reach and benefit the deceased when performed on their behalf.

Sayyiduna Abu Hurayrah (RA) reports that the Prophet of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:

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When a person passes away, then all his actions cease except for three: a) Sadaqah Jaariyah (perpetuating charity), b) Knowledge which he imparted and is now being benefitted from or c) a pious child who will make Dua for him. (Muslim)

In the chapter titled "recitation by the deceased", Imam Abu Dawood (ra) transmitted the Hadith reported by Sayyiduna Ma'qal bin Yasar (RA) that the Prophet of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:

"Recite Surah Yaseen upon your dead" (Abu Dawood)

Allamah Ayni (ra) states:

The rewards of all good actions benefit the dead including Salaah, fasting, Hajj, charity, Zikr etc (Ramzul Haqa'iq)

In Sahih al-Bukhari, the narration from Sayyidatuna Aa'ishah (RA) is recorded where a man came to the Prophet of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and asked him:

"My mother passed away suddenly and she did not get a chance to make a bequest. I think that if she had a chance, she would have given charity. So if I give charity on her behalf, will she be rewarded and will I also be rewarded?"

The Prophet of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) replied in the affirmative. (Bukhari)

These are just a few narrations from the many that establish that reciting the Qur'an and performing good deeds on behalf of the deceased will benefit them in their graves. You should continue doing good deeds on behalf of your father, be it in the form of charity, keeping optional fasts, optional Salaah, Istighfar, Zikr or the recitation of the Qur'an etc and all of this will benefit him Insha Allah.

Mufti Suhail

Question:

If I have earned interest on loans, and I have no way to dispose it off.

1. Is it permissible to deposit it in the bank account of some institution which treats poor people and in the bank account of someone who has made appeal for financial help on account of his illness etc.

2. Is it permissible to open such an account in which we can collect the interest earned by the people and use the said amount for social services or to give interest free loans to loans to unemployed?

Answer:

It is not permissible to open up an account specifically to earn interest even if the intention is noble, to provide social services and empower people.

If by chance and subordinately, one received interest due to using the bank facility out of personal need, then the interest accrued should be disposed to the poor and needy. This maybe done personally or even depending on reliable institutions to dispose of it on your behalf. In the enquired case, if the institution is reliable and serves the needs of the people, then interest monies should be given to those institutions to dispose of on your behalf.

Likewise, if a person needs financial help due to ill health, interest may be dispensed to his account. In this case, it is important to ensure that the person is poor and

needy.

Interest monies cannot be given as loans. They have to be dispensed to the poor and needy.

M. Ismail

Question

For the past year, I have the Nisab amount and I know I have to pay Zakaat on this. I pay Zakaat every year on the 10th Ramadan. A few days ago, my father gave me R10 000. do I have pay zakat on this as well? Keep in mind that I don't possess this amount for a full year

Answer.

What is meant by Zakaat becoming compulsory when you possess wealth for one year is that you possess the Nisaab amount for one year. Once you possess the Nisaab amount for one year, Zakaat becomes compulsory on you. Thereafter, any other wealth earned during the year will be added to your possessions on which Zakaat is due and you will have to pay Zakaat on it as well. So even though you just received this R10 000 a few days ago, you still have to pay Zakaat on it if you have it in your possession on your Zakaat due date.

The Zakaat Nisaab as of Tuesday, 10 Ramadan 1435/8 July 2014 is R4 806.92.

Mufti Suhail

Allah's Help

"Allah's help is with a person as long as he is helping his brother. "(Muslim)

If Allah is helping a person, is there anyone or anything that can repel Allah's help? Is there any greater help than the help that can come from Allah? How can one achieve that magnificent help? It is by turning to his brethren and helping them. As he helps his brothers, Allah will help him.

This hadith gives a picture of what the ideal Islamic society should be like. It is a society in which its members help and assist one another. The different members of society should be working together and helping one another for everything that is good and righteous. They should help each other fulfill their needs and they should assist each other to make life easier for all.

Lesson From The Qur'an

Surah Al-Imran - Verse 172-179

Note: Text in bold letters is the literal translation of the meaning of the Qur'an by M. Taqi Usmani and the normal text is the brief explanation compiled by Institute of Islamic Research, Darul Uloom Ilahiya.

When the Makkan infidels were returning from Uhud, they decided to attack the Muslims once again. They felt that what they achieved was insufficient and wished to wipe out all the Muslims. When the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) received intelligence of this, he, together with the Companions pursued the enemy to a place call Hamra'ul Asad. Upon learning of the chase, the Makkan infidels took flight. En route they met few horsemen from the Bani Abdil Qais tribe. The Makkan infidels told them to pass the message on to the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) that they were returning to attack Madinah so that all the Muslims may be annihilated. When the horsemen met the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) at Hamra'ul Asad and conveyed the message to him, the noble Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and his Companions remarked, "Allah is sufficient for us and He is the Best of Helpers". The following verses, as per one opinion, were revealed in praise of these valiant Companions, who despite injuries, responded to the call of Allah and His Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) to pursue the infi-

dels.

Another opinion regarding is that when the Makkan infidels were returning from Uhud they mentioned that the next battle shall be at Badr where the Muslims had previously killed 70 of them. It was in response to this that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and his Companions marched to Badr after Uhud. They took with them goods for trade as well, so that they may do some business in the event that there is no battle.

Those who responded to the call of Allah and the Messenger to chase the infidels, even after they had received the fresh wound in Uhud, for those of them, in fact all of them are such, **who did good deeds and feared Allah, there is a great reward** in the Hereafter [3:172]

– that is **those to whom people** of Bani Abdil Qais **said** on arriving, **"The people** i.e., Makkan, **have gathered** huge weaponry to fight **against you; so, fear them."** **It increased them** i.e., the believers, **in Faith and,** concluding the conversation, **they said** unwaveringly, **"Allah is**

fully sufficient for us against difficulties, and the best One in whom to trust.” [3:173] [3:177]

So, they returned with bounty from Allah viz., business profit, **and grace** viz., reward in Hereafter, **with no evil having even touched them, and they submitted to the pleasure of Allah** in this incident. **Allah is the Lord of great bounty.** [3:174]

O Muslims! **It** - the informer - **is none but a human Satan**, by virtue of his act, **who frightens you of his co-religious friends. So, do not fear them** for they won't be able to harm you; **but fear Me, if you are believers** which you certainly are as is evident by your sacrifices, so don't worry. [3:175]

The above verses mention the disloyalty and the enmity of the hypocrites which would grieve the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Allah comforts him in the following verses so that he remains unaffected, now and in future, by any kind of shock from them or other infidels.

O Prophet! **Those** i.e., the hypocrites, **who hasten towards** supporting and helping **disbelief** on seeing Muslims going weak **should not make you grieve. They cannot harm** the religion of **Allah** by their tactics **at all**; therefore, this should not grieve you. And if you are concerned about their advancement towards the Hell owing to their misdeeds, still you need not to worry because **Allah** already **intends not to spare for them any share in the Hereafter** which also makes it useless for you to hold onto the hope of their support. Not only is the deprivation of divine blessings but **for them there is a mighty punishment** also. [3:176]

Certainly, those also who bought disbelief in exchange for Belief is it hypocrites or open infidels, friends or strangers, **cannot harm** the religion of **Allah at all. For them** also, like the earlier people, **there is a painful punishment.**

Above the mention of mighty and painful punishment to the disbelievers is mentioned. Now, in the following verse, their belief that the luxurious life they are living is the proof of their reputability near Allah, is being repulsed.

Those who disbelieve should not think that the respite We give them is anyway good and advantageous for them. In fact, We give them respite and long life only that they may increase in sin, and then punish them at one go; **and what if they are not punished in this world, for them there is a humiliating punishment** in the Hereafter. [3:178]

Onward, it is mentioned that the difficulties being faced by the believers should not create doubt of their disreputability near Allah because there are reasons and expedencies behind those difficulties.

Allah is not to leave the believers in the state you are in unless He separates the impure i.e., hypocrites, **from the pure** i.e., true believers, by subjecting you to distress and trials in order to draw distinction between you in obvious terms. **Allah is not to inform you** - O people, **of the Unseen** with regard to ones hypocrisy or belief other than through tests and trials. **But,** those to whom His Wisdom demands to convey to without subjecting them to tests and trials, **Allah selects from His messengers whom He wills** to communicate with. Since, O people, you are not His messengers, information to you cannot be conveyed this way and that is why circumstances are created by which sincere people are distinguished from hypocrites. Therefore, when it has been established that respite given to disbelievers or test and trials thrown on believers, is not a proof of

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Lesson From Sahih al-Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

The Book of Ablution

Chapter 19 : One who starts from the right side of his head while taking a bath.

Alaihi Wasallam) said, "One must feel shy from Allah more than from the people as He has the right for it".

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

It is better to start from the right side. Some people say that by 'right side' the right side of the body is meant but Imam Bukhari (RA) says that it means the right side of head as written by Alaama Qastalaani.

Hadith No. 272

Narrated Aisha (RA)

"Whenever any one of us was Junub, she poured water over her head thrice with both her hands and then rubbed the right side of her head with one hand and rubbed the left side of the head with the other hand".

Comments

The Shariah prefers to execute good actions with right hand and from right hand side.

Chapter 20 : One who takes a bath alone (in isolation) completely naked. And one who veiled himself, for shielding oneself is better.

And Bahz quoted his father and he from his grandfather that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Shah Waliullah Muhaddith Delhvi (RA) says that Imam Bukhari (RA) wants to mention that if someone takes a bath naked alone (in isolation), it is permissible though covering the body is better.

Hadith No. 273

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA)

"The Prophet said, 'The (people of) Bani Israel used to take bath naked (all together) looking at each other. The Prophet Moses used to take a bath alone. They said, 'By Allah! Nothing prevents Moses from taking a bath with us except that he has a scrotal hernia.' So once Moses went out to take a bath and put his clothes over a stone and then that stone ran away with his clothes. Moses followed that stone saying, "My clothes, O stone! My clothes, O stone! till the people of Bani Israel saw him and said, 'By Allah, Moses has got no defect in his body. Moses took his clothes and began to beat the stone." Abu Huraira added, "By Allah! There are still six or seven marks present on

the stone from that excessive beating."

Hadith No. 274

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA)

"The Prophet said, "When the Prophet Jacob (Aiyub) was taking a bath naked, golden locusts began to fall on him. Jacob started collecting them in his clothes. His Lord addressed him, 'O Jacob! Haven't I given you enough so that you are not in need of them.' Jacob replied, 'Yes! By Your Honor (power)! But I cannot dispense with Your Blessings'".

Comments

From these narrations it is stated that Hadhrat Musa (AS) used to take bath naked alone (in isolation). Since Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) mentioned these incidents and did not comment on the acts of these prophets, the learned scholars concluded from this that it is permissible for this Ummah as well, but covering ones private parts even during Gusul bespeaks of higher degree of modesty.

Chapter 21 : To use a veil while taking a bath amongst people.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

If someone needs to take a bath while the people are around, he should use a cloth as veil so that people won't see him.

Hadith No. 275

Narrated Umami Hani bint Abi Talib (RA)

"I went to Allah's Apostle in the year of the conquest of Makkah and found him taking a bath while Fatima was screening him. The Prophet asked, "Who is it?" I replied, "I am Um-Hani."

Hadith No. 276

Narrated Maimuna (RA)

"I screened the Prophet while he was taking a bath of Janaba. He washed his hands, poured water from his right hand over his left and washed his private parts. Then he rubbed his hand over a wall or the earth, and performed ablution similar to that for the prayer but did not wash his feet. Then he poured water over his body, shifted from that place, and washed his feet".

Chapter 22 : If a women has a wet dream (nocturnal sexual discharge).

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

It is a controversial issue whether women get a wet dream or not i.e., observing wetness on her clothes after dreaming about some sexual activity. Imam Bukhari (RA) is of the opinion that a woman also gets wet dream (Ihtilaam).

Hadith No. 277

Narrated Um-Salma (the mother of the believers) (RA)

"Um Sulaim, the wife of Abu Talha, came to Allah's Apostle and said, "O Allah's Apostle! Verily Allah is not shy of (telling you) the truth. Is it necessary for a woman to take a bath after she has a wet dream (nocturnal sexual discharge)?" Allah's Apostle replied, "Yes, if she notices a discharge."

Comments

There is consensus amongst the jurists that if a man gets Ihtilaam (wet dream), Gusul becomes obligatory on him. There is difference of opinion between the Ulema on the issue whether a woman also gets a wet dream or not. The majority of jurists are of the opinion that a man and woman are similar in this issue. Ibrahim Nakha'ee is one who says that a woman does not get any wet dream.

