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R **RADIANT** **Y**
EALITY

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Verily

with

Every

Hardship

Comes

Ease




(Quran- 94:5)

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RADIANT REALITY

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

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Question Answer

Question.

Upon whom is Hajj compulsory?

Answer.

Hajj is compulsory upon every baaligh, sane, fit and healthy free muslim, who has the means to perform Hajj in the months of Hajj.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

Years ago, I was not inclined to Deen. So a friend of mine asked me for a R100.000.00 loan and I gave it to him on interest for a R150.000.00 return. After he repaid me the interest loan of R150.000.00, I used the same money to start-up my business which is a multi-million business today. I am concerned about the interest money I used to start my multi-Million business. Is my entire business Haraam or just the interest portion of it?

Answer.

As a general rule, it is Haraam for person to take or give interest loans. If an interest loan had been taken or given to a person, the interest money has to be returned to its original owner. A person should make sincere Taubah and Istighfaar for involving himself in such loans.

In the enquired case, the Halaal profit earned from your capital investment (interest) to your start-up business over the years is Halaal. The capital investment of interest to your start-up business will not affect the status of your Halaal profit of your multi Million business today. However, the interest portion of your capital investment (R50.000.00) to your start-up business is Haraam for you and has to be returned to your

friend.

Note: It should be kept in mind that this is a case of a person giving an interest loan and benefiting from it negligently or ignorantly. Otherwise, it is not allowed at all for a person to do so intentionally or make this a means or source of income.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

How should one give Azaan in the ears of a new born baby?

Answer.

When a child is born, the Azaan and Iqaamah should be called out in the ears of a child. The Azaan should be called out in the right ear of the child and the Iqaamah should be called out in the left ear of the child. This should, preferably, be done after the child has been cleaned and given a bath.

At the time of calling out the Azaan and Iqaamah in the ears of a child, the child may be held in one's hands. It is Mustahab (preferable) to face the Qiblah in doing so. However, it is not necessary. It is also not necessary to keep the fingers in the ears, turn to the right and left or call out the Azaan loudly as is normally the case.

The Azaan should be called out at a slow pace and the Iqaamah should be called out at a moderate pace to differentiate between Azaan and Iqaamah. It may be given standing or sitting. If there is a delay for some reason, the Azaan and Iqaamah should not be left out and it should be done at a later stage. (Fataawa Darul Uloom Zakariyyah 6/503)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Please advise if it is only permissible for Muslim men to wear silver rings, and not titanium or other materials?

Answer.

Men are only permitted to wear silver rings. The amount of silver should not exceed one mithqaal (4.374 g).

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

If a person on safr performs salaah alone and intentionally performs full Salaah, will he be sinful?

Answer.

During safr it is compulsory upon one to perform qasr salaah. If intentionally he performs full salaah, he will be sinful and the salaah will have to be repeated.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

If in a 4 rakaat salaah one forgets to read a surah after surah al Fatiha in the 2nd rakaat, should he read a surah in the 3th rakaat after surah al Fatiha? If yes, is this Waajib to do so, and what if one wilfully does not do it?

Answer.

If one had left out the surah in the second rakaat of a four rakaat salaah, then it is compulsory upon him to recite a surah after surah faatiha in either the third rakaat or fourth rakaat and make sajdah sahw at the end of the salaah. If one did not recite the surah after surah faatiha in the third rakaat or fourth rakaat one should make sajda-e-sahw at the end of the Salaah.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

Is it permissible to tell someone “happy birthday”? I know its not a day to celebrate, nor do we do so but people feel appreciated / acknowledged

that at least he remembered my birthday. Sometimes, some people take offense if you “forget” to tell them?

Answer.

Celebrating birthdays is a custom of the kuffaar. As Muslims, we are commanded to refrain from emulating the kuffaar as well as adopting their ways. Nabi Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam said: The one who emulates a people will be counted from amongst them (in the court of Allah). Hence, it is not right at all for a Muslim to share in the happiness of someone celebrating his birthday by saying “happy birthday” to him.

We should remember that if we make the feelings of people the benchmark, then just as some people become happy by telling them ‘happy birthday’ others take exception to this. Thus, the criteria of acceptance in the court of Allah is the adherence to the sunnat of Rasulullah Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam not the feelings of people.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

If a person did not discharge his sadaqatul fitr for many years, what should he do?

Answer.

He should discharge the value of the current year’s sadaqatul fitr for each year he missed.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

If the Imaam did not make Sajdah Tilaawat immediately after reciting the verse of Sajdah Tilaawat, but he did so after one or two verses, is the Salaah valid?

Answer.

If a person did not prostrate for Sajdah Tilaawat after reciting a verse of Sajdah Tilaawat in Salaah, then if he prostrates for it after reciting one or two verses from the verse of Sajdah Tilaawat (three verses), the Salaah will be valid. However, if he prostrated for Sajdah Tilaawat after reciting

one or two verses from the verse of Sajdah Tilaawat in Salaah (after three verses), then it will be necessary for him to perform Sajdah-e-Sahw before completing the Salaah. The same ruling applies to all Salaahs. (Fataawa Mahmoodiyyah 7/468)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

My wife gave birth to our first child. My wife has been bleeding for forty days since she gave birth. I am aware that there should be a clean period of fifteen days after each Haidh. Does my wife have to have a clean period of fifteen days after bleeding from child birth to count her next Haidh? Or does she count her Haidh after Forty days immediately?

Answer.

In principle, the maximum period of Nifaas (post-natal bleeding) is forty days while there is no minimum limit to it. The same rules that apply to a woman in Haidh (menstruation) apply to a woman in Nifaas (post-natal bleeding).

In the enquired situation, if a woman experiences Nifaas (post-natal bleeding) for forty days, she will have to wait for a minimum period of fifteen days before she counts her next Haidh cycle. Therefore, since your wife has experienced Nifaas (post-natal bleeding) for forty days, she will have to wait for a minimum period of fifteen days before she counts her next Haidh cycle. If she spots any blood during the fifteen days period, it would be regarded as Istihaadhah (irregular discharge) and the laws of Istihaadhah will apply. (Shaami 1/285)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Will my salaah be valid behind an Imaam who makes masah over ordinary, cotton socks?

Answer.

According to the four imaams of fiqh, masah on cotton socks is not valid. If the masah is not valid

then the wudhu is incomplete and if the wudhu is incomplete then the salaah will not be valid.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

A person purchased an item for resale purposes but thereafter cancelled his intention. After some time, he decided to once again sell the item. Will zakaat be waajib on the item?

Answer.

Zakaat will not be waajib upon the item. However, zakaat will be waajib upon the money received after selling the item.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

Is zakaat waajib upon life insurance which matures after the death of the policy holder?

Answer.

Zakaat is not waajib upon wealth received from the insurance company after the demise of the policy holder. However, if the wealth was received during his lifetime, then he is obligated to pay zakaat of the current year as well as the previous years.

Note: It is impermissible for a believer to involve himself in any insurance policy as the elements of gambling and interest are found. If a person has taken out an insurance policy of any kind, then he should sincerely repent and cancel the contract.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

Can you please guide us for “up to which age of child’s urine is acceptable even it touches our cloths. Can we pray salah without changing clothes? And weather we need to repeat wadu in such cases.”

Answer.

In principle the urine of a Human being is impure irrespective of the age of the person.

However if a child's urine comes onto one's clothing, and it is more than the size of a Dirham (the inner-part of one's palm) then that cloth will have to be washed three times.

If a child's urine comes onto one's clothing it will not invalidate one's wudhu.

Maulana Bilal

Question.

Which people are not eligible for zakaat?

Answer.