Chapter 23: The sweat of a person who has

got ritual impurity. And a Muslim does not become Najas (impure or unclean as per Shariah).

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Shah Waliullah Muhaddith Delhvi (RA) says that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said that a believer never becomes impure (in a sense that he cannot be touched), and he did not avoid to shake hands with those people who were ritually impure.

Hadith No. 278

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA)

"The Prophet came across me in one of the streets of Madina and at that time I was Junub. So I slipped away from him and went to take a bath. On my return the Prophet said, "O Abu Huraira! Where have you been?" I replied, "I was Junub, so I disliked to sit in your company." The Prophet said, "Subhan Allah! A believer never becomes impure."

Comments

The impurities in Shariah are of two types, viz.,

1. The visible impurity like urine, blood and faeces etc. These kind of impurities need to be washed away and one should avoid to touch these.
2. The ritual impurity, for example, if a person gets semen ejaculation and then he washes his private part and the semen from his body, he is still in a ritually impure state as per Shariah till he takes a Gusul. Although there is no visible impurity on the body of such a person, still he is impure. This ritual impurity bars him to offer the Salaah, touch the Qur'an or enter a Musjid but it does not make him un-touchable as Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) used to shake hands with such people. Similarly the sweat of such a per-

son is also not a ritual impurity.

Chapter 24 : A ritually impure person can go out and walk in the market or anywhere else.

And Atta said : "A ritually impure person can go for cupping of blood (i.e., can let his blood out medically), clip his nails and get his head shaved even if he has not performed Wudu".

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Imam Bukhari (RA) wants to say that after getting ritual impurity, it is not obligatory to perform Gusul immediately.

Hadith No. 279

Narrated Anas bin Malik (RA)

"The Prophet used to visit all his wives in one night and he had nine wives at that time".

Hadith No. 280

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA)

"Allah's Apostle came across me and I was Junub He took my hand and I went along with him till he sat down I slipped away, went home and took a bath. When I came back. he was still sitting there. He then said to me, "O Abu Huraira! Where have you been?" I told him about it The Prophet said, "Subhan Allah! O Abu Huraira! A believer never becomes impure".

Comments

Hadhrat Ali (RA), Hadhrat Umar (RA) and Ibn Umar (RA) used to come out of their houses without taking a bath after getting ritual impurity. Imam Bukhari (RA) wants to say that though it is preferable to perform Gusul as quickly as possible but it is not obligatory as one can engage himself in necessary work before performing the Gusul.

Education in Islamic History

From the very earliest days of Islam, the issue of education has been at the forefront at the minds of the Muslims. The very first word of the Quran that was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was, in fact, "Read". Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) once stated that "Seeking knowledge is mandatory for all Muslims." With such a direct command to go out and seek knowledge, Muslims have placed huge emphasis on the educational system in order to fulfill this obligation placed on them by the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

Throughout Islamic history, education was a point of pride and a field Muslims have always excelled in. Muslims built great libraries and learning centers in places such as Baghdad, Cordoba, and Cairo. They established the first primary schools for children and universities for continuing education. They advanced sciences by incredible leaps and bounds through such institutions, leading up to today's modern world.

Attitudes Towards Education

Today, education of children is not limited to the information and facts they are expected to learn. Rather, educators take into account the emotional, social, and physical

well-being of the student in addition to the information they must master. Medieval Islamic education was no different. The 12th century Syrian physician al-Shayzari wrote extensively about the treatment of students. He noted that they should not be treated harshly, nor made to do busy work that doesn't benefit them at all. The great Islamic scholar al-Ghazali also noted that "prevention of the child from playing games and constant insistence on learning deadens his heart, blunts his sharpness of wit and burdens his life. Thus, he looks for a ruse to escape his studies altogether." Instead, he believed that educating students should be mixed with fun activities such as puppet theater, sports, and playing with toy animals.

The First Schools

Ibn Khaldun states in his Muqaddimah, "It should be known that instructing children in the Qur'an is a symbol of Islam. Muslims have, and practice, such instruction in all their cities, because it imbues hearts with a firm belief (in Islam) and its articles of faith, which are (derived) from the verses of the Qur'an and certain Prophetic traditions."

The very first educational institutions of the Islamic world were quite informal. Mosques were used as a meeting place where

people can gather around a learned scholar, attend his lectures, read books with him/her, and gain knowledge. Some of the greatest scholars of Islam learned in such a way, and taught their students this way as well. All four founders of the Muslim schools of law – Imams Abu Hanifa, Malik, Shafi'i, and Ibn Hanbal – gained their immense knowledge by sitting in gatherings with other scholars (usually in the mosques) to discuss and learn Islamic law.

Some schools throughout the Muslim world continue this tradition of informal education. At the three holiest sites of Islam – the Haram in Makkah, Masjid al-Nabawi in Madinah, and Masjid al-Aqsa in Jerusalem – scholars regularly sit and give lectures in the mosque that are open to anyone who would like to join and benefit from their knowledge. However, as time went on, Muslims began to build formal institutions dedicated to education.

From Primary to Higher Education

Dating back to at least the 900s, young students were educated in a primary school called a maktab. Commonly, maktab were attached to a mosque, where the resident scholars and imams would hold classes for children. These classes would cover topics such as basic Arabic reading and writing, arithmetic, and Islamic laws. Most of the local population was educated by such primary schools throughout their childhood. After completing the curriculum of the maktab, students could go on to their adult life and find an occupation, or move on to higher education in a madrasa, the Arabic world for "school".

Madrasas were usually attached to a large mosque. Examples include al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt (founded in 970) and al-Karaouine in Fes, Morocco (founded in 859). Later, numerous madrasas were established

across the Muslim world by the great Seljuk vizier, Nizam al-Mulk. At a madrasa, students would be educated further in religious sciences, Arabic, and secular studies such as medicine, mathematics, astronomy, history, and geography, among many other topics. In the 1100s, there were 75 madrasas in Cairo, 51 in Damascus, and 44 in Aleppo. There were hundreds more in Muslim Spain at this time as well.

These madrasas can be considered the first modern universities. They had separate faculties for different subjects, with resident scholars that had expertise in their fields. Students would pick a concentration of study and spend a number of years studying under numerous professors. Ibn Khaldun notes that in Morocco at his time, the madrasas had a curriculum which spanned sixteen years. He argues that this is the "shortest [amount of time] in which a student can obtain the scientific habit he desires, or can realize that he will never be able to obtain it."

When a student completed their course of study, they would be granted an ijaza, or a license certifying that they have completed that program and are qualified to teach it as well. Ijazas could be given by an individual teacher who can personally attest to his/her student's knowledge, or by an institution such as a madrasa, in recognition of a student finishing their course of study. Ijazas today can be most closely compared to diplomas granted from higher educational institutions.

Education and Women

Throughout Islamic history, educating women has been a high priority. Women were not seen as incapable of attaining knowledge nor of being able to teach others themselves. The precedent for this was set with Prophet Muhammad's own wife, Aisha, who was one

of the leading scholars of her time and was known as a teacher of many people in Madinah after the Prophet's (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) death.

Later Islamic history also shows the influence of women. Women throughout the Muslim world were able to attend lectures in mosques, attend madrasas, and in many cases were teachers themselves. For example, the 12th century scholar Ibn 'Asakir (most famous for his book on the history of Damascus, Tarikh Dimashq) traveled extensively in the search for knowledge and studied under 80 different female teachers.

Women also played a major role as supporters of education:

- The University of al-Karaouine in Fes, Morocco was founded by Fatima al-Fihri in 859
- The first formal madrasa of the Muslim world, the University of al-Karaouine in Fes was established in 859 by a wealthy merchant by the name of Fatima al-Fihri.
- The Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid's wife, Zubayda, personally funded many construction projects for mosques, roads, and wells in the Hijaz, which greatly benefit the many students that traveled through these areas.
- The wife of Ottoman Sultan Suleyman, Hurrem Sultan, endowed numerous madrasas, in addition to other charitable works such as hospitals, public baths, and soup kitchens.
- During the Ayyubid period of Damascus (1174 to 1260) 26 religious endowments (including madrasas, mosques, and religious monuments) were built by women.

Unlike Europe during the Middle Ages (and even up until the 1800s and 1900s), women played a major role in Islamic education in the past 1400 years. Rather than being seen as second-class citizens, women played an active role in public life, particularly in the field of education.

Modern History

The tradition of madrasas and other classical forms of Islamic education continues until today, although in a much more diminished form. The defining factor for this was the encroachment of European powers on Muslim lands throughout the 1800s. In the Ottoman Empire, for example, French secularist advisors to the sultans advocated a complete reform of the educational system to remove religion from the curriculum and only teach secular sciences. Public schools thus began to teach a European curriculum based on European books in place of the traditional fields of knowledge that had been taught for hundreds of years. Although Islamic madrasas continued to exist, without government support they lost much of their relevance in the modern Muslim world.

Today, much of the former Ottoman Empire still runs education along European lines. For example, what you are allowed to major in at the university level depends on how you do on a certain standardized test at the end of your high school career. If you obtain the highest possible grades on the test, you can study sciences such as medicine or engineering. If one scores on the lower end of the spectrum, they are only allowed to study topics such as Islamic sciences and education.

Despite the new systems in place in much of the Muslim world, traditional education still survives. Universities such as al-Azhar, al-Karaouine, and Darul Uloom in Deoband, India continue to offer traditional curricula that bring together Islamic and secular sciences. Such an intellectual tradition rooted in the great institutions of the past that produced some of the greatest scholars of Islamic history and continues to spread the message and knowledge of Islam to the masses.

Courtesy: lostislamichistory.com

A Wife is not a Girlfriend

The character and personality of a girlfriend is quite different from the character and personality of a wife. She who had been a good girlfriend, might succeed as a wife, or might not. In most cases that does not happen. Not because she can never be a good wife, but because, the disappointment is oppressive. Similar is the case when we compare the boyfriend against the husband, writes SYED IQBAL ZAHEER.

Satan has a million guiles. One of them is that of an innocent relationship between a boy and a girl. They believe (or pretend to believe) that their relationship is pure, free of any sexual overtones and undertones, and full of sisterly or brotherly affection and liking. Many parents close their eyes when their children fall into this trap. They think it is a harmless relationship.

In actual fact, this kind of relationship (between non-mahrams) is only possible between children who are not conscious of their selves. If the two are above 9 or 10, when sex-consciousness begins to develop, their relationship will definitely take sexual overtones.

Relationship developed during this age leaves a deep imprint on the mind. In most cases they fall into what is called as "boyfriend/ girlfriend syndrome"; or, the "first-love syndrome." If they do not get married, the longing for each other remains until death. But the situation changes drastically, in most cases, after marriage. For, a wife is not a girlfriend.

There is something strange about these "firsts" of life. We tend to clearly re-

member the first things in our lives. The day the first cycle was gifted by the father and you went out to proudly display it to your pals, the first train journey, the first day in college, the first child's birth, and so on. The events stick to memory and recalling is sweet.

The first dating is similar. Married people with children and grandchildren, at the borders of senescence still recall their first date with clarity and fondness. The reasons should not be difficult to guess. First cycle, first train journey, etc. are momentary events. They do not involve one's mind, body, or emotions, but marginally. But human contacts leave their signature at the deepest level of mind and heart. If they are prolonged, many memories get attached to them. And when it is male and female, and it is their first contact with the opposite sex, when they are teens, then, the memory's fondness is deeply emotional, deeply etched in mind.

If they were in love, or thought so, but did not get married, then, the story is incomplete, the train-journey was cut short, the disappointment is bitter, and will last the rest of their lives. Marriage is the only cure. But, most

such marriages fail.

Love is the central theme of life. So much so, that a true Sufi doesn't bother about heaven and hell. It is enough of a reward for him that he should meet with his Lord. Christianity's motto is "God is love." Rightly so, but, unfortunately, the first Christian having died on the cross, seems to have taken the elixir with him, leaving behind an empty bottle.

At all events, neither the Sufi is wholly right in his belief, nor the Christians who have been the most bloody with humans, throughout their history, and evince all intentions to carry with their journey on the holy grail. May we not fall in their path of love – Amen.