The following people are not eligible for zakaat:

A non-Muslim

A Sayyid (descendent of Nabi Alaihis salaam's family i.e. the Banu Haashim) even if he is poor. (The Banu Haashim include the descendents of either 'Abbaas, Ali, Jafar, Aqeel or Haarith Bin Abdil Muttalib (Radiyallahu Anhum))

The donors ascendants e.g. his parents, grandparents, etc. and descendents e.g. children, grandchildren, etc.

The donors spouse (husband or wife)

A minor whose father is wealthy

A wealthy person (A person who possesses that amount of wealth which equals the nisaab after deducting all his liabilities and debts)

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

Is it permissible for a diabetic to take an insulin injection whilst fasting and will it nullify the fast?

Answer.

Taking an insulin injection whilst fasting is permissible. The insulin does not nullify the fast. However, in the case where the insulin is directly injected into the stomach the fast will be nullified.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

What is the mas'alah regarding a person who received some wealth prior to the completion of the zakaatable year?

E.g. Zaid's zakaatable year ends on the 1st of Ramadhan. Few days before the 1st of Ramadhan, he received a lump sum of R1, 000, 000 in inheritance. Will Zaid have to pay zakaat on the R1, 000, 000 as well?

Answer.

Zaid will have to pay zakaat on the R1, 000, 000 as well.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

If one's phone rings during Salaah, can one remove the phone from the pocket and pouch in order to switch it off? If one removes the phone to switch it off, will the salaah break?

Answer.

If switching off the phone involves 'amal qaleel (a little movement), one should switch it off and his Salaah will not break. However, if switching off the phone involves 'amal katheer (a lot of movement), he should not switch it off. If he does switch it off his Salaah will break. 'Amal katheer refers to that amount of movement in Salaah which, if any person who is out of Salaah observed him doing that action, he would have thought that the person was not in Salaah.

One should ensure that one switches off one's phone before entering the Musjid so that it does not become a means of distracting one during Salaah or causing inconvenience to the other musallees.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

A person gave zakaat to a muslim whom he regarded to be eligible for zakaat. However, after giving him the zakaat he discovered that he was unworthy of zakaat. Is the zakaat discharged?

Answer.

If a person discharged the zakaat to a muslim whom he regarded to be eligible for zakaat then

the zakaat will be discharged.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

Will zakaat be discharged by paying a poor person's light or water account?

Answer.

The fundamental requirement in the discharging of zakaat is the aspect of Tamleek i.e. to transfer ownership of the wealth to the recipient of zakaat. Since this requirement is not fulfilled in the case where the person paid the water or light account, the zakaat will not be discharged. However, if one fears that if he gives the money to the poor man then instead of him paying his water or light account he will misuse the wealth then in this situation he may ask the poor man for permission to pay the account on his behalf. In this way the zakaat will be discharged.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

Will the zakaat be fulfilled if it is given under the pretext of a gift or a loan?

Answer.

If the person discharging the zakaat has the intention of zakaat at the time he gifted the wealth or loaned it to the poor person, the zakaat will be discharged. However, in the case where he gave the zakaat as a loan it is impermissible for him to take back the wealth. If he takes it back he will be sinful.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

I would like to know is the nikaah valid if the couples are not willing by heart? Especially the bride? If they just accept the nikaah because of family pressure.

Answer.

If consent is given by the girl for the nikaah to be performed, then the nikaah will be valid. How-

ever it is not at all correct for the family to force the girl to marry someone whom she is unhappy to marry. Generally, in forced marriages there is always the fear that the nikaah would not last on account of the spouses not being compatible.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

It is said that Jannah is at the feet of one's mother. So for a female, once she gets married, is Jannah still with her mother or husband?

Answer.

The meaning of the Hadith is, through serving one's mother and showing kindness and obedience to her, Allah Ta'ala will bless one with Jannah. Similarly, the Hadith explains that the husband is the wife's Jannah or Jahannum. Through showing obedience to the husband and serving him, she will earn her Jannah and through showing disobedience to the husband, she will earn Jahannum. Hence, respecting and serving both, her husband and her mother, are the means of her entering Jannah.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

About three years ago, I sent my phone for repairs and when I went to fetch it, they told me they could not repair it, so I did not pay them. But when I tried the phone, it worked but I told to myself that it is too late now to return and pay them. So should I pay them now?

Answer.

If the phone remained by them and they did not attempt to fix it, then they are not entitled to receive any fee. However, if they repaired it but were under the impression that the phone was not working, and you found the phone to be working, then in this case they will be entitled to the fee. You should inform them that the phone was working after you picked it up and pay them whatever is due to them.

Mufti Zakaria

Collective Reformation

O those who believe, no men should ever mock at other men, since it is possible that the latter are better than the former, nor (should) women (ever mock) at other women, since it is possible that the latter women are better than the former ones. And do not find fault with one another, nor call one another with bad nicknames. Bad is the name of sinfulness after embracing Faith. And whoever does not repent, such people are the wrongdoers. (49:11)

This verse prohibits three social evils: [1] ridiculing one another; [2] finding fault with one another; and [3] reviling one another with nicknames.

According to Qurtubi, mocking or scoffing does not only connote mocking with the tongue, but it also implies mimicking someone, making pointed references to him, laughing at his words, his works, his appearance, his dress or calling people's attention to some of his defects, so that they may laugh at him. Mocking includes all of this. By the clear text of the Qur'an, poking fun at someone or ridiculing him is absolutely forbidden.

Stylistically, the Qur'an has, on this occasion, addressed men and women separately. Men are referred to as qawm, a word that is specifically reserved for male members of the human society, though by extension the word most often includes the female members of the human society as well. The Qur'an, however, generally employs the word qawm for both men and women, but here it is specifically used for men in contradistinction to the word nisa' which specifically refers to women. Here both

men and women are reminded that mocking one another is a disdainful and evil act. They must refrain from it, because it is very likely that the man who is mocked at may be better than the mocking person and the woman who is mocked at may be better than the mocker. Here the Qur'an prohibits men from mocking other men, and women from mocking other women. This, however, does not mean that it is permitted for men to mock at women or for women to mock at men. The actual reason for making separate mention of the two sexes is that Islam does not allow free intermingling of the two sexes. Ridiculing each other generally occurs where there is such an intermingling. Therefore, in a Muslim society it is inconceivable that men would mock a woman or women would mock a man in an intermingling situation.

In short: no one dare make mockery of a person whose body, face, shape and stature are defective, imperfect, impaired or deformed, because he does not know that the other person, in the sight of Allah, might be better than him on account of his sincerity and purity of heart. When the righteous predecessors heard this

verse, they adopted a conducive attitude: For example, Sayyidna ‘Amr Ibn Shurahbil (RA) said that he would not laugh at a person when he sees him drink milk direct from the udders of a goat, lest he should become one like him. Sayyidna ‘Abdullah Ibn Mas’ud (RA) said: “I would not like to scoff at a dog, lest I be {metamorphosed into a dog (Qurtubi).”

It is recorded in Sahih of Muslim on the authority of Sayyidna Abu Hurairah (RA) that the Holy Prophet (SAWS) said: “Allah does not look at your faces and your wealth; He looks at your hearts and your works.” Qurtubi derives a legal maxim from this tradition of the Holy Prophet (SAWS) that in any matter it is not proper to pass a categorical judgment on the basis of overt evidence or circumstances, because it is possible that a person’s overt actions might seem to be good but in the sight of Allah, on account of the insincerity and impurity of his heart, they could be bad, as He is fully aware of the inner state of people’s hearts. On the contrary, a person’s overt actions might seem to us bad, but in the sight of Allah, on account of the sincerity and purity of his heart, they could serve as an expiation of the bad actions, as He is fully aware of the inner state of people’s heart.

The next thing that is prohibited in the verse is lamz which connotes to find fault with someone or to upbraid him. The verse literally means, “Do not find fault with your selves.” But the intention is: “Do not find fault with one another-” [49:11] as is seen in the translation above. This expression is similar to the expression ‘...And do not kill yourselves - [4:29]’. Although the verse commands “do not kill yourselves”, it purports to say “do not kill one another”. This expression indicates that, from one point of view, killing another person amounts to killing oneself. Often it happens that if one person kills another person, the victim’s supporters kill the murderer. Even if this does not happen, a Muslim is the brother of another Muslim. Killing one’s brother is like killing oneself and rendering oneself crippled,

helpless and powerless. Similarly, the expression ‘and not find fault with yourselves’ means when you find fault with others and upbraid them, others will find fault with you and upbraid you, because no man is normally free from any fault. Scholars have formulated the maxim: “You have faults and people have eyes” with which they see them. Thus if someone seeks out the imperfections of some other person and broadcasts them, the latter will do the same in return. If, however, he exercises patience and evades retaliation to his verbal attacks, it comes down to the same thing: If one considers carefully, he will find that defaming and despising one’s Muslim brother is actually casting aspersions on oneself.

Scholars have suggested that the satisfaction, well-being and happiness of man lies in examining his own faults and finding ways of mending them. This approach to life will give him no time to find fault with others and broadcast it. How well the last king of India Bahadur Shah Zafar has versified it!

*As long as we were unaware of our own faults,
we looked into the faults and failings of others;
But when we looked at our own faults there
remained no one faulty in the world.*

The third thing that is prohibited in the verse is reviling one another with nicknames which are offensive to them, e.g. calling a person lame, hands cropped, blind or one-eyed; or referring to him by other offensive nicknames. Sayyidna Abu Jabirah Ansari (RA) says, “This verse was revealed in connection with us. When we migrated to Madinah, most of us had two or three names. Some of them were popularised in order to denigrate, defame or belittle the bearer of the name. The Holy Prophet was not aware of this situation; as a result he sometimes called them by one of these offensive names unwittingly. The noble Companions informed the Prophet (SAWS) that the name offends the bearer of that name. This verse was revealed on that occasion.” Sayyidna Ibn-’Abbas (RA) says that prohibi-

Cont’d on page 17

Lessons from Sahih Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

Chapter 19 : When the clothes of a Musalli (one offering Salaah) in prostration touch his wife.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

During the menstruation period, a woman is not an untouchable and hence if her garments come in contact with a Musalli, his Salaah is valid. Imam Bukhari wants to convey the message that it very important to keep clean the place of Salaah and its surroundings.

Hadith No. 371

Narrates Abdullah bin Shaddad

Maimuna said, "Allah's Apostle was praying while I was in my menses, sitting beside him and sometimes his clothes would touch me during his prostration." Maimuna added, "He prayed on a Khumra (a small mat sufficient just for the face and the hands while prostrating during prayers).

Lessons from the Hadith

1. It is permissible to interact with a menstruating woman.
2. It is permissible for a person to touch the clothes and body of a woman (wife or Mahram) during menstruation.
3. If a person while offering Salaah comes in contact with the clothes of a menstruating woman, it will not affect his Salaah.

Chapter 20 : (To offer) Salaah on a mat.

Jaabir and Abu Sa'eed offered Salaah standing on board of a ship. Al-Hasan said, "If it is not troublesome for one's companions, one may offer Salaah standing and turn himself with its (ship's) turnings; otherwise offer Salaah sitting".

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Some Ulema are of the opinion that it is better to offer Salaah on ground. It is said that Umar bin Abdul Aziz liked to offer Salaah on ground. According to the learned scholars if someone offers salaah on ground, it will be a sign of humility. However, the majority of scholars including Imam Bukhari permit to offer Salaah on a prayer mat. Imam Bukhari has quoted Jaabir and Abu Sayeed offering Salaah in a boat, therefore, if it is valid to offer Salaah in a boat then there is no issue in offering it on a mat. Here it is to mention that if Salaah can be offered in a boat while standing without any difficulty, it should be done like that, however, it is also permissible to sit down. Further, if the boat changes its direction, the Musalli will also have to turn towards the direction of Qibla in that case.

Salaah in a moving train

It is necessary to offer Salaah in the standing position while in a train. It is not correct to compare a train with a boat because one feels nauseated while standing in a boat, and there

is apprehension of falling into the water. That is why it is mandatory for one to offer Salaah in the standing position in a train.

Salaah in an aeroplane

It is permissible to offer Salaah in an aeroplane, and it is better to do so while standing after ensuring the direction of Qibla. If it is not possible to stand then one can offer his Salaah while sitting but in this case he shall have to repeat it after reaching his destination. (Inaamul Baari)

Hadith No. 372

Narrated Ishaq

Anas bin Maalik said, "My grandmother Mulaika invited Allah's Apostle for a meal which she herself had prepared. He ate from it and said, 'Get up! I will lead you in the prayer.' " Anas added, "I took my Hasir, washed it with water as it had become dark because of long use and Allah's Apostle stood on it. The orphan (Damira or Ruh) and I aligned behind him and the old lady (Mulaika) stood behind us. Allah's Apostle led us in the prayer and offered two Rak'ats and then left."

Comments

Umm Sulaim was the daughter of Mulaikah, and Anas bin Maalik was the son of Umm Sulaim. Umm Sulaim was first married to Maalik bin Nadhar and later to Abu Talha.

Mulaika once invited Rasulullah (SAWS) for a meal. Rasulullah (SAWS) ate from it and then led them in prayer. Anas and his brother stood in the first row behind Rasulullah (SAWS) and his grandmother in the second row.

Lessons from the Hadith

1. One should accept an invitation when invited. (Note: If the occasion of invitation and the proceedings of a function are against the principles of Shariah then one should refrain from such invitations and functions).

2. Congregational Salaah at home: According to some Ulema the Salaah that Rasulullah (SAWS) led in the house of Mulaika was a Nafl Salaah while some others opine that it was Fardh. Those who consider it Nafl put forward in favour of their argument this hadith saying that it is permissible to offer Nafl Salaah in congregation. Allaama Ayni has quoted from Maalik and also from Hanafite scholars that it is permissible to offer Nafl Salaah in congregation provided that it is not pre-arranged and that people are not called for it, because the calling is restricted to Fardh Salaah only.

3. It is permissible for children to stand with adults in the same row during Salaah.

4. Women have to stand in the last row behind children.

5. It is permissible to request pious people to offer Salaah at the invitees house in order to earn blessings of Allah.

6. One should first execute the job for which he has been invited and then turn to something else as was done by Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). He was invited for meals so he first ate from it and then offered Salaah.

Chapter 21 : (To offer) Salaah on al-Khumra (a small mat just sufficient for the face and hands while prostrating during Salaah)

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Al-Haseer: It is a bigger prayer mat on which one can place his feet as well as prostrate during Salaah.

Al-Khumra: It is a smaller prayer mat which suffices only for one's feet or hands and head during prostration i.e., if a person stands on it he will not be able to prostrate on it, and if he places it at the place where he prostrates then he will not be able to place his feet on it.

In these two chapters, Imam Bukhari wants to convey that Salaah is permissible on both types of mats. According to Shah Waliullah Mughaddith Delhvi, Imam Bukhari wants to remove

the misunderstanding which could have arisen because of the hadith narrated by Sayyiduna Rabah wherein he says that he tried to blow out the dust from the ground which could have touched his forehead. Rasulallah (SAWS) forbade him to do so and advised him to let it happen.

Shah Waliullah further quotes the second Hadith that could have been the reason for misunderstanding, viz.,

“The land has been made as mosque and ritually clean for me”.