The point we are trying to drive at is that love is truly the central theme of life, but not a very successful guile if used as a slogan, little believed in. But the boy and girl, recently conscious of sex, little suspecting of how the society can convert their God-gifted innocence into artful fiendishness as they grow, how the modern world can train them into becoming selfish bugs, and how the advancing age alters its demands, tend to believe that they are in true love. Beliefs blind, when they are not rational. People's blind belief in stone gods is an example. In Islam, rational love is valued more than emotional love. In case of teens in love, none of the defects of each is visible to the other. The Devil sits on their eye-lashes. More: dreamy eyes see merits that do not exist. Their minds are locked, not the hearts, as it is commonly believed.

Little surprise then that, having fallen into the trap of "first love," if they get married, they end up in separation in majority of cases. Separation time is at most five years. Disappointment follows disappointments. In some cases, regretful feelings visit them on the first morning after marriage. The boy had never seen his sweetie – as he sees her now, leaving the bed yawning – with pimples at a few

wrong places, the hair disheveled, eyes filled with yellow smut, and the earlobes a little bit out of shape.

They are yet to begin their married life in earnest. They are yet to have a conversation as long as they used to have earlier. Never again they will have it. Before marriage it was, he: "I love this lake," and she, "me too" (the lake is stinking with filthy water). Or he, "I hate fish, they stink," and she, "I am not particularly fond of them." (She enjoys them). Or, "I love computer games," and she, "I suppose they are a good pastime," (she hates them, anyway).

So, it is artificiality through and through. Both are falling upon each other trying to be agreeable to each other. Both wish to submerge their personalities into the other's. Films give them dialogs, and, as bonus, dreams of happy life thereafter, forever and forever.

Although, as pointed out earlier, some regret creeps in the morning after marriage, they remain suppressed during coming months and years. But, gradually, as and when personalities open up, realities become visible, disenchantment grows, differences harden up. There was that pre-marriage time when the two wished to submerge in the other's personality; these are times, when each begins to assert his or her personality. Confrontation is inevitable.

The character and personality of a girlfriend is quite different from the character and personality of a wife. She who had been a good girlfriend, might succeed as a wife, or might not. In most cases that does not happen. Not because she can never be a good wife, but because, the disappointment is oppressive. And of course, the reverse is also true, that is, what is true of a girlfriend is also true of a boyfriend. A husband is not a boyfriend. He may succeed as a husband; he may not. In pretty many cases, he does not. Not

because he could never be a good husband, but because of his anger.

A girlfriend has to have two qualities: talk smart, look pretty; where talk smart is more important than look pretty; for, the boyfriend is partly blind. But a wife too must look pretty, but she should also be responsible, and should not be a chatter box. She must go as often as possible where she had never been once before marriage: the kitchen. When she says, "Your dinner is in the fridge," the honeymoon is over, arrogance is visible in her face, and anger is visible on his face. There are pretty many things that a wife has to do, and be. Before marriage, her world was her boyfriend. After marriage, there are a dozen men and women around, with whom she must interact rightly. The list of demands on her is long, and grows. The main point is, she is not a girlfriend. If she tries to remain the happy-go-lucky buddy she once was, she will neither be happy, nor enough lucky.

Rare it is that a boyfriend and girlfriend got married, and they proved to be successful husband and wife. And, where success is seen by the outsiders, it is because they both assure each other that the time for a change is gone, and so, they must simply learn to live with each other – each hiding disappointment from those who had advised against the dating, against the marriage. But the rise in the cases of separation, tells us that pretty many smiling faces in public carry scorn in private.

Another point: they dream of successful marriage. Come to your senses. When life itself is failing, and failing miserably, at the widest of panorama, as in our times, then, how can husband-wife relationship succeed? If the choice had been blind, which it was, then, you are in a blind alley. If you escape bumping your head into a wall, you will hurt your toe hitting a stone. Successful marriages make a high demand on man and wife. But that is not the topic here. Teenage boys and girls must be strictly kept apart.

Any talk of innocent relationship between a boy and a girl, is simply rubbish. It is kitten-puppy relationship. Watch them when they have grown into moral and mental maturity. Watch them turn into enemies. Watch them laughing boisterously. Watch them, because that won't happen too often.

Source: YMD

It's only a Sunnah

Once Imaam Abu Dawood (ra), who's "Sunan" is one of the six classical books of hadeeth, was on board a ship. He heard a person on the shore sneezing and saying "Alhamdulillah" (all praise is due to Allah). So he hired a rowing boat for one dirham (silver coin) and went to shore to reply to this person by saying "Yarhamukallah" (may Allah have mercy on you), as is the sunnah of Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam). When he was asked about this action of his, he replied: "It is possible that this person who sneezed is a person whose supplication is accepted by Allah." When the people on board the ship fell asleep, they heard someone calling out: "O people of the ship! Surely Abu Dawood purchased paradise from Allah for one dirham." (Risaalatul Mustarshideen)

Lesson: Despite the great services which he rendered to Islam, a "small" sunnah like this became the means of his entry into Jannah. We cannot regard any good deed as small or any sin as trivial. Every good deed has the potential of securing us a place in Jannah, while every sin has the possibility of landing us into eternal ruin and misery.

Shaytan's White Flag

Hannan Ayoun

How can you break free from hitting the self-destruct button?

Imagine Shaytan's campaign dancing across your television screen.

"He'll never give up on you. He'll keep whispering until he's sure that you won't enter Paradise. Are you wavering over whether or not to fall into desire? He'll be there!"

Images of people being blissful in their ignorance fade on and off of the screen. The background music is deceptively soothing, almost enticing.

"I'm Iblis and I approve this message."

Every commercial break, the ad plays over again. Your eyes, ears, and heart begin to go numb to it. It doesn't seem to matter anymore, though the voice in your head is still yelling out in regret and your heart has yet to cease its depressive aching after every sin you commit. Sin. You've grown accustomed to the very word. You've hit the self-destruct button – the one Shaytan has built inside of you, the one you keep hitting time and time again. Besides, you may think, it is so much easier to press that button and believe that you aren't entitled to Allah's forgiveness anymore than to strive for that forgiveness.

But that's exactly what he wants you to believe. Shaytan makes the idea of giving up

look more viable up until the point that you start believing it. And it is this mentality, this corrupt thought, that the self-destruct button is built from. Unfortunately, this intangible button does not have an automatic fix.

So then, how can you break free from hitting the self-destruct button?

The first step comes in recognizing the pattern and making the intention to change. No problem can be solved if you aren't aware that there is a problem to begin with. Be honest with yourself and evaluate yourself. Take the advice of people that know you well. After that, make the sincere intention to never go back to the sin again.

The next step is holding on to the feeling of regret. After you fall into sin, don't let the regret slip through your fingers. Do not justify your actions, because that destroys that bit of regret and only further pushes you into Shaytan's trap. The justification of sin is what Shaytan feeds off of. If you find yourself thinking it was no big deal because it doesn't happen frequently or that no one saw you, then know that Shaytan is hard at work, filling your heart with misleading reassurance.

After obtaining regret over the sin, the final step is to repent immediately or as soon as possible. Thinking twice about it may be

Shaytan's chance to manipulate you again. Try to find an empty room, turn toward the qiblah, and fall into prostration. Praise Allah, pour your heart out to Him, and let the tears flow. Don't hold back. Repeat the blessed supplication of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him): "Allahumma Inna-kal 'Afuwan Tu Hibbul 'Afwā Fa'fu'anni": "Oh Allah, You are the most forgiving, You love to forgive, so forgive me".

At this moment, Shaytan may be throwing all his tricks at you to prevent you from repenting, because it's the one thing he can't stand. You may begin to feel tired or remember something else that you had to do. But know that when a slave turns back to his Master – recognizing his mistakes, knowing that his Master is the All-Forgiving, and asking for forgiveness with sincerity – Shaytan waves his white flag. It is then that you break free from hitting that self-destruct button over and over again.

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

Say, [O Muhammad], "If you should love Allah, then follow me. Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. (Surah Aali Imran: 31)

Furthermore, Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

Allah the Almighty has said: "O son of Adam, so long as you call upon Me and ask of Me, I shall forgive you for what you have done, and I shall not mind. O son of Adam, were your sins to reach the clouds of the sky and were you then to ask forgiveness of Me, I would forgive you. O son of Adam, were you to come to Me with sins nearly as great as the earth and were you then to face Me, ascribing no partner to Me, I would bring you forgiveness nearly as great as its. [Related by Anas, reported by At-Tirmidhi & Ahmad ibn Hanbal]

Know that you can never ask for too much forgiveness. It is when you keep asking for it that Shaytan finally wavers and waves his white flag. May Allah make us regular in repentance throughout our lives, and may He forgive our sins and admit us into Paradise. Ameen.

Agreeing to Disagree

Yunus bin Abdul Aa'laa as-Sadafi (rahimahullah), one of the special students of Imaam Shaafi'ee (rahimahullah) says: "I never saw anyone more intelligent than Imaam Shaafi'ee (rahimahullah). One day we debated regarding a certain issue and then separated. Thereafter, Imaam Shaafi'ee (rahimahullah) met me, held my hand and said: 'O Abu Moosa! Can we not remain as brothers although we do not agree in even one issue?'" (Siyaru Aa'laamin Nubalaa vol. 10, pg. 16)

Lesson: *It is vitally important to understand that having a difference is not an issue. Not handling it correctly is the issue. One of the biggest contributing factors to the widespread dissention is that we feel we cannot maintain a relationship of love once we have a difference or argument. Previously people had great tolerance despite their issues, thereby allowing them to remain united and live together happily. Ponder over the statement of Imaam Shaafi'ee (rahimahullah). In essence he is saying that disagreeing in every issue should not affect the cordiality of our relationship.*

Prophethood and Revelation

Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah

It will be better if we say something about the office and objectives of prophethood because religions differ on this. Some believe that God is born in the body of man. Every word and deed of such a man whose body He enters becomes the word and deed of God. Another concept suggests that God sends His message to a chosen man. This message is conveyed to him through different means. The voice of God sometimes reaches him directly as was the case with Adam and Moses who are supposed to have spoken with God. It has also happened that the message is conveyed to man through an angel, who neither forgets nor makes a mistake in faithfully conveying a message.

The message an angel brings to man is technically called revelation. How do we define revelation? Non-Muslims and those critical of Islam tend to dub the phenomenon of revelation to the Prophet (peace be upon him) as a physical ailment. Sprenger, a well-known German orientalist of the nineteenth century, had lived in British India. He had studied medicine and also knew Arabic. Availing himself of Arabic sources he wrote a life of the Prophet (peace be upon him), offering his personal views on the process of receiving the revelation he wrote that it seemed to resemble an illness or disorder called epilepsy.

Contemporary accounts in Arabic sources suggest that at the time of revelation the face of the Prophet (peace be upon him) would turn red. He would sweat profusely and a state of utter silence would descend on him. Sprenger, took into account some but not all relevant facts and concludes that these were symptoms of epilepsy. He jumps to that conclusion without fully examining all available evidence. This is not an honest and scholarly approach.

We have collected the traditions which have been narrated by the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who have described the phenomenon that they witnessed at the time of revelation. A Companion states that the personality of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was completely transformed at the time of receiving revelation but he became his normal self as soon as the experience was over.

All the Companions who witnessed the event are unanimous in saying that the weight of the Prophet (peace be upon him) increased so much during the process of receiving the revelation that it was well nigh impossible to bear it. If he was riding a camel, the animal had to sit down. If for some reason it could not sit down its feet began to turn straight and rigid as if they were about to break. Another

tradition relates that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was once sitting in his mosque with his knee resting against the leg of Zayd ibn Thabit (RA). In the meantime the process of revelation started. Zayd (RA) said that he felt such a heavy weight on his leg that he thought his thigh-bone would break into pieces. As he said, had it not been for his deference to the Prophet (peace be upon him), he virtually, he might have shrieked and withdrawn his leg for it was impossible for him to bear the weight. This evidence has not been taken into account by Sprenger while criticising the phenomenon.

The problem is that we have not gone through this extraordinary experience and we cannot pass a judgement based on our limited experience. Revelation is exclusive to Prophets and they too do not receive it all the time, when an epileptic gets a fit, his arms and legs move in a convulsive manner; he is restless and makes incomprehensible noises. He utters words which do not mean anything. The disease is transferred from generation to generation.

We do not come across these symptoms in the statements of Companions who saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) at the time of his receiving revelation. There is no mention of convulsions, spasms, or cramps. There is also no reference to restlessness, and kicking about of legs and arms. On the contrary, the Prophet (peace be upon him) became completely still. Never, never at all, is the state of convulsion or spasm attributed to him in any account of an eye-witness. Besides, words that came out of his mouth during or after these states were perfectly intelligible for they were the verses of the Qur'an which were understood by everybody.