Hadith No. 373

Narrated Maimuna

Allah’s Apostle used to pray on Khumra.

Comments

It is Imam Bukhari’s practice to quote exactly the same words which he has listened to from his teachers, and in doing so, he does not care about repetitions.

Chapter 22 : (To offer) Salaah on flooring (mat, bedding etc).

Anas said, “We used to offer Salaah with the Prophet (SAWS) and anyone among us would prostrate on his clothes”.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

First Imam Bukhari mentioned about smaller prayer mats like al-Khumra and al-Haseer and that it is permissible to offer Salaah on them. Now, he says that Salaah is permissible even on large floorings or beddings like carpets, blankets etc., the only condition being that such floorings or beddings be ritually clean.

Some people do not like to offer Salaah on luxurious or colourfully designed carpets, though it is permissible to offer Salaah on them.

Hadith No. 374

Narrated Abu Salmah

Aisha the wife of the Prophet said, “I used to sleep in front of Allah’s Apostle and my legs were

opposite his Qibla and in prostration he pushed my legs and I withdrew then and when he stood, I stretched them.’ Aisha added, “In those days the houses were without lights.”

Hadith No. 375

Narrated Aisha

Allah Apostle prayed while I was lying like a dead body on his family bed between him and his Qibla.

Hadith No. 376

Narrated Urwa

The Prophet prayed while Aisha was lying between him and his Qibla on the bed on which they used to sleep.

Comments

Rasulallah (SAWS) loathed to live in a palace.

Rasulallah (SAWS) was the most beloved prophet of Allah and the best of the creation, yet he chose for himself austere life and taught the whole mankind the fact that simplicity is because of faith. He could have lived a luxurious life but whatever he received (as gifts etc), he distributed it among the poor and needy. His one such character was described by his wife, Sayyida Khadijah as:

“You earn for have-nots”

In the hadith under discussion, Sayyida Aisha says that she and Rasulallah (SAWS) lived in such a small room and she had to bend her knees to make space for Rasulallah to prostrate. Further, as narrated by Sayyida Aisha during those days the houses used to be without lights.

Lessons from the Hadith

1. The world is but an ordinary abode, one should live an austere life.

2. The Salaah during night (i.e., Tahajjud) is a supreme asset of a believer and he should never leave it.

Cont’d on page 22

The Last Word

Syed Iqbal Zaheer

Scholars of Islam have always maintained that when *`aql* (intellect) clashes with *naql* (revelation), then *naql* should be given an unchallengeable position. Indeed, *`aql* should never be allowed to clash with *naql*. That would mean treating them on par, equal footing. But rather, *`aql* has to be kept one level below, well suppressed, and *naql* always on top, controlling it, guiding it.

But with the onslaught of *`aql* in the modern times (actually it is *nafs*), it gained precedence over *naql*.

This was the making of modern science. We say 'modern' because humans developed science in previous epochs too. But that science, although quite advanced even by modern standards, remained subservient to revelation. Modern science on the other hand, invented such technological tools, produced such gadgets and utilities in such numbers and at such great pace, that it conquered the hearts, and the humans decided to give revelation the option to retire from active life.

Gradually, science captured the minds and imaginations to such extent that it became a religion. Whatever it said, or its spokesmen (the scientists) said, was revelation, the new Bible; but in sharp contrast to the old Bible, this new Bible was invincible and infallible.

Consequently, science changed almost every concept held as true by the humans since times immemorial. One of them was the concept held about mind and heart. Science said assertively that the heart was nothing more than a pumping machine. Its job is to supply blood to the body. It expands to accept incoming blood, and contracts to pump it out. It has no other function and all ideas about it as the "the seat of emotional, intellectual and volitional life, and the center of all moral and spiritual functions" are traditional, mythical, and so, wrong.

The scientific findings were that it is actually the brain which is the seat of emotional, intellectual, and volitional life. It is the brain, and not the heart, that is the center of all moral and spiritual functions.

To facilitate a basic understanding of the brain, the following lines should help: The brain is endowed with a special type of cell. They are called neurons. Some 100 billion neurons in the brain control and direct the activities of the entire body, including those of the heart. The heart-beats of the heart,



follow instructions sent across by the mind.

The above is a simple medical illustration of the human brain. (Courtesy, <http://phototakeusa.com/>).

Different parts (known as lobes) perform different functions viz., speech control; skilled movement; voluntary movement; sensation; sensory interpretation, speech interpretation, visual interpretation, hearing etc.

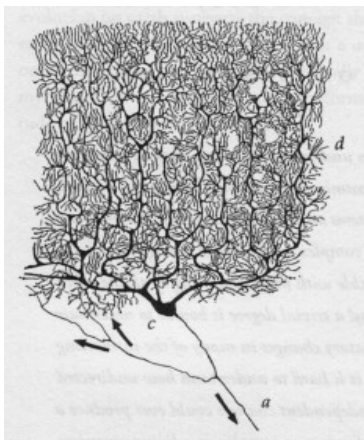
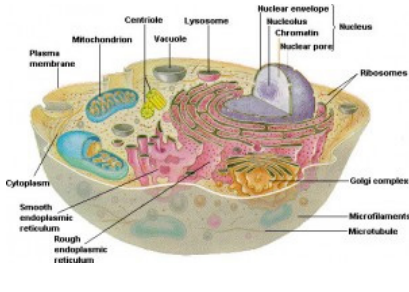
The above is of course a simple illustration. The brain is primarily for receiving, analyzing, and processing data, and then sending out commands. Millions of data is received every minute and processed. How exactly the brain processes them is not fully understood. But a slightly deeper look into its physical make-up will reveal the novelties.

Like the bricks of a building, the human body's smallest unit is called a cell. It is not visible to the naked eye. There are about 100 trillions of them in an average person. They come in different sizes and shapes. But most look something like the illustration below. (Source: <http://people.eku.edu/>)

Cut into half, the above is a common human cell. We shall not go into any further details.

The illustration is here for comparison with the brain cells.

Within the brain, there happen to be a very different kind of cells. Known as Neurons, they are drastically different in size, shape and functions from cells in other parts of the body,



or even from other 90% of the cells in the brain itself. (Courtesy: Nature's Destiny, by Michael Denton, Free Press, 1998, p. 322)

Illustrated above is a single neuron (also called nerve cell) – one of the three kinds of which the brain is composed.

As seen above, it has a cell body (c), an axon (a), and dendrites (d). The dendrites receive signals from other nerve cells and transmit to the nerve cell body where the data is processed. (They are the input channels). The axons carry the nerve impulses from the nerve cell body to other nerve cells. (They are the output channels). All the billions of cells in the brain are interconnected.

The cell body (c) is like any other cell. It can be compared to a super-computer. It is 0.025 mm thick, and like other cells has a nucleus, mitochondria, Golgi complex, etc. The axon (a) can be a meter long. Some axons are as long as tall a person is: the neuron body is located in the brain while the axon is in the toe. The dendrites (d) are always short and a mere 0.001 mm thick.

As stated above, the neurons in an average brain number 100 billion (10¹¹). They make a staggering total of 10¹⁵ connections with other cells. They are electrically excitable, and transmit information by electrochemical signaling. As thought by the scientists, they are also found in the spinal cord and the nerve and ganglia of the peripheral nervous system.

However, as against scientific findings, for thousands of years humans have believed that the heart is the seat of emotions. "Follow your heart," they would say, if you were dithering over something. Or, "I have a feeling in my heart that this won't work." Or, they say about a kind man, "A man of soft heart." Even a scientist would say, "I love my profession from the bottom of my heart."

Several statements of the Prophet (SAWS) also accorded the same status to the heart. He would supplicate in words:

"O turner of hearts, affirm my heart in Your

religion.”

He also supplicated in words,

“(O Allah), Guide my heart.”

But, in the light of modern science, how could he have supplicated in those words? Isn't the mind which sees, hears, contemplates, weighs down the arguments, and then accepts or rejects? Would it not be proper to seek from Allah that the 'mind' be guided? After all, the heart does not think!

The Prophet (SAWS) also reported about himself that when he was a little boy, a few non-humans had seized him, cut open his breast, taken out the heart, removed something from it, and cast it away. Then they washed the heart with Zamzam and placed it back. Should the angels not have rather cleansed the brain?

The Qur'an also left no room about the central function of the heart. It said (64: 11):

“And, whosoever believes in Allah, He guides his heart.”

It said that the heart plays the central role in accepting or rejecting religious truths. It said (50: 37):

“In that is a reminder for him who has a heart.”

It also asserted that the heart is the organ where spiritual diseases are located. It said about the hypocrites (2: 10):

“There is a disease in their hearts.”

It asserted this fact for no less than 12 times.

The Qur'an not only gave the prime place to the heart in matters involving religion, but also attributed thought process to it. It said (7: 179):

“They have hearts whereby they do not understand.”

All the above goes against scientific findings.

What made it difficult is that not once did the Qur'an refer to the mind or the brain, although humankind knew of its existence and the Arabs referred to an idiot as “dameegh” from which the Urdu word “dimaagh” has been borrowed.

Even if there was room in the above usages to interpret as referring to “the seat of all emotional, intellectual and volitional life, and the center of all moral and spiritual functions – residing somewhere in the human body,” a famous Prophetic tradition has been difficult to reconcile with modern science.

It says,

“Lo. Within the body is a piece of flesh which, if it is ordered, the whole body is ordered and when it is disordered, the whole body is disordered. Lo. It is the heart.”

By identifying the heart as a piece of flesh, this hadith apparently makes a strong case for the heart as placed in the breast; although, to be accurate, since the Prophet (SAWS) did not use the word 'breast' but 'the body,' there is room for saying that the allusion could either be to the heart in the breast, or, alternatively, to another piece of flesh, somewhere else in the body.

But the Qur'an narrowed the location of the 'heart' of its usage by placing it in the breast. It said (22: 45):

“It is not the eyes that go blind but the hearts that are in the breasts that go blind.”

Thus, the 'heart' of the Qur'an and Prophetic statements is narrowed down to its existence within the breast.

The above of course completely contradicted science.

But here comes the surprise of the century. The Qur'an and Hadith stand vindicated. The heart has its own brain, complete with neurons, dendrites, axons, memory, thought processes, data handlers, and rest of the neuron paraphernalia.

Back in 60s neurophysiologists had discovered a neural pathway and mechanism whereby input from the heart to the brain could 'inhibit' or 'facilitate' the brain's electrical activity. It was discovered that the heart is the most powerful generator of rhythmic information patterns in the human body. The conclusion was that as a critical nodal point in many of the body's inter-

acting systems, the heart is uniquely positioned as a powerful entry point into the communication network that connects body, mind, emotions, and spirit. (<http://www.heartmath.org/>)

Amazingly, the neurons of the nervous system of the heart, numbering some 40,000, group together to form what could be called the 'brains' of the heart. On the one hand they regulate and control cardiac functions of the heart, while, on the other, are responsible for functions like learning, memory (both short and long-term) and even 'feel' and 'sense.'

Indeed, in some respects, the heart seems to be more powerful than the brain. Its electrical field is 60 times greater in amplitude than the electrical activity generated by the brain, and the magnetic field produced by the heart is more than 5,000 times greater in strength than the field generated by the brain. It is so strong that it can be detected with the help of magnetometers from the distance of a few meters from the body. This opens up the possibility of heart-to-heart transfer of information through heart-brain synchronization of two people when they interact.

After two decades of research, it is now firmly established that the brain in the head is not the only brain in the body. There are at least two others, one in the heart and another in the gut. (Thus, it turns out that to say, "I have a gut feeling" is perfectly scientific). In fact, the gut has many more neurons (about 100 million) but the brain in the heart seems to control higher human senses, perceptions, emotions and feelings. It can also 'remember' feelings associated with other people and alter the heart rhythm when people meet with each other. Thus, feelings such as of love, hatred, etc. reside precisely in the heart.

By 1991 research had advanced and for the first time the idea of "heart brain" was introduced by the scientists. By now it is firmly

established that the heart has its own intrinsic nervous system that operates and processes information independently of the brain or the nervous system.

The specialists of this newest scientific discipline are called Neurocardiologists. They have discovered a profound communication link between the heart and the brain. And, what is surprising, they have discovered that although communications take place from both directions, more information is sent across by the heart to the brain than the other way round. The messages from the heart are sent to the brain through several pathways to an area called the 'medulla,' located in the stem of the brain.

This relatively new area on ongoing research is releasing study results almost weekly. The Institute of Heart Math has now published photographs of neurons in the heart—some taken with a confocal microscope. Researchers call these neurons "the little brain in the heart."

The heart is not merely a mass of muscles pumping out blood. It constantly communicates with the brain and rest of the body using neurons, biochemicals, blood pressure waves, and electricity. It has its own nervous system impacting on information processing of the brain.

So, once again, the Qur'an and Sunnah have the last word. Naql has precedence over 'aql. And the Prophetic guidance in matters confusing, whether allowed or not in Islam was,

"Ask your heart"

What pricks your heart as something "not so good," is sin.

"Since emotional processes can work faster than the mind, it takes a power stronger than the mind to bend perception, override emotional circuitry, and provide us with instinctive feeling instead. It takes the power of the heart."

- Doc Childre, founder, Institute of HeartMath

60-65 percent of cells are neural cells and not muscle cells as previously thought.

YMD-Nob-11

Make it a Part of Life

Mawlānā Muhammad Saleem Dhorat

Wudū is not only a means of external cleanliness, it is also a means of internal purification. As well as removing al-hadath al-asghar (the impurity that arises when wudū is broken) it also purifies the soul and the heart and assists the nafs through the lowly stage of ammāriyyah, through lawwāmiyyah, towards itmi'nān, the stage of perfection.

To fully appreciate how wudū contributes towards this internal cleansing we need to understand that our hearts are corrupted or rectified by our actions, and that our actions come into existence through the function of four parts of the body: the face, head (mind), hands and feet. There is a process by which an action normally comes into existence:

1. First, the inclination to do or not do a particular action is born. This happens by coming face to face with and seeing something, for that is how we understand something to be attractive or repulsive. It is possible for this inclination to arise straight away or at some future time after the encounter.

2. Next, the mind weighs up whether to undertake the action or leave it.

3. Thereafter the feet move one towards doing it or avoiding it, and the arms and hands reach out to accomplish it, or deflect it.

So, as a rule, a human uses these four parts of the body in order to acquire or avoid something.

If these four parts of the body are blessed, through the action of wudū, they will incline towards blessed things; if they are left unclean, they will incline towards filthy things. By washing the face, arms and feet and doing masah of the head in wudū we increase both their power of attraction towards goodness and their power to repel evil.

Therefore, we should do wudū as frequently as we can and try to remain in a state of wudū at all times. Wudū is one of the weapons Allah has given believers to ward off the insidious whispers of Shaytān. Washing the face frequently will mean that the eyes will be inclined towards goodness and disinclined to evil. Doing masah often will mean that if confronted with temptation, the mind will decide against it, and when encountering goodness it will decide to acquire it. As the hands and feet – the servants of the mind – are also washed frequently they will support and obey the mind. This is why it has always been the habit of the sulahā (pious predecessors) to remain in the state of wudū at all times. They not only do wudū for salāh or tilāwah, but renew it whenever it breaks.