In the light of these details, one is obliged to dismiss the theory advanced by Sprenger. The Prophet (peace be upon him) had his children. His descendants who issued

from his daughter are still around in the world and there is no evidence of anyone inheriting the disease so wrongfully attributed to him.

There is a long list of traditions stating that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to become completely quiet at the time of receiving a revelation and there is no mention of any concision at all at any stage. The only condition different from the normal that one saw in him was that he sweated profusely even during the winter and the colour of his face turned red, presumably because of the faster circulation of blood. Otherwise the Prophet (peace be upon him) retained full control of his faculties and resumed his normal activities after the process of revelation was over.

In the accounts of Western writers one also comes across statements suggesting that at the time of revelation the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to lie down with his face covered, as was the custom with the soothsayers of yore. During our research on the subject we have come across only one occasion in his life when this happened; for otherwise such a situation never arose. If he was riding a camel, for example, or if he was addressing a congregation from the pulpit, there was no occasion to lie down and cover his face.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) received revelation in such situations and resumed his normal activity, as we have pointed out earlier, when it was over. The only occasion when he lay down and covered his face was during his visit to Abu Bakr's (RA) house when Aisha (RA) was at her father's home after being slandered by the hypocrites. Suddenly revelation started and he lay down to receive it. Abu Bakr (RA) and his wife put a small piece of cloth on his face out of sheer respect. This is the only instance of its kind.

Another instance is narrated by a Companion who was extremely eager to see

the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the state of receiving revelation. At the time of the Farewell Pilgrimage such an occasion arose and 'Umar (RA) brought the Companion to witness the phenomenon he had long wished to see. The narrator of the tradition relates that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was sitting behind a curtain at the time. 'Umar (RA) moved it a little to allow the Companion a glance of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He saw that his face had turned red and that his breathing was heavy. After a while the process of revelation was over.

There is no other tradition which refers either to his lying down or covering his face or sitting behind a curtain at the time of revelation.

But what is revelation? It is impossible for us to explain accurately for none of us has gone through this experience. We can only explain it with reference to the statements of those who have witnessed the phenomenon. We have already cited some evidence. A little more is available. Once a Companion mustered the courage to ask a direct question to the Prophet (peace be upon him): "How do you feel at the time of receiving a revelation"? The answer is interesting. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said that sometimes a bell rang in his ears and he felt he was in a state of agony. It seemed that life itself was coming to an end. At this time he would hear voices which were indelibly inscribed on his mind. At the conclusion of the experience he recalled them exactly as if he had committed them to memory and he repeated them to the people.

But sometimes he saw a person either in the form of a man who spoke to him like a human being, or in the shape of a bird, that is a man with wings who could fly, stand or stay in space. He would address the Prophet (peace be upon him) who would listen carefully to every word he uttered. These he remem-

bered completely and reproduced them to his people in exactly the same form after the person with the message had disappeared.

The statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he experienced such pain and agony as gave him a feeling that he was about to lose his life is extremely important. It is no wonder, therefore, that his weight increased so much that even a camel was unable to bear it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself realised that it was an extraordinary situation. This is the description of the experience of revelation and we cannot describe it in any greater detail. This is an experience which only a Prophet of God undergoes and its nature cannot be inferred from the experience of ordinary men and no medical experts can possibly understand it.

The fundamental articles of faith in Islam are belief in God, in His angels, in His Books, in His Messengers and in the Day of Resurrection. The concept of accountability is indeed important, both from the point of view of faith and human psychology. The hope of reward and the fear of punishment are concepts which prompt man to do good. They also save him from evil deeds.

We are all servants of God. It is our bounden duty to carry out His commands. No extra reward is due to a servant who does his duty for he is paid for it. But he deserves to be punished if he does not carry out the task assigned to him. In principle, therefore, the concept of Hell is necessary while that of Paradise is not. We are servants of God. He can punish us if we disobey Him. He need not reward us if we obey Him for in doing so we are merely carrying out our duty. It is out of His immense mercy that He promises us Paradise for doing our duty. In other words, there are incentives as well as deterrents — a promise, a threat, and a warning at the same time.

Main Factors in the Spread of Islam

Ali Unal

Some have criticized Islam because it recognizes war and even commands it in order to put an end to the domination of injustice and tyranny; to rescue the oppressed; and to establish a tolerant social-political environment where Islam can be practiced freely and everyone is free to practice their own religion. The criticism is wholly unjust insofar as, though not in so many words, it seems to be arguing that Islam introduced war into human history. The criticism is particularly inappropriate when voiced by adherents of Christianity: for although there is not a specific commandment in the Gospels to permit or prohibit war - the Gospels are silent and present no rules for instigating war nor for its proper conduct and containment - western history is replete with examples of extremely bloody wars, wide in scope and ruthless in their intensity, which were conducted in the name of Christianity. Indeed, the religion of Christianity was often employed by Western powers in previous centuries to provide a cover and means for the colonization of two-thirds of the world's peoples and resources. The criticism is also entirely inappropriate when voiced by adherents of Judaism, for Jewish history, too, is largely a chronicle of religiously motivated conflicts and wars, and the old Testament is explicit in sanc-

tioning war . As for other faith communities, such as those in south, east and southeastern Asia, their followers have surely not refrained from waging war, either. Yet in the end, the driving forces behind the "modern secularized world," which allow and even promote war in the service of individual rulers, nations, and even commercial interests -- rather than God-- have caused more bloodshed and destruction in the past one hundred years than every single religious conflict combined, throughout the whole of human history before it.

Part of the very meaning of the word Islam is peace; therefore, Islam prefers peace, desires it and seeks to establish it throughout the world. However, war is a reality of human history, a manifestation in the collective life of humankind resulting from the inner condition of those who have not been able to attain excellence in mind, heart (spirit) and conduct. Or, it is a manifestation of the war between the spirit and the carnal soul, or between Satan and the perfectibility of human nature. What is important and necessary, therefore, rather than denying the reality of war in a vainly idealistic manner, is to establish rules to make war just, in respect to both its motives and purposes, as well as its means and conduct, so that the harm of it is contained, and

the good in it may benefit the people in general. War may then be, while not something in itself desirable, rather something capable of serving (versus perverting) a desirable end - like disciplining and training the body to improve its strength or skill, or doing a necessary operation to save someone's health, or administering upon a criminal the due punishment for the sake of deterrence and the health of the moral environment. Precisely such disciplining of the means and ends of war is what Islam has done.

The verses do not order war, but allow it on condition that it be in God's cause and for defensive purposes. It also enjoins that the limits set by God must not be exceeded. Those limits are related to both the intention and the practice. For example, Islam does not permit war for motives such as conquest or plunder, or to quench a lust for revenge, or for the sake of some material advantage, or to satisfy racist persuasions. Islam does not seek to compel anyone to change his or her faith. On the contrary, it seeks an environment where all are free to accept faith freely. Islam has also set limitations on the conduct of relations before, during, and after conflict; for example:

- Do not betray any agreements you have entered into.
- Do not plunder.
- Do not commit injustices or use torture.
- Do not touch the children, the womenfolk, the elderly, or other noncombatants of the enemy.
- Do not destroy orchards or tilled lands.
- Do not kill livestock.
- Treat with respect the religious persons who live in hermitages or convents, and spare their edifices. (Ibn al-Athir, 3: 227)

We should also point out here that people have embraced Islam in very large numbers over very many centuries and in very diverse conditions (from the heights of politi-

cal and military superiority to the depths of military collapse and subjection), while few have left it to accept another faith. In part because of the psychological difficulty this success has provoked in those who do not wish it, and in part because of prejudices derived from ignorance about Islam, combined with dogmatic conviction about one culture's superiority over another, some individuals have claimed that Islam is a religion of the sword which was spread by the force of the sword. However, this claim has been consistently refuted by Western unbiased scholarly researchers who have solidly rejected such arguments as simply the result of cultural prejudice.

Many have sought to answer the question of why the triumph of Islam was so speedy and complete? Why have so many millions embraced the religion of Islam and scarcely a hundred ever recanted? Some have attempted to explain the first overwhelming success of Islam by the argument of the Sword. They forget Carlyle's laconic reply. "First get your sword." You must win men's hearts before you can induce them to imperil their lives for you; and the first conquerors of Islam must have been made Muslims before they were made fighters on the Path of God.

In all these explanations the religion itself is left out of the question. Decidedly, Islam itself was the main cause for its triumph. Islam not only was at once accepted (by many peoples and races in) Arabia, Syria, Persia, Egypt, Northern Africa and Spain, at its first outburst; but, with the exception of Spain, it has never lost its vantage ground; it has been spreading ever since it came into being. Admitting the mixed causes that contributed to the rapidity of the first swift spread of Islam, they do not account for the duration of Islam. There must be something in the religion itself to explain its persistence and spread, and to account for its present hold over so large of a

proportion of the dwellers on the earth... Islam has stirred an enthusiasm that has never been surpassed. Islam has had its martyrs, its self-tormentors, its recluses, who have renounced all that life offered and have accepted death with a smile for the sake of the faith that was in them. (Ezzati, quoting from Stanley Lane-Poole, *Study in a Mosque*, 86-89)

Islam has spread because of its religious content and values, and "its power of appeal and ability to meet the spiritual and material needs of people adhering to cultures totally alien to their Muslim conquerors." Among other important factors are the tolerance that Islam has shown to the people of other religions, the absence of an ecclesiastic hierarchy, intellectual freedom, the equity and justice that Islam enjoins and that Muslims have striven for throughout the centuries, the ethical values that Islam propagates, its inclusiveness and universalism, as well as its humanity and brother/sisterhood. In addition, the activism of the Sufis, the moral superiority of Muslim tradesmen, the principle of "enjoining the good," and the dynamism and magnificence of Islamic civilization, have all contributed to the spread of Islam.

The qualities that principally attracted people to Islam were and are still:

- the simplicity of its doctrines based on the strictest and purest Divine Unity;
- the rationality of Islamic teachings;
- the harmony between Islamic ideals and values and natural human conscience;
- the inclusiveness and comprehensiveness of Islam as a way of life covering all aspects of individual and collective being, physical, mental, and spiritual, and the consequent harmony between religion and life lived within its compass and jurisdiction;
- the lack of formalism and mediation in its rites and doctrines;
- the vividness, dynamism and resilience of

the Islamic creed, its creativity and universality, and its compatibility with established scientific facts;

- the internal cohesion and harmony of the Islamic principles, and the practicability and practice thereof in everyday life;

A. J. Arberry has pointed out that the reason for the spread of Islam is Islam itself and its religious values (*Aspects of Islamic Civilization*, 12). He states: "The rapidity of the spread of Islam, noticeably through extensive provinces which had long been Christian, is a crucial fact of history....The sublime rhetoric of the Qur'an, that inimitable symphony, the very sounds of which move men to tears and ecstasy.." He continues: "This, and the urgency of the simple message carried, holds the key to the mystery of one of the greatest cataclysms in the history of religion. When all military, political and economic factors have been exhausted, the religious impulse must still be recognized as the most vital and enduring."