A special effort should be made to also retire to sleep in the state of wudū. a drat Shaykh Mawlānā Muhammad Zakariyyā (ra) explains that doing wudū before sleeping wards off bad dreams and Shaytānī whispers during the night, and if combined with the recital of Āyat-ul-Kursī before sleeping, then all the better.

Tahiyyat-ul-Wudū

We should also make a habit of performing two raka'āt of Tahiyyat-ul-Wudū after completing wudū, as long as it is not a makrūh time to offer salāh and there is enough time before the fard salāh. After Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam returned from mi'rāj he asked Bilāl (RA), "O Bilāl! Tell me in which of the actions you have done in Islām you have the most hope of reward, for truly, I heard the sound of your footsteps ahead of me in Jannah?"

Bilāl (RA) replied, "I have done no action that I have more hope in than that whenever I do wudū, any time in the day or night, I perform as much salāh with that wudū as Allah has ordained for me." (Al-Bukhārī)

Attentiveness During Wudū

To derive the greatest benefit from wudū we must do it with understanding, concentration and attentiveness. When Imām Zayn-ul-Ābidīn (ra) (the son of Husayn ibn 'Alī (RA)) used to sit down to do wudū, his demeanour would change and he would turn pale. Once, someone asked the cause of the change and he explained that when commencing wudū the realisation would dawn that it is time to stand in the court of the Almighty, and thus his heart would be weighed down by a sense of awe at the Greatness and Majesty of Allah.

Our pious predecessors would do wudū with the realisation that they were about to present themselves in the court of the Almighty. They would start preparing for salāh up to an hour beforehand, and utter beautiful supplications during the various stages of wudū, remaining

mindful of Him from beginning to end. They would enter the masjid with that attentiveness, offer Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid and the sunnah salāh and then sit in anticipation of the fard salāh, neither looking this way nor that, completely engrossed in the remembrance of Allah.

Imagine the connection with the Almighty they would have established when they would finally stand for the fard salāh and say Allāhu Akbar! Shaykh Fadl-ur-Rahmān Ganjmurādābādī (ra) used to say that when placing his forehead on the ground in sajdah, he would feel like never lifting it up again, and he would feel he had placed his head in the lap of Allah, and Allah was stroking his head with affection. That is why when our pious predecessors would finish salāh they would not feel like leaving the masjid.

It is sad to say that our condition is very different. When the time for salāh approaches we rush through wudū and rush to offer salāh, which we regard as a burdensome duty. Even while doing wudū, our minds are occupied with worldly matters, or we chat and laugh. And after salāh we rush out of the masjid.

May Allah instead grant us the ability to follow in the footsteps of our pious predecessors by giving wudū an important place in our lives, and doing it frequently and with attentiveness.

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-tion of tanabuz bil-alqab means that if a person committed a sin or performed an evil deed from which he repented and mended his ways, it is unlawful for anyone to call him by denigrating names, such as thief, an adulterer, a drunkard or any such name. The Prophet (SAWS) is reported to have said: "Anyone who denigrates a Muslim who has committed a sin of which he has repented, Allah takes it upon Himself that He will get the person to commit the very same sin and expose him to embarrassment and humiliation in this world and in the Hereafter [Qurtubi].

HISTORY

WHAT IS GIVES

Dr. Ovamir Anjum

THE GREAT INDIAN Islamic scholar and historian Abu Al-Hasan Ali Nadwi observes, like other sages of Islam have before, that Islam, being the last and universal religion of God, has a unique history of internal revival, reform and self-rejuvenation.

God sent the message of Islam at a chosen moment in the development of human history where the technological, scientific and intellectual understanding of humanity as a whole was reaching a stage of final maturation and ripening. Instead of geographically confined nations and tribal systems which all received their own messengers from Allah, the humanity was now ripe for one, universal, perfected and final message of Allah.

The development of the Islamic Ummah in history was amazingly rapid. It was full of trials and tribulations and encounters with other cultures and religious systems. As a result, the final message of Allah was embodied in a civilization that was enriched by all the great civilizations of the world. Within the first century of its birth, Islam spread across half the known and majority of the civilized world of that time. As different people became Muslims or came under the rule of Islam, the scholars and thinkers of Islam

came from increasingly diverse regions, thus enriching the flowering and protection of Islamic scholarship and tradition with their own cultural strengths. The contributions of the Persians in bureaucracy and culture, the Hindus in mathematics, the Greeks in logic, the Turks in military and architecture fields, just to name a few, all became sources of strength of Islam. On the other hand, the previous philosophical and religious systems of the new lands both challenged and influenced the Muslim scholars and thinkers. All these factors make the history of Islam extremely fast moving, diverse and filled with conflicts, debates and upheavals. Each of these experiences, however, also helped it mature and develop.

Whenever the Ummah of Islam faced a new danger, internal or external, Allah raised among the Muslims scholars, leaders and groups who protected the true Din of Allah and revived it in its true, pristine form. This ubiquitous phenomenon is known to the historian as revivalism or *tajdid*.

The Ummah of Islam, with its preserved source-texts (the Quran and the Hadith), scholarship and legacy, has survived all its enemies only because of the special divine arrangements.

In history, this protection and guidance of Allah has been actualized in the form of the rise of great scholars and leaders, fields of scholarship like the sciences of the Quran, of Hadith, of jurisprudence and its principles, the preservation of the Arabic language and so on.

Today, the Muslim Ummah faces great challenges from all sides. But an observer of Islamic history recognizes that the situation is neither new nor hopeless: in fact, these trials and challenges are part of God's plan to take the Ummah of Islam and the message of Islam up to a new level of strength and recognition in this world.

To learn Islamic history is to inquire how Allah's ways have worked and his will carried out at the hands of myriads of individuals and groups and how His promises have come true. To look at history Islamically is to keep an eye on the moral, spiritual and ethical dimensions of all episodes in history, however big or small. This is precisely why the Quran makes learning history in some ways an act of faith and a source of wisdom.

WHY LEARN HISTORY: Reasons from the Quran

Just as the food we eat constitutes our bodies, our history constitutes our minds. Our ideas, concepts, sentiments, and preferences, in short, what makes us human, is largely a result of our past experiences. Individuals, peoples, institutions, or nations, all acquire their particular nature or identity primarily because of their unique histories. We cannot know ourselves without knowing where we have been and come from. Not knowing where we come from leaves us without our sense of self-hood. Loss of identity leaves us without a purpose, like a ship without destination, at the mercy of merciless winds. This loss of identity has been mentioned in the Quran as a punishment from Allah:

Do not be like those who forgot Allah, so Allah made them forget themselves. [59:19]

People who forget who they were may forget who they ought to be. This lead to self-de-

ceit and arrogance. Allah reminds every human being again and again of his or her individual 'history,' to shake them up from their disbelief and arrogance:

Was he not a drop of semen? Then a sticky mass, so Allah created and proportioned him [75:37-38], and

Does man not see that We created him from a drop of sperm, but he grew up to be an open belligerent.[Surat Yasin, 36:77]

In Surat Al-Fil and Surat Quraysh, Allah reminds the people of Quraysh of his favors upon them in the past, encouraging them to learn moral lessons from their history:

Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the People of the Elephant? [105:1] And For the accustomed security of the Quraysh...

Let them worship the Lord of this House, Who has fed them [saving them] from hunger and made them safe [saving them] from fear. [106:1-4]

Allah repeatedly commands Muslims in the Quran to observe, consider, and reflect upon the lessons from the history of bygone nations. Instructing the Muslims in moral and spiritual history of the earlier nations seems to be one of the major emphases of the Quran. The fact that the majority of Allah's Final Message consists of stories of moral struggle of earlier peoples is an indication of the significance of learning history, and learning it with the right perspective of seeking lessons. Following are a few lessons that can be drawn from the Qur'anic perspective on history.