The noted scholar, Brockelman, who is usually a less than sympathetic commentator on Islam, also recognizes the religious values of Islam as the main factor for the spread of Islam and suggests that Islamic monotheism, to a considerable extent, is the basis of the proselytizing power of Islam (*History of the Islamic Peoples*, 37). Rosenthal makes the point as follows: The more important factor for the spread of Islam is the religious law of Islam (i.e. the Sharia, which is an inclusive, all-embracing, all-comprehensive way of thinking and living) which was designed to cover all manifestations of life. (*Political Thought in Medieval Islam*, 21)

The tolerance of Islam is particularly relevant to an explanation of why it spread. Another distinguished scholar, Toynbee, praises the Muslim tolerance towards the Peoples of the Book, after comparing it with the attitudes of the Christians towards Muslims and

Jews in their lands (An Historian Approach to Religion, 246). In turn, Trevor Ling attributes the spread of Islam to the credibility of its principles, its tolerance, persuasiveness and other attractive elements (A History of Religion, 330). Makarios, orthodox Patriarch of Antioch in the seventeenth century, compared the harsh treatment received by the Russians of the Orthodox Church at the hands of the Roman Catholic Poles with the tolerant attitude towards orthodox Christians shown by the ottoman Government, and he prayed for the Sultans (Ling, 331). (For all these and several similar quotations, see Ezzati, 2-35)

That is by no means the only example of the followers of other religions preferring Islamic rule to that of their co-religionists. The orthodox Christians of Byzantium openly expressed their preference for the ottoman turban in Istanbul to the hats of the Catholic cardinals. Scholar Hans Barth wrote that the Muslim Turks allowed the followers of different religions to perform their religious duties and rivals, and that the Christian subjects of the ottoman Sultan were freer to live their own lives than the Christians who lived under the rule of any rival Christian sect (Le Droit du Croissant, 143). And for his part, Popescu Ciocanel pays tribute to the Muslim Turks by stating that it was lucky for the Romanian people that they lived under the government of the Turks rather than that of the Russians or Austrians as, otherwise, "no trace of the Romanian nation would have remained (Revue du Monde Musulman)." (For both quotations, see Djevad, 71-72, 91)

A historical episode recounted by Baladhuri, a famous Muslim historian, tells how pleased the native peoples were with their Muslim conquerors: When Heraclius massed his troops against the Muslims, and the Muslims heard that they were coming to meet them, they refunded the inhabitants of

Hims the tribute they had taken from them, saying: "We are too busy to support and protect you. Take care of yourselves." But the people of Hims replied: "We like your rule and justice far better than the state of oppression and tyranny in which we were. The army of Heraclius we shall indeed, with your help, repulse from the city." The Jews rose and said: "We swear by the Torah, no governor of Heraclius shall enter the city of Hims unless we are first vanquished and exhausted." Saying this, they closed the gates of the city and guarded them. The inhabitants of other cities - Christians and Jews - that had capitulated did the same. When, by Allah's help, the unbelievers were defeated and the Muslims won, they opened the gates of their cities, went out with the singers and players of music, and paid the tribute. (Ezzati, 144)

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the School of Thought or the scholar you revere should be necessarily revered by others also. In the grave will a person be enquired about his Iman and about the belief on prophethood or the opinion he holds about some individuals or schools of thought? A clean, wide, uniform, straight and illuminated road lies open before you and you ought to tread it to reach your Lord in a perfect and true manner.

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repute or disrepute, so, O people of vanities, don't doubt in - the approval of belief and disapproval of disbelief - but **believe in Allah and His messengers. If you truly believe, and fear Allah** regarding infidelity and disobedience, **you will deserve a great reward** in the Hereafter instead of mighty or painful punishment promised in the previous verses. [3:179]

Good Violence, Bad Violence

Hamza Saif

Written in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, Mahmood Mamdani's 2005 book *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim* historicizes the violence of terrorism. It extricates terrorism from the narrow morality that arises from the convergence of ethics and national interest, and instead locates terrorism "first and foremost as unfinished business of the Cold War." "Good" and "bad" Muslims, terms borrowed from former U.S. President George W. Bush, are descriptions not of religious adherence, but of utility to U.S. foreign policy. As yesterday's allies become today's antagonists, the labels change to morally denigrate American foes.

Reintroducing history to the violence, the book begins by tracing the broad contours of the relationship between nation-state modernity and violence. Mamdani rejects violence as a pre-modern phenomenon, asserting instead that there is an inextricable relationship between violence and modernity. This is the book's central theoretical framework: violence is political, not cultural.

The first chapter builds on this history of violence, and offers an alternative account of political Islam. It exposes the caricatures of Muslims and Islam that are deployed to provide a moral veneer for expansionist imperial-

ism. The subsequent three chapters offer a chronological account of the violence of U.S. imperialist policies, beginning with post-Vietnam American support for anti-nationalist militancies, and through the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Today's terrorism, the book asserts, is a direct consequence of these policies. The final chapter of the book offers closing thoughts, exhorting a review of American policies that "consistently seem to erode support and generate opposition."

The book's push to retreat from moralized diatribe has unfortunately been as unheeded in the academy as it has in popular discourse. Instead of politically and historically engaged analyses of terrorism, academic inquiry has legitimized state policy more than it has sustained impartial investigation. The attacks of September 11th prompted and created an industry of 'terrorism experts,' locating terrorism anywhere from the theological contours of Islam to structural poverty in Muslim-majority countries to their marked increase in youth population. Analytic methodologies are equally variant: comprador intellectuals paint a picture "from inside the harem", statistical models ascertain propensity to violence, and charlatan theologians perform textual dissection to pinpoint the sources of

violence. This burgeoning literature owes less to intellectual inquiry than it does to the deluge of newly available funding.

In a powerful critique of this conflation of power politics and analysis, Stampnitzky, demonstrates that the term 'terrorist' has become a label ascribed to unwelcome forces, and that and that an intellectually under- and politically hyper-defined academic discipline has been constructed around the idea. Writing as early as the 1986, Eqbal Ahmad too underscored this intellectual laxity: "the contemporary environment is extremely inhospitable to reasoned discussion of terrorism, its forms, and the compulsions which produce them."

Reduced to a pathology, terrorist violence is thus rendered a phenomenon devoid of history and politics, as a pernicious virus. Its eradication is to be found in economic alleviation or cultural renaissance, but not in a revision of political and power relations.

Contrary to this understanding of conflict dissociated from modernity, Mamdani sites the very genesis of political modernity in violence. The bloody expulsion of Jews and Muslims from 1492 Spain, and the contemporaneous conquest of Grenada, cemented a violent and racial dimension to the birth of modernity. The history of the modern state had two victims: "the internal victims of state building and the external victims of imperial expansion." Race informed both Spanish and European imperialist violence. And while war was a parameterization of war within imperial Europe, inhumane violence against the 'uncivilized' colonized peoples was explicitly sanctioned, for they "love fighting for fighting's sake...They have no objection to being killed". Thus, colonization's epistemological violence—the labeling of people as 'uncivilized'—sanctioned physical terror.

This overwhelming tendency to characterize violence as inherent to colonized peo-

ples continues to prevail today, and is deployed to legitimize neo-colonial wars. In Malcolm X's prescient 1964 summary: "they use the press to appear that the area that they are about to invade is filled with savages, or filled with people who have gone berserk". He unveils the role of such rhetoric in creating a Muslim figure for America's mission civilisatrice, which provides a moral patina to imperial politics. It begins with the ascription of modernity exclusively to the Western tradition, leaving other traditions with no claim to civilization. Thus, those in assent with the West are found to be modern, and those in disagreement said to be lacking modernity. The elision of modernity and pacifism allows those marked as non-modern to also be found inherently violent. This additionally sanitizes the role of imperial politics in creating that violence, identifying instead the culture of the 'uncivilized' as the driver of this violence. Today, Muslim cultural proclivity to violence is often presented to imperial audiences as embodied in the notion of jihad.

It would be inaccurate to suggest that a martial concept of jihad was absent in Islamic intellectual tradition prior to the spread of modern-day terrorism. In an excellent chronology of the changing concept of jihad in the geographical epicenter of contemporary terrorist conflict, South and Central Asia, historian Ayesha Jalal describes some notions of jihad as supportive of militarism. Yet despite the presence of this concept, militant Islamic movements historically remained marginal. It then becomes pertinent to inquire, as Mamdani does, "How did a political ideology become a violent force?"

Mamdani finds the answer in President Reagan's rollback initiative, a plan to use pan-Islamist militarism to drive the Soviets back to the borders of their empire. Nowhere did this project find more gusto than in Af-

ghanistan, where neighboring Pakistan had long courted imperial interventionism to shore up its regional primacy. General Zia's repressive junta of the 1980s, with its anti-communist Islamism, presented an adroit and eager conduit for American arms and pan-Islamist ideology.

Zia's regime replaced the socialist government of Zulfikar Bhutto, and found quick favor with a Reagan administration intellectually informed by Jeanne Kirkpatrick's theory of benevolent right wing dictatorships. Grade-school textbooks exhorting militant jihad were published by USAID in dusty Nevada universities and sent to chilly Nowshera madressas as recently as 1994, while American weapons landing in Karachi were dispatched through the historic Khyber Pass to Kabul. Meanwhile, Pakistan's ISI diligently provided recruitment facilities and training. The result was "to flood the region not only with all kinds of weapons but also the most radical Islamist recruits."

If Islamist terrorism's "cancer is in Pakistan", culpability for the malady is undeniably collective. "The Afghan jihad had a deeper effect on the Pakistani state and society than it did on any other country", and "it became clear that even if the Afghan jihad was over, its effects on Pakistani society were not." An efficacious proxy for American's pernicious Afghan war, the domestic repression of Zia's regime expunged progressive politics from the Pakistani polity. In her detailed recounting of the marginalization of Pakistan's left, sociologist Saadia Toor traces the deep relationship between the Pakistani religious right and the CIA that has rendered a country where "religion or its opposite is constantly being rammed down [Pakistani] throats."

Despite widespread condemnation of this nefarious historical US-Pakistani nexus, it continues today in the country's acquiescence to American drones and USAID's continuing

social reorganization project. The universalist pretenses of Islamism have been substituted for those of liberalism; indeed, in the wake of the tragic attack on Malala Youselfzai, posters proclaiming "Drones Kill So Malala Can Live" were seen around Pakistan. Similarly, the rhetoric of violent non-modernity continues to animate the project of bringing pacifism to 'Af-Pak' by introducing "modernity" to communities, and USAID funnels roughly 5 billion dollars to the region a year.

A discussion of the tragedy of September 11th that eschews an equitable reorganization of global politics for reclusion into narratives of self-righteous moralism cannot transition us to a more peaceful world. We cannot divorce violence from history and politics; As long as violence is ascribed inherently to some, subsequent, reciprocal, violence shall remain endemic to global politics. Mamdani quotes Franz Fanon: "He of whom they never stopped saying that the only language that he understands is that of force, decides to give utterance by force."

An analysis of terrorism must locate its genesis in the historic and continuing inequities of American foreign policy. Good Muslim, Bad Muslim is a timely reminder of this critical need.

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mutakabbireen (the proud ones) will be encased in trunks of fire of Jahannam.

THE REMEDY

This malady is remedied by reflecting on the Splendour, Glory and Majesty of Allah. This reflection will produce in one a realization of one's own lowly position. Your own excellences will then recede into nothingness. Also, humble yourself in the presence of those whom you regard as your inferior. Be respectful to them so that you become imbued with humility.

Adopting the Correct Procedures

Mufti Ebrahim Sahib

Allah's love for His servants is more than the love the servants have for themselves. Hence, it is on account of this love that Allah has placed procedures and systems for man to follow. A person conducts business following some procedure and system. He understands that if he follows the procedure then he will achieve his goal. He will do the presentation, marketing and pricing well and then he will see the customers coming in.

Likewise when working for the aakhirat, one needs to work for it, but using the correct procedure –was'aa lahaa sa'yahaa. Allah wants us to make an effort but we should do it correctly. So it will be wrong for one to justify his stance and say that he made an effort, though he had not followed the correct procedures. It is like a matric student who barely studies and after failing the exams says that he studied. However, he will be asked whether he studied following the correct procedure for studying. He cannot say that this was taqdeer.

For the dunya we are asked to be brief in our effort, but for the deen the effort has to be greater. However, if one is living in luxury then one cannot come to the level of bare minimum all at once, for we do not have that high level of tawakkul. Thus, the 'Ulama will

advise that the effort for the dunya should be gradually decreased.

These are concepts that take time to understand. They cannot be understood and implemented overnight. It will take time to develop. Normally what happens is that a person gains some concentration in salaah for a few days and then he feels that he has achieved concentration in salaah, but then it disappears. It is like a person who has been allowed to sit in the pilot's seat and then he feels that he knows how to fly a plane. It takes a great deal of time to achieve these aspects entirely. Sometimes, youngsters have to be cautioned. They feel that their wives have to come to their level of piety etc. overnight. Just as it took them time to understand, these women will also take time to understand such concepts. So the plan that Allah wants from you is to come gradually. You may get one thing after five years or ten years, but one should not feel that his time has been wasted. Rather it was an effort made in the right direction.

These are not academic points which one has to learn for a test and examination. Instead, these are concepts that will have to be practised and implemented, and this is the examination. Hadhrat Ebrahim ('alaih is sa-

laam) was commanded to slaughter his beloved and dear son. It was not announced before hand and in this way his level of conformity and endurance was tested. Allah then announced that he had passed the test and he was then posted to the position of imaamat.

Allah wants to see whether a person exercises patience and then only will Allah allow one to progress. A person is in a situation where there are young girls around him. Allah will now watch what is the response, whether he will be moved by temptations or whether he will lower his gaze and move away. The Mashaayikh understand people and guide them gradually. So the approach and mentality has to be right. You have to be focused. The second thing is that the intention must be correct.

If your child is studying for the matric exams, will you impress upon him to join you for 'umrah? But then you would find parents coming and requesting leave from the madrasah for an 'umrah trip. So what is greater in their eyes? Is the matric greater or the deeni ta'leem? In dunya our brains work, but do we apply the same to our deen. So the simple way is not to take a chance in anything that we are unclear about.

Someone complained that there are a lot of differences and problems in the area where he lives. So I told him that if you feel that the person will take to your correction and it will not lead to any problem then you should correct the person. But if he will not take heed or it will lead to some problem then make du'aa for him and leave it. Further, each person needs to see to his personal reformation. So you need to look for an experienced guide whom you will follow. Thereafter, in the court of Allah you will be absolved. Then hold on to him and listen to what he has to say. Thereafter you do not get involved in further discussions of people, that why did this

one say this and that one say that. This is detested in the hadeeth.

The hadeeth says that Nabi (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) did not like qeel wa qaal – getting involved in futile discussions and things that do not relate to us. Another meaning of qeel wa qaal is to relate different reports of a single incident, whereas you do not have the ability to decipher and give preference to what is most correct. These discussions come about because of our curiosity. We want to know what this person said and what the other person said. If one is really concerned then he will just hold on to one person and move on.

Equality Breeds Disunity

Remember well! In the smooth running of our worldly and religious matters, there has to be a system where one is a leader and the rest are followers. The basis of unity and conformity is when one person who is accepted as being the leader is obeyed and the rest obey. There will never be unity and conformity if everyone wishes to be the leader and no one wishes to follow, or everyone is claiming equality, that everyone is a leader and nobody is a follower.

Thus for unity to exist in a marriage, one partner has to lead and the other has to follow. There is no concept of equality between husband and wife as this is the root cause of disunity. Thus justice demands that the husband is followed and the wife is the follower.

In Pursuit of Ikhlaas

Abu Abbaad

Sizing up Sincerity

As one prepares their luggage to meet the Lord of the worlds, there is nothing more vital to check for than ikhlas (sincerity). The Most High says:

"...So whoever is hopeful for the Meeting with his Lord – let him do righteous work and not associate in the worship of his Lord anyone." [Surah Al-Kahf, Verse 110]

This verse embodies the two pillars of acceptance. Whoever hopes to be accepted by his Maker and Master, and hopes to live for eternity in His Company, must ensure these two ingredients are available:

Sincerity: namely that none is associated alongside Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala (glorified and exalted be He), in our motives.

Righteous Work: namely what has been defined as correct and righteous by the Messenger, Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

Upon reflection, these are realized as the summary of Islam, and the essence behind its 1st pillar: None is worthy of worship but Allah (sincerity), and Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is the Messenger of Allah (righteousness defined).

However, the more important of these two pillars is ikhlas, for it can sometimes compensate for other things, but nothing can compensate for it. As a scholar said, "Allah may accept from you half an action, but will not

accept from you half an intention." Others illustrated the disparity by saying, "An imperfect action that was done with sincerity is like a fisherman who brings a flawed net to a pond of fish. As for the perfect action what was performed without sincerity, it is like a fisherman who brings a perfect net to a pond without fish." The first may possibly catch some fish, despite the flawed apparatus, whereas there is no chance for the second to catch any, regardless of how flawless his equipment is.

Surely this does not imply undermining the second pillar whatsoever, but simply aims to size things up correctly. In fact, true sincerity will necessitate that one follow the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). If a person is genuinely seeking the pleasure of Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala (glorified and exalted be He), he/she will inquire as to what actually pleases Him, and will in turn discover that it is nothing but the perfect path of His messenger, Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

Sincerity Defined

Linguistically, ikhlas means to separate and distinguish. Thus, Yahya ibn Mu'adh ar-Razi (ra) said, "Ikhlas is to filter the actions from every flaw, just as milk is filtered out from between blood and dung." In that, he was referring to the words of the Most High:

...We give you drink from what is in their bel-

lies – from between excretions and blood – milk that is khalis (pure), palatable to the drinkers.[Surah An-Nahl, Verse 66]

The benefit of knowing the origins of this term, and not settling for just the translation “sincerity,” lies in realizing that ikhlas is an active process, a laborious task, and an uphill climb. It literally means to strip our motives of anything but the pleasure of Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala (glorified and exalted be He), and frankly, that is unnatural! The original, raw nature of the human being is that he pursues his personal interests, and loves to be recognized, and enjoys nothing more than the mention of his own name. Therefore, extracting that egotistical drive is comparable to pulling out a wisdom tooth which is naturally, originally there. Thus, one of the salaf used to say, “Nothing is more difficult on the inner-self than ikhlas, for it has no share of it.” In other words, the inner self sees that it gets nothing out of it (at first glance!), so why agree to it?

Realizing its Difficulty

Hence, the first step towards sincerity is coming to terms with its difficulty, and acknowledging that acquiring, keeping, and retrieving ikhlas, is a life-long mission that ends with your last breath. This was the vigilant approach of the best generations. Consider how Sufyan ath-Thawri (ra), who filled this planet with his knowledge, devotion, and piety, has said, “I never remedied anything more difficult on me than my intention, and it's constantly overturning on me.” Similarly, when Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal was asked regarding his countless journeys and trials in pursuit and defense of the religious sciences, he said, “As for it being all for Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala (glorified and exalted be He), that is a difficult claim.” Another of the salaf said, “A moment of ikhlas entails an eternity of salvation, but ikhlas is indeed difficult.”

The Conspiracies of the Inner-Self

What illustrates the difficulty of ikhlas, are the layers of false motives conspired by the inner-self; many of which are almost undetectable. Our scholars have mentioned – I believe this was Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (ra) – how most people presume that insincerity only lies in seeking praise from the people, while this is only the simplest, most obvious form of “showing off.” He argues that, in reality, riyah (showing off) comes in four degrees, each uglier and stealthier than the one before it:

Acting in front of people, in order to earn their praise. An example of this is beautifying the prayer due to the presence of onlookers. A sign of this form of riyah is that the action stops or changes when such an audience is absent.

Acting in private, while hoping to be seen by the people. An example of this is a person performing night prayers in seclusion, while wishing that someone discovers his dedication. A sign of this form of riyah is that s/he becomes happy when they are stumbled upon, or quit the act when they are not acknowledged for it.

Acting in private, in order to feel self-righteous. An example of this is a person lengthening their prayer in private, so as not to feel guilty and hypocritical when beautifying his prayers for the onlookers. A sign of this form of riyah is that a person is only diligent with the acts of worship that have a public counterpart.

Acting in private, to acquire status in the hearts. An example of this is a person praying at night, so that Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala (glorified and exalted be He) would turn the people towards him in veneration by day. A sign of this form of riyah is that a person becomes angry when not distinguished, for his conceited heart feels entitled to the utmost reverence because of how “near” it is to Allah

subhanahu wa ta'ala (glorified and exalted be He).

None of these are ikhlas, for the first three sought to impress the people or themselves, and the fourth sought Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala (glorified and exalted be He) as the means and the people as the goal (making it the most pitiful form!).

Ruined without ar-Rahman (the Most Merciful)

After considering these stealthy insinuations that flow through the veins of the human being, one now understands the importance of this Prophetic supplication:

allahumma inni a 'oodhu bika an ushrika bika wa ana a'lam, wa astaghfiruka li mala a'lam

O Allah! I seek refuge in You from associating [others] with You while I know, and I seek Your forgiveness for when I don't know. [Bukhari; al-Adab al-Mufrad (551)]

This brilliant hadith contains two gems that must be picked up for our quest in pursuit of ikhlas:

Fear: Via remembering that there are times when we do in fact associate others with Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala (glorified and exalted be He) without realizing it.

Hope: Via remembering that by earnestly calling upon Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala (glorified and exalted be He) with this du'a', those barely discernible poisons can be forgiven.

So let that be our second step towards sincerity, relying upon Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala (glorified and exalted be He) to rescue us from this tangled web that prevents us from the sweetness of pleasing Him, the bliss of feeling near to Him, and the ecstasy of finally seeing Him.

The pride of Abu Jahl

Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (ra) mentioned that the pride of Abu Jahl was even worse than the pride of Fir'oun. At the time of his death, Fir'oun's heart softened to some extent, even though his imaan was not accepted. On the other hand, Abu Jahl's pride exceeded all limits, to such an extent that even at the time of his death he was proud. Thus he expressed his regret upon being slain by a farmer (and not being slain by a person of high status and position as this would have been a means of honour after his death). He lamented since the person responsible for killing him was a youngster from the Ansaar who were well-known farmers.

Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (ra) further says that I had heard from my Ustaad that when the Sahaabi was about to sever the head of Abu Jahl from his body, he (Abu Jahl) desired that his throat be cut more closer to his chest in order that his head stands out from the rest of the heads of the kuffaar when they are placed in line after their death. There are no limits to this pride. Nevertheless, when his head was brought before Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam), Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) said that the Fir'oun of this Ummah has died. Thereafter Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (ra) said that even in today's times, we find people with the outlook and mindset of Fir'oun.

(Malfoozaat Hakeemul Ummat)

A Comparative Approach to Islam and Democracy

Fethullah Gülen

Religion, particularly Islam, has become one of the most difficult subject areas to tackle in recent years. Contemporary culture, whether approached from the perspective of anthropology or theology, psychology or psychoanalysis, evaluates religion with empirical methods. On the one hand, religion is an inwardly experienced and felt phenomenon, one that, for the most part, is related to the permanent aspects of life. On the other hand, believers can see their religion as a philosophy, a set of rational principles, or mere mysticism. The difficulty increases in the case of Islam, for some Muslims and policy-makers consider and present it as a purely political, sociological, and economic ideology, rather than as a religion.

If we want to analyze religion, democracy, or any other system or philosophy accurately, we should focus on humanity and human life. From this perspective, religion in general, and Islam in particular, cannot be compared on the same basis with democracy or any other political, social, or economic system. Religion focuses primarily on the immutable aspects of life and existence, whereas political, social, and economic systems or ideologies concern only certain variable social aspects of our worldly life.

The aspects of life with which religion is primarily concerned are as valid today as they were at the dawn of humanity and will

continue to be so in the future. Worldly systems change according to circumstances and so can be evaluated only according to their times. Belief in God, the hereafter, the prophets, the holy books, the angels, and divine destiny have nothing to do with changing times. Likewise, worship and morality's universal and unchanging standards have little to do with time and worldly life.

Therefore, when comparing religion or Islam with democracy, we must remember that democracy is a system that is being continually developed and revised. It also varies according to the places and circumstances where it is practiced. On the other hand, religion has established immutable principles related to faith, worship, and morality. Thus, only Islam's worldly aspects should be compared with democracy.

The main aim of Islam and its unchangeable dimensions affect its rules governing the changeable aspects of our lives. Islam does not propose a certain unchangeable form of government or attempt to shape it. Instead, Islam establishes fundamental principles that orient a government's general character, leaving it to the people to choose the type and form of government according to time and circumstances. If we approach the matter in this light and compare Islam with the modern liberal democracy of today, we will be better

able to understand the position of Islam and democracy with respect to each other.

Democratic ideas stem from ancient times. Modern liberal democracy was born in the American (1776) and French Revolutions (1789-1799). In democratic societies, people govern themselves as opposed to being ruled by someone above. The individual has priority over the community in this type of political system, being free to determine how to live his or her own life. Individualism is not absolute, though. People achieve a better existence by living within a society and this requires that they adjust and limit their freedom according to the criteria of social life.

The Prophet says that all people are as equal as the teeth of a comb.[1] Islam does not discriminate based on race, color, age, nationality, or physical traits. The Prophet declared:

You are all from Adam, and Adam is from earth. O servants of God, be brothers [and sisters.]" (Bukhari)

Those who were born earlier, who have more wealth or power than others, or who belong to certain families or ethnic groups have no inherent right to rule others.

Islam also upholds the following fundamental principles:

- Power lies in truth, a repudiation of the common idea that truth relies upon power.
- Justice and the rule of law are essential.
- Freedom of belief and rights to life, personal property, reproduction, and health (both mental and physical) cannot be violated.
- The privacy and immunity of individual life must be maintained.
- No one can be convicted of a crime without evidence, or accused and punished for someone else's crime.
- An advisory system of administration is essential.