Universality of lessons

The lessons from the rise or fall of any community in the past are valid for all humanity, for there are some unalterable, universal laws or principles that apply to all nations depending on their specific conditions. The Quran calls these laws the Sunan (established ways of dealing) of Allah:

For you shall not find any alteration in the way

(Sunna) of Allah; and you shall not find any change in the way of Allah. [35:43]

Moral-Spiritual Interpretation

While modern historians focus on different dimensions of history and offer different bases for the interpretation of history based on their respective belief systems, the basis of Qur'anic storytelling is emphatically moral and spiritual. In other words, Allah demands of us to look first and foremost at the moral aspects of a nation's history. Nations fall, for example, not due primarily to economic failures, but due to the moral-spiritual failure to properly dispense economic justice based on the correct belief in and obedience to Allah. In Surat Al-Araf, after relating several stories of encounter between the truthful prophets of Allah and their disbelieving people, Allah summarizes the lessons of these stories by saying:

If only the people of the towns had believed and feared [Allah], We should indeed have opened out to them (All kinds of) blessings from heaven and earth; but they rejected (the truth), so We seized them for their misdeeds. [7:96]

Learning Moral Lessons from History is an Obligation

The cause of the downfall of nations one after the other in the aforementioned verse [7:96] is that they neglected the moral lessons of the history of their forefathers, and thought that the same does not apply to them:

Whenever We sent a prophet to a town, We took up its people in suffering and adversity, in order that they might learn humility. Then We changed their suffering into prosperity, until they grew and multiplied, and began to say: "Our fathers (too) were touched by suffering and affluence. "... then We took them by surprise, and they did not perceive. [7:94-95]

History is the Best Way to Teach and Caution

The Quran could have been a book of ab-

stract theories of laws that govern societies, or simply a list of do's and don'ts. But the fact that our Creator, the Most Wise, has chosen story telling as a chief means to caution and education the humankind necessarily means that humans have a propensity to learn from other's examples. Successful teachers and preachers of Islam always have a good grasp of history.

History of All Humanity is Relevant

By Islamic history, we often mean the history of Muslims. But the Quran is full of history of rebellious nations. We conclude that so long as the framework of history is Islamic (i.e., moral-spiritual), no part of human history is irrelevant to the believers.

History Repeats Itself

It has become a cliché that history repeats itself. This is true inasmuch as all struggles of good and evil are bound by the universal Sunan (principles) established by Allah. In order to show the Muslim Ummah its potential failings, the Quran focuses on the moral stories of the Children of Israel, for they were, as some scholars have observed, 'the ex-Muslim Ummah.' The Prophet has explicitly informed us that the Muslim Ummah will follow in the footsteps of their sister community, the Children of Israel:

What great brethren the Children of Israel are to you if they possess all the vices and you all the virtues. No, by Allah, you will follow their path [very closely] like the length of a sandal strap. (Al-Tabari in his commentary on verses 5:44-47)

Systematic Learning of the Science of History is a Requisite

The Quran, the Final Message of Allah, is a book of guidance and contains all foundational principles and general moral exhortations that will suffice all those who seek Allah till the Day of Judgment. The Quran is not a book of history, and the way it tells stories presumes that the audience has some knowledge of the history being

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Dilapidating Our Home to Develop Others

A woman once travelled from Iraq to lay a request before ‘Umar bin ‘Abdil ‘Azeez (ra). When she arrived at his home, she called out, “Is there a doorkeeper guarding Ameerul Mu’mineen?” After a few moments, she heard someone reply from within the home, “There is no doorkeeper, enter if you so wish.” The woman therefore entered and found Faatimah bintu ‘Abdil Malik (ra) seated in the home, holding cotton which she was spinning. The woman greeted Faatimah (ra) with salaam to which she replied and again invited her into the home. The woman accepted the invitation and ventured further into the home until she took a seat. She then looked around the home and was surprised to find that her sight did not fall on any item of value.

She thereafter said, “I only came to this ruined home so that I can build my own home (i.e. I have come for financial assistance).” Hearing the woman’s statement, Faatimah (ra) replied, “It is the building of homes of people such as yourself that has caused this home to be dilapidated.”

Just then, ‘Umar bin ‘Abdil ‘Azeez (ra) entered the yard and went to a well in the corner where he drew a few buckets of water which he poured on the clay that was near the home, all the while frequently glancing at Faatimah (ra). Noticing this, the woman admonished Faatimah (ra) saying, “Veil and conceal yourself from this worker for I see him constantly glancing at you!” To this, Faatimah (ra) answered, “He is

not a worker! He is Ameerul Mu’mineen!”

‘Umar bin ‘Abdil ‘Azeez (ra) then proceeded to the door of the home and entered after making salaam. On entering, he immediately proceeded to his musalla to perform salaah. When he was done, he asked Faatimah (ra) who the woman was and served her with some grapes.

When she had eaten, ‘Umar bin ‘Abdil ‘Azeez (ra) asked her what need had brought her to his door. The woman replied, “I am a woman from Iraq and I have five daughters who are all unproductive and unmarried. I have come to ask you to please show your kindness to them.” Hearing this, ‘Umar bin ‘Abdil ‘Azeez (ra) began to cry out of sympathy. He then seized his inkpot and some paper and began to write instructions to the Governor of Iraq. Addressing the woman, he said, “What is the name of your eldest daughter?” The woman provided him with the name which he wrote on the paper, together with a stipulated allowance which the Governor was to provide her. Seeing this, the woman was delighted and exclaimed, “Alhamdulillah!” ‘Umar bin ‘Abdil ‘Azeez (ra) thereafter enquired regarding the names of the second, third and fourth daughters and similarly wrote instructions to the Governor to provide them with allowances. Through this all, the woman continued to exclaim “Alhamdulillah!” in delight. When the stipulation was made for the fourth daughter, the woman’s delight reached its peak and she began to thank and praise ‘Umar bin ‘Abdil ‘Azeez

(ra) profusely.

The instant the woman thanked and praised him, ‘Umar bin ‘Abdil ‘Azeez (ra) held up his hand and said, “So long as you praised Allah, Who is worthy of all praise, I continued to stipulate allowances for your daughters. Now that you have praised me, I will not stipulate anything for your fifth daughter. Instead, instruct your four daughters to spend on her from their own allowance.”

The woman departed for Iraq with the precious letter to the Governor in her possession. When she reached Iraq and handed the letter to the Governor, he cried bitterly and exclaimed, “May Allah Ta‘ala shower his mercy on the one who wrote this letter!” The woman immediately realized that something had happened to ‘Umar bin ‘Abdil ‘Azeez (ra) and asked, “Has he passed away?” When the Governor replied in the affirmative, she began to wail and cry, convinced that her daughters would never receive the allowance that ‘Umar bin ‘Abdil ‘Azeez (ra) had promised. Noticing her distress, the Governor consoled her saying, “Do not worry. Under no

circumstances will I reject his instructions.” Saying this, he made the necessary arrangements for their allowance. (Seerat ‘Umar bin ‘Abdil ‘Azeez libni ‘Abdil Hakam pg. 149)

Lessons

1. Faatimah bintu ‘Abdil Malik (ra), despite being the wife of the ruler and being raised in luxury, did not consider it below her dignity to fulfill the household chores with her own hands. Hence the woman from Iraq found her spinning cotton.

2. Faatimah (ra) had once lived the ‘ultimate’ life. To please Allah Ta‘ala and her husband, however, she forwent her luxuries and adopted a life of simplicity. If she could make the change from extravagance to simplicity, we can, at the very least, live with moderation and stop being wasteful and extravagant.