All rights are equally important, and the rights of the individual cannot be sacrificed for the sake of society. Islam considers a society to be composed of conscious individuals equipped with freewill and having responsibility toward both themselves and others. Islam goes a step further by adding a cosmic dimension. It sees humanity as the "motor" of history, contrary to the fatalistic approaches of some nineteenth century Western philosophies of history, such as dialectical materialism and historicism [Karl R. Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism*]. Just as the will and behavior of every individual determine the outcome of his or her life in this world and in the hereafter, a society's progress or decline is determined by the will, worldview, and lifestyle of its inhabitants. The Qur'an says:

God will not change the state of a people unless they change themselves (with respect to their beliefs, worldview, and lifestyle). (Ar-Rad 13:11)

In other words, each society holds the reins of its fate in its own hands. The prophetic tradition emphasizes this idea: "You will be ruled according to how you are." [Kanz al-'Ummal]. This is the basic character and spirit of democracy; an idea which does not conflict with any Islamic principle.

As Islam holds individuals and societies responsible for their own fate, people must be responsible for governing themselves. The Qur'an addresses society with such phrases as "O people!" and "O believers!" The duties entrusted to modern democratic systems are those that Islam assigns to society and classifies, in order of importance, as "absolutely necessary, relatively necessary, and commendable to carry out." The sacred text includes the following passages:

- Establish, all of you, peace. (Al-Baqara 2:208)
- Spend in the way of God and to the needy of the pure and good of what you have earned

and of what We bring forth for you from the Earth. (Al-Baqara 2:267)

- If some among your women are accused of indecency, you must have four witnesses (to prove it). (An-Nisa 4:15)
- God commands you to give over the public trusts to the charge of those having the required qualities and to judge with justice when you judge people. (An-Nisa 4:58)
- Observe justice as witnesses respectful for God, even if it is against yourselves, your parents and relatives. (An-Nisa 4:135)
- If they (your enemies) incline to peace (when you are at war), you also incline to it. (Al-Anfal 8:61)
- If a corrupt, sinful one brings you news (about others), investigate it so that you should not strike a people without knowing. (Al-Hujurat 49:6)
- If two parties among the believers fight between themselves, reconcile them. (Al-Hujurat 49:9)

In short, the Qur'an addresses the whole community and assigns it almost all the duties entrusted to modern democratic systems.

People cooperate with one another by sharing these duties and establishing the essential foundations necessary to perform them. The government is composed of all of these basic elements. Thus, Islam recommends a government based on a social contract. People elect the administrators and establish a council to debate common issues. Also, the society as a whole participates in auditing the administration. During the rule of the first four caliphs (632-661) in particular, the fundamental principles of government mentioned above—including free elections—were fully observed. The political system was transformed into a sultanate after the death of Ali, the fourth caliph, due to internal conflicts and the global conditions at that time. Unlike

the caliphate, power in the sultanate was passed down through the sultan's family. However, even though free elections were no longer held, societies maintained other principles that are found at the core of liberal democracy of today.

Islam is an inclusive religion. It is based on the belief in one God as the Creator, Lord, Sustainer, and Administrator of the universe. Islam is the religion of the whole universe. That is, the entire universe obeys the laws laid down by God; everything in the universe is "Muslim" and obeys God by submitting to His laws. Even a person who refuses to believe in God or who follows another religion has to be a Muslim perforce as far as bodily existence is concerned. Our entire life, from the embryonic stage to the body's dissolution into dust after death, every tissue of the muscles, and every limb of the body follows the course prescribed for each by God's laws. Thus, in Islam, God, nature, and humanity are neither remote from one another nor are they alien to one another. It is God who makes Himself known to humanity through nature and humanity itself, and nature and humanity are two books (of creation) through which each word of God is made known. This leads humankind to look upon everything as belonging to the same Lord, to whom it itself belongs, and therefore regarding nothing in the universe as being alien. His sympathy, love, and service do not remain confined to the people of a particular race, color, or ethnicity. The Prophet summed this up with the command, "O servants of God, be brothers (and sisters)!"

A separate but equally important point is that Islam recognizes all religions that came before it. It accepts all the prophets and books sent to different peoples in different epochs of history. Not only does it accept them, but it also regards belief in them as an essential principle of being Muslim. In this way, it acknowl-

edges the basic unity of all religions. A Muslim is at the same time a true follower of Abraham, Moses, David, all the other Hebrew prophets and Jesus. This belief explains why both Christians and Jews enjoyed their religious rights under the rule of Islamic governments throughout history.

The Islamic social system seeks to form a virtuous society and thereby gain God's approval. It recognizes right, not force, as the foundation of social life. Hostility is unacceptable. Relationships must be based on belief, love, mutual respect, assistance, and understanding instead of conflict and the pursuit of personal interests. Social education encourages people to pursue lofty ideals and to strive for perfection, not just to run after their own desires. Justified calls for unity and virtues create mutual support and solidarity, and belief secures brotherhood and sisterhood. Encouraging the soul to attain perfection brings happiness in both worlds.

Democracy has developed over time. Just as it has gone through many different stages in the past, it will continue to evolve and improve in the future. Along the way, it will be shaped into a more humane and just system, one based on righteousness and reality. If human beings are considered as a whole, without disregarding the spiritual dimension of their existence and their spiritual needs, and without forgetting that human life is not limited to this mortal life and that all people have a great craving for eternity, democracy could reach the peak of perfection and bring even more happiness to humanity. Islamic principles of equality, tolerance, and justice can help it do just this.

Noise in the Masjid

The House of Allah - the Masjid - commands the greatest respect and honour. Rasulallah Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam has advised that the best of places on earth are the Masaajid, hence it is a place where one acquires peace, tranquillity and contentment of the heart.

The worship of Allah deserves complete focus and concentration which requires an environment free of disturbance. It is indeed unfortunate that people flout the honour of the Masjid and have made it a meeting place to discuss worldly affairs and events.

Rasulallah Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam warned those who violate the sanctity of the House of Allah that such violation is a cause of Allah's anger.

Rasulallah Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam said, "A time will come upon the people that their talk in the Masjid will be their worldly matters. Do not sit with them, for Allah has no need of such people." (Shuabul Imaan)

In one Hadith, Rasulallah Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam mentions 15 transgressions that will cause Allah's punishment to befall the Ummah; one of which is, "When voices are raised in the Masjid." (Tirmizi)

Another Hadith states that when a person engages in worldly talk in the Masjid, an angel requests him, "Keep quiet, O friend of Allah." If he continues his worldly chatter, the angel says "Keep quiet, O enemy of Allah." If he still persists, the angel finally says, "Keep quiet, may Allah's curse be upon you." (Takhrijul Ihya)

Are We Creating a Society of Beggars?

Communities across the world are facing an increasing epidemic of beggars. Hardly do you pass an intersection except with a few individuals requesting hand-outs. While some beggars turn away with a shake of the head, others will persist to the point of harassment.

Islam encourages charity, generosity and kindness, but at the same time strongly discourages begging. Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam has stated, "Whoever is afflicted by poverty and then turns to people for assistance, his poverty will never end, but whoever is afflicted by poverty and turns to Allah for assistance, soon will Allah provide for him, immediately or after some time." (Abu Dawud)

In another Hadith, Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam states, "Begging is not permitted for the wealthy, nor for those able to earn. It is only permitted for the one in desolate poverty or for the one with overwhelming debt. And whoever begs to increase his wealth, it will be scars that will line his face on the Day of Resurrection and boiling stones that he will eat in Hell. So whoever wishes may take less and whoever wishes may take more." (Tirmizi)

Once an Ansaari came to Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam asking for assistance. Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam enquired, "Is there nothing in your home?"

The Ansaari replied, "Yes we have a saddle blanket that we cover ourselves with and that we lay down for sleeping, and a wooden container from which we drink water." Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam then instructed that Ansaari to bring those two items. When he arrived with them, Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam held them in his hand and said, "Who will purchase these?" One Sahaabi said, "I will take them for one Dirham (silver coin)." Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam asked again, "Who will double or triple this price?" Another Sahaabi said, "I will take them for two Dirhams." Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam then sold him the items and took the two Dirhams. He then gave the Dirhams to the Ansaari and instructed, "Purchase food for one Dirham and give it your family. Purchase an axe head with the other and bring it to me." The Sahaabi brought the axe head and Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam fitted the handle on with his own hands. He then told the Ansaari, "Go, cut wood and sell it and return after fifteen days." The Ansaari then came (after fifteen days) and he had earned ten Dirhams from which he purchased clothing and food. Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam then remarked, "This is better for you than having to appear on the Day of Resurrection with your begging as scars on your face!" (Abu Dawud)

Islam as a religion is always about uplifting and empowering people. We need to consider seriously the manner in which we discharge our charity and whether it is helping to empower people or is it increasing the beggars in our society. An Aalim from Soweto recently remarked that our contributions are creating "Instant Hijaabis"; women with no affiliation to Islam that are now suddenly in cloak and scarf to receive hand-outs from the Muslim community. It is worth noting that while the religious sites of other faiths are generally free from beggars, our Masaajid and Eidgah entrances are lined with beggars.

Generosity and kindness is something to be proud of, creating a society of beggars is not. Consider carefully whether your generosity is helping our society grow or is it producing the reverse. The money that we daily pull out of our pockets will find more value if invested in programmes that put people on their feet rather than allowing them to live off others.

At the same time, remember the Quranic verse, "And as for the beggar, then do not scold (him/her)." If we do not give, do not insult and criticize. Be decent and civil in our refusal.

Islam takes us away from begging and towards self-sufficiency. It removes us from reliance on others towards self-determination. It eradicates worthlessness and grants dignity. Our actions should mirror the same.

Courtesy: Jamiatul Ulama (KZN)

Quotable Quotes

A true Muslim is thankful to Allah in prosperity, and resigned to His will in adversity. [Muslim]

Be satisfied with what Allah has apportioned for you and you will be the richest of people. [Tirmidhi]

Say 'Laa Hawla Wa Laa Qumwataa Illaa Billaah' in abundance, for indeed it is from the treasures of Jannah. (Bukhari)

Do not abandon your noble deeds, even though nobody appreciates it. (Ali R.A)

Do not invest your hopes in anyone besides Allah and do not fear anything but the consequences of your sins. (Uthmaan RA)

Sincere regret over sins, deletes it, while arrogance regarding one's virtues, destroys it. (Ali R.A)

The cure to sin is to resist it with firm determination when tempted, & to repent from it if committed. (M. Ashraf Ali Thanvi (ra))

The greatest miracle that could be performed by a person is his/her perpetual practice of the Sunnah. (Mufti Mahmud Hassan (ra))

Some people desire to acquire Allah's pleasure but refuse to sacrifice any of their pleasures and desires. (Hakim Akhtar Sabeel (ra))

I found the Sahaaba (R.A) to be more possessive of their time than wealth. (Hassen Basri (ra))

Avoiding a sin is lighter than the pain of remorse. (Umar Ibn al-Khattab ((R.A)

Remembrance [of Allah] in relationship to the heart is like nourishment relative to the body. (Sulayman al-Khawwas (ra))

Muslims must live by Qur'an

Khalid Baig

It happened at an international inter-faith conference. The organizers decided to end the conference with readings from the scriptures of major religions, done by followers of other religions. An Arab Christian turned out to be a very good reciter of the Qur'an, as he read few verses from the Holy Book.

Every one seemed to be moved by his heart-rending reading, including the reciter himself. Later, a Muslim thinker and writer, who narrated this story, asked him: "Do you think Qur'an is the Word of God?" In a moment of truth, he said: "Yes." But, then, he had second thoughts, so he added: "But only for the Arabs."

The Qur'an has arguably been the only Book that kept moving millions to the message of Allah all through the ages and all across the world. Its Words stirred up souls of many people who might not know even a word of the Arabic language.

Famous Egyptian reciter Qari Abdul Basit reportedly once accompanied then President Gamal Abdul Nasser to a meeting with the Soviet leaders. During a break in the meeting, Nasser asked him to recite the Qur'an before the top Soviet leaders. When he finished the recitation, Qari Abdul Basit saw at least four of them shedding tears.

"We don't know what it was," they

later explained. But there was some thing touching in those Words!

Ironically at that time Qur'an was the forbidden tree for the Muslims in the Soviet Union. Reading, teaching, or even possessing a copy of the Qur'an resulted in the most severe punishments. The KGB was always on the look-out. Its agents could enter any house, any time, if they suspected anyone inside of reading Qur'an or offering prayers. Religious leaders were drafted for compulsory labor. Mosques and Islamic schools were closed down and turned into cinema houses, factories and offices. One could not find a copy of the Qur'an anywhere.

The ruthless state machinery did everything within its power to extinguish the flame of Qur'an in the empire. Yet during those 70 dark years, Muslims kept the flame burning. They developed elaborate camouflage mechanisms, at tremendous risks, to teach Qur'an to their children. Little children had to stay away from their parents for months at a time as they retired to secret hujras (rooms) where they memorized Qur'an and received religious instructions without ever having looked at a printed page. Their stories remain a neglected but extremely bright part of our recent history.

What kind of book can command such

devotion and sacrifices? Only the Book that begins by asserting:

"This is the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah." (Qur'an, 2:2)

And then each and every line of it attests to that assertion. It declares:

"The Most Gracious! It is He Who has taught the Qur'an." (Qur'an, 55:1-2)

It challenges:

"Say If the whole of mankind and Jinn were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support." (Qur'an, 17:88)

It says:

"Verily it is We Who revealed the Remembrance and verily We are its guardians." (Qur'an, 15:9)

Qur'an is the first document in the Arabic language. There is no other language of the world that has withstood a time span of 1400 years. Over the centuries, rivers change courses, civilizations rise and fall, and languages become extinct making way for the new ones. Consider the expression "faeder ure on heofonum" in a Bible of 900 CE (Matthew, 6)

The writing from that time cannot be read by an English-knowing person today. But anyone having the knowledge of Arabic can read the Qur'an and understand its message. As did all the people in the intervening centuries!

Prominent scholar Dr. Hamidullah tells of an effort in Germany by the Christian scholars to gather all the Greek manuscripts of Bible as the original Bible in Aramaic is extinct.

They gathered all manuscripts in the world and after having examined all of them, reported: "Some 200,000 contradictory narrations have been found... of these one-eighth are of an important nature." Following the publication of the report, an Institute for

Qur'anic Research was established too in Munich with the similar goal of examining the Book as it was done in case of the Bible.

A gigantic research project was started that continued for three generations. By 1933 CE, 43,000 photocopies of Qur'anic manuscripts were collected. A report published shortly before World War II that showed the results of the examination of these manuscripts. While some minor mistakes of calligraphy were found, not a single discrepancy in the text could be discovered!

Of course the love, devotion and care that Muslim showed toward the Qur'an, and that became the immediate cause of its miraculous preservation, was inspired by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). On one occasion he asked the companions in Suffa: Which of you would like to go out every morning to Buthan or Al-Aqiq (two markets near Madinah) and bring two large she-camels without being guilty of sin or without severing the ties of kinship? Camels were the valuable commodity of the time, she-camels even more so. As they showed their interest, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) explained: "To teach or recite two verses of the Qur'an is better than getting two she-camels. And three verses are better than three she-camels." (Muslim).

And so, for centuries this ummah displayed an unprecedented love and devotion for the Book of Allah Almighty. It began the education of its children by teaching them how to read Qur'an. It began its day by reciting from the Qur'an, which was divided into seven parts, each called a manzil, so it could be read completely every week. It was divided into 30 parts, each called a juz, so it could be read completely every month. Qur'an is the most read and memorized book in the world!

Today, though, we see a change. Thanks to the twin scourges of a colonial edu-

cation system and the television, today we find millions of Muslim children for whom learning to read the Qur'an is not part of their education. We find millions of Muslim homes where Qur'an is read only on special occasions, when someone dies, for example. This despite the fact that in most parts of the world today, unlike the Soviet Union of yesterday, reading the Qur'an is no longer a high risk proposition.

How unfortunate is the person who dies of thirst while holding the refreshing glass of water in his hands! How unfortunate is the person who dies of disease while holding the perfect medicine in his hands!

We must read it, understand it, and put it into practice. But we must also remember that reading with full deference and proper etiquettes is a pre-requisite for understanding the Qur'an, just as understanding its message is a pre-requisite for practicing it. Our goal must be to live by the Qur'an. For only then we truly live. Otherwise we only pretend to live.

Beautiful outcome of Honesty and Taqwa

Once, 'Abdullah bin 'Umar (RA) was on a journey, accompanied by his pupils and disciples. When they stopped for meals, a shepherd passed by with his herd of goats and greeted them by saying: "Assalaamu 'alaikum". Ibnu 'Umar (RA) invited him to join them, but he said that he was fasting. At this, Ibnu 'Umar (RA) said: "You are fasting in a shadeless desert, on such a hot day when a hot wind is blowing!"

The shepherd replied: "I want to receive my rewards for the past days (al-ayyaamul khaaliyah)." He was referring to the following verse of the Quraan Majeed:

It will be said to those in Jannah) "Eat and drink at ease for that which you sent on before 'in the past days'."

Ibnu 'Umar (RA) then said to him, by way of trial: "We want to buy a goat; name a price and we shall pay it. We shall then slaughter the goat and give you some of its meat to serve you for iftaar (breaking the fast)." The shepherd said: "These goats are not mine; I am but a slave and the goats belong to my master." Ibnu 'Umar (RA) said: "How will your master know? You can tell him that a wolf devoured a goat." At this, the shepherd turned away saying: "What about Allah? (Who is watching us at all times? How could I deceive Him and say that a wolf had devoured a goat?)." Ibnu 'Umar (RA) was delighted with these words from a simple shepherd and he began to say to himself, again and again (in an ecstasy of joy): "A simple shepherd says: 'What about Allah (who is watching us at all times)?'"

When Ibnu 'Umar (RA) came back to Madeenah Munawwarah after the journey, he bought the slave from the master, together with the herd of goats, emancipated him and bestowed the herd upon him as a gift. (Shu'abul Imaan).

Lesson: Such was the honesty and Allah consciousness of the simple shepherds of the past. As we draw closer to the final hour, these two qualities are leaving us very rapidly, resulting in most of the vices and complications we are experiencing presently. We need to nurture these great qualities in our hearts and the hearts of our families in order to have an enjoyable stay in this world and the Hereafter.

By Love and Enthusiasm

Religion is lived by love and enthusiasm explain Harun Yahya

In the holy month of Ramadan, the blessings and the spirit of love of Islam is being felt deeply in believers' hearts. It is very important that the blessings poured upon people by this spirit of love and faith does not remain limited to this one month alone but spreads to all our lifetimes. To accomplish this, we need to take every opportunity in speaking about love and encouraging peace.

Life becomes meaningful with faith and love. Allah loves to love and be loved and this is why He created the universe with love. We witness this fact everywhere and in everything. That the Earth accommodates so much artistry, the variety of colors, the aesthetics in nature, the beauty in animals are all the kindness and love Allah offers to His servants.

The enormous artistry in a tiny flower, the transition of colors on its petals are all out of the love Allah feels for His servants. The fragrance, the aesthetics of the fruits and vegetables Allah creates for us, the delicacy in their seeds, the way they are packaged are all again because of the love Allah has for us, His servants.

In the absence of love one cannot live by the religion in the true sense of the word. Love is obligatory upon human beings. In a

person who has not placed this understanding into his heart, there exists an emptiness in his heart. Everything a Muslim does for the sake of Allah is based on love. The fear and awe one feels for Allah is again based on this love.

A believer avoids doing something that will not please Allah. This is what we call "fear of Allah." This is similar to the case of a person who abstains from doing the slightest thing that will be disliked or that displeases the person he loves. He even takes precautions against the possibility of his being displeased. Similar to this, beneath the fear of Allah lies the love one has for Allah.

A person experiences religion in his heart. It is enjoyed with love, zeal, sincerity and with joy and enthusiasm. It is not imposed on a person by compulsion. That is why love of faith is the most essential and important issue.

Imagine a person who fulfills his regular prayers everyday, fasts, counts his beads and knows the Qur'an by heart but this person is cold towards other people. He is cruel and strict. He is not forgiving. He thinks that even the slightest mistake must be punished rather than changed for the good by gentle admonition. He does not like others and takes every opportunity to criticize them. However he is

very meticulous about formalities. He knows the Qur'an but he does not put its commandments into practice in his daily life. Such a person is distant to the spirit of the Qur'an, because Islam is love, understanding, compassion, being reconciliatory and unitary.

According to the Qur'an, it is obligatory upon Muslims to love one another. In the verses of the Qur'an, Allah speaks of His forgivingness, protectiveness and mercy. The 22nd verse of Surat an-Nur Allah reads: "...Would you not love Allah to forgive you? Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

Everyone definitely wants to be forgiven and pardoned, and deeply hopes for this. In the way that our Lord relates in this verse, it is essential for us to be affectionate, complementary and forgiving.

We already experience the nefarious consequences of this lovelessness. The Islamic world is disunited and disintegrated. There is a reason for this; the compassion, love, forgiveness, and protective spirit is not duly experienced. Islamic communities do not have a compassionate outlook towards one another and they do not approach one another in a brotherly spirit. People who are brothers in faith, who believe in the same Allah and His prophet have been detached from one another because of some differences in details.

It is evident that this is a sedition stirred up by anti-Christ, a satanic trap. Satan prevents Muslims from showing love and compassion, which is in the essence of religion, to one another. The way to deal with this sedition is to love one another and to become united. We need to put the spirit of cooperation and self-sacrifice that exists in the Qur'an into practice.

Our Lord says:

"Allah loves those who strive in His Way in ranks like well-built walls" and thus informs us about the kind of love that is obligatory upon

us. (Surah Saf: Verse 4)

We are the guardians of one another. Muslims are people with saint-like morality. They are the friends of Allah, His assistants and they are the people with superior morality that will distribute peace and justice to the Earth. So what is obligatory upon Muslims is their loving one another, their embracing one another and making alliance with one another. Thwarting the sedition of Satan urgently and spreading the spirit of self-sacrifice within the Islamic world, and embracing one another without considering the differences in Islamic schools and Islamic communities is what is obligatory upon them.

In Surah Al 'Imran Verse 103, our Almighty Allah commands to Muslims;

"Hold fast to the rope of Allah all together, and do not separate. ..."

It is obligatory upon us not to disunite, but to embrace one another, to cooperate, to support one another and put an end to the sedition in the ideological sense.

All around the world, Muslims are being martyred everyday. Poor women, little children and elderly people are being killed only because the compassionate and mighty spirit of the morality of Islam has not been secured and believers have not become united. But the solution is rather easy.

Allah creates destiny and He informs us about the keys to salvation. What we need to do is to place that key into the lock. This is to establish love, compassion among our brothers.

With the love that Allah makes obligatory upon us all, Muslims must set aside all kinds of separation and make alliance. Let us all hope that this holy month of Ramadan becomes instrumental for Muslims to attain those days when they have deeper love for another, become more compassionate and more restrained.

Blameworthy Morals

Takabbur

Mawlana Maseeh-Ullah Khan (RA)

Allah says:

"Verily, Allah does not love the proud ones."

Rasulullah (saws) said:

"He who has a grain of pride in his heart will nor enter Jannat."

Takabbur is to consider oneself superior to others in attributes of excellence. There are many kinds of takabbur. Most kinds are subtle, concealed and difficult to detect. It is only the thorough gaze of the Shaikh-e-Kaamil which can discern such hidden forms of takabbur. In this matter even the Ulama-e-Zaahir (those Ulama who concern themselves with only the external Law of the Shariah) are constrained to follow an expert in the Path of Tasawwuf.

In a nutshell takabbur is to voluntarily and consciously regard oneself superior to others in religious or mundane excellences in a way which engenders contempt in the heart for others. This is the reality of takabbur and this is haraam. Takabbur consists of two ingredients, viz.,

1. The feeling of superiority—considering oneself to be great.
2. Contempt for others.

Takabbur not induced voluntarily, but entering the heart involuntarily is not sinful. Such non-volitional pride is merely the external dimension or form of takabbur. Up to this stage takabbur is not sinful. But when one voluntarily entertains the feeling of pride which

had initially crept in involuntarily, then it will be sinful takabbur. In this case the mere form of takabbur is transformed into the reality of takabbur.

Where the condition of contempt for others is non-existent, takabbur—will not be applicable. Mere belief in superiority and inferiority greatness and smallness—is not takabbur. For example: an old man regarding an infant to be small without the notion of contempt for it. But, the one who intentionally considers himself better than others, becomes arrogant. His nafs swells up with pride, the consequences of which then manifest themselves. Examples of pride are: to regard others with contempt; to take offence when others do not greet one first; to be offended if others do not offer you respect; to be annoyed when someone admonishes you; refusal to concede the truth even after having realized it. May Allah keep us under His Protection and save us from takabbur, for indeed, it is the severest of maladies. It is the root of all spiritual ailments.

It was takabbur which made shaitaan a deviate. The Hadith therefore sounds dire warnings in regard to takabbur. Allah has warned that the abode of the proud ones will indeed be vile. Pride is the exclusive prerogative of Allah. Allah will destroy all those who desire to participate in this exclusive Attribute of greatness. Rasulullah (saws) said that the

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