3. Such was the generosity of Faatimah (ra) that she allowed her own home to be emptied so that the homes of others could be filled.

source: alhaadi

Cont’d from page 11

3. It is permissible for a man to offer Salaah facing towards his wife. Some people believe that if a woman, a donkey or a dog passes in front of a Musalli, his Salaah becomes invalid. Allaama Ayni refutes this belief but says that these may become the cause of losing concentration. A woman is known for distracting one’s concentration, a donkey makes noise, and there is apprehension of a bite from a dog.

4. Touching a woman does not spoil one’s Wudu as Rasulullah (SAWS) pushed the legs of Aisha in order to make space for prostration.

5. It is permissible to offer Salaah on bedding.

6. It is permissible to offer Salaah in darkness as long as one does not turn away from Qibla.

Cont’d from page 20

told. If the Quraysh, for instance, did not know something about the history of Aad, Thamud and the destruction of the army of Abraham and his Elephants, the Qur’anic references to these incidents would make little sense to them. The Quran provides the moral interpretation to the human drama of life and gives many instructive examples. But it is an obligation of Muslims to learn as accurately and objectively as possible the facts of history so the Qur’anic principles could be correctly applied, since fulfilling the requisites of an obligation is an obligation itself. To learn objectively the science of history, therefore, is part of Islamic obligation upon the Muslim Ummah, without which they cannot fully benefit from the message of the Quran.

Passing Through Opposites

The Challenge Of The Believer

Ahmad Haleem

It belongs to the imperfection of everything human that man can only attain his desire by passing through its opposite. — Søren Kierkegaard

HAVE YOU EVER walked against a tide, felt the briny water resist your every man-made volition? Have you ever climbed a hill? What about a winding stair? Have you ever burned your skin? Has ice cream ever frozen the nerves of your palate? In your whole life, have you ever passed through opposites?

Man is, in his imperfect way, at odds with the world around him. Gravitation weighs him down and resists his desire to transcend the surface of the earth. Ocean's beat his limbs back against the shore. Ice and fire threaten his tender tissue with necrosis and he flees. The hardness of stony mountains halts the human continuum and grafts human generations to parallel yet different geographies. In this way, Spanish generations, for example, have been grafted parallel to French generations.

With all this tremendous resistance, some would argue that it is impossible to resist such tremendous physical odds. How could one resist the earth's powerful attraction and ascend into the heavens? How is it possible to bite

granite and pass through unwavering hearts of mountains? How could it be that such a willowy frame as man's forges through pounding oceanic surfs? How did the Eskimo brave the tundra and Arabs traverse the desert? All accounts of man thus far are contrary to reason, polar in nature. It is one big story of opposites passing through opposites.

The truth is that people desired hard enough to pass through opposite substances. When people desired practical metals like iron and precious metals like gold, they passed through mountains. When we were weary of moons made of cheese and desired to see space, we fought gravity and traveled to the moon and back. When we wanted fish, we built boats, divorced the shores and went out to sea. When the days grew short and ponds froze, we gathered lamb's fleece and avian down around our pale necks.

In each human account of discovery, ingenuity, and success, we see a recurring pattern of man having to pass through opposition in order to capture his quarry. Being an imperfect, visceral creation, we are bound to this pattern of existence as long as we occupy this earth of ours.

But we must ask ourselves, specifically as be-

believing men and women, the following twofold question: What kind of opposite are we seeking to pass and for what item are we attempting this miraculous passage? Is it through the mountain's heart that we are passing and is our intent to mine its hidden metals or perhaps its good salts? Is it through the ocean that we are passing and is it our intent to capture its submarine pearls? What medium are we passing through and with what intent?

Particularly, for the believing woman and man, the challenge is being able to pass through the right opposites and for the right reasons. Pushing through waves and finding fish and pearls are beautiful resistances, but we must ask whether this should be the extent of our worldly passaging.

Being Muslims, our dominating desire should be to follow in the footsteps of the Prophet, and to endeavor toward the mercy of Allah. And even though it is difficult, we should be able to overcome those obstacles that seem to provide no way of passage through, no means of resistance. Traveling to the moon and resisting gravity is no great feat at all when we think of traversing the illusive trappings of this dimension that we call the universe and transcending to Heaven, if Allah wills! Now that is a feat worth pushing for, struggling for.

And yet the terrestrial tide is strong. It sometimes seems to me like so many odds are stacked up against the good Muslim. To achieve a Muslim desire, it feels like one must not only pass through the challenges of the earth, but also pass through challenges presented by other human beings.

Now here is the unique Muslim challenge. Hour after hour and day after day, the Muslim is challenged by seemingly attractive things (i.e., things that present themselves as wholesome in nature).

The landscape presented to the Muslim is riddled with opposites, and we must recognize this fact. Having friends of the opposite gender

is viewed as a healthy relationship when really it is often a devastating, heartbreaking dynamic.

Not that I am a big proponent of platitudes, but the global society we live in also articulates the idea that war is peace and peace is war (ironically, many a Nobel Peace Prize has been ceremoniously awarded to warmongers). In our modern society, values are just plain mixed up and morality is tampered with by big business and big personalities (i.e., celebrities).

We must learn that it is often the case that our goodly, Muslim desires (e.g. following the Sunnah, attempting to gain Allah's mercy, and ultimately the Garden) often lie in recognizing the dunya for what it is: A panorama of opposites.

We must be able to see things for what they really are and understand that by choosing the seemingly more turbulent path we are, in fact, regularly choosing the smoother, calmer path.

So society may make a certain avenue seem to be bad and impenetrable when, in fact, it is good and penetrable. For the good Muslim, it is understood that while we are all about belief in the Unseen, what the world presents to us we must view with wary skepticism, and recognize that sometimes the road to Heaven is passed through the opposite way that society instructs us to take.

Respect

Rasulullah (SAWS) said: "Verily it is from the dictates of the respect for Allah to respect a Muslim of advanced age, to respect a haafiz of the Zuraan who does neither exceed its bounds nor does he disregard it, and to respect a just ruler."

(Sunan Abi Dawood)

Speaking to You

Farid Ansari

WHAT IS THE Quran? What is this Book that has shaken to its core, not only the world, but also the whole of the universe?

Muslim men of learning unanimously define the Quran as “the Speech of Allah.” They, however, differ over the features and dimensions of this definition. We will content ourselves, in our attitude toward these scholarly differences, with the position of the partisans of truth from the righteous generations.

The most important thing that concerns us here is to elucidate the *asl* (the origin) upon which the hearts and minds of the entire Ummah converge: The Quran is the Speech of Allah. This is a paramount truth.

But is it not good for us to reflect on this a little more?

Allah is the Creator of the entire universe. Can anyone fire up his or her fancy to grasp the massive expanse of this universe? Surely none, save its Creator, has the mind to do this.

The limited human intellect can in no way fully apprehend the colossal dimensions of the universe—what with this Earth and its hidden secrets! What with the storied stages of space! What with these stars, planets, and their orbits! What with this heaven above us and its constellations! What with these seven heavens stacked one above the other! It is a wonder amid an unfathomable unknown that defies all measure, not even by millions of light years!

Where are you located now? Ask yourself. You are but a teeny-tiny speck even in the space of this “limited” worldly heaven.

Yet your Lord—your Creator, the Creator of every thing, the One who encompasses all things in His knowledge and power, this Glorious and Majestic Lord—has decided, in His mercy, to talk to you.

He talked to you through the Quran, the speech of the Lord of the Worlds.

Do you realize what you are hearing? Allah, the Exalted, the Lord of the Universe, speaks to you!

Listen, then, to the inspiration sent to you.

[20:13]

What is this conscience, this heart that reflects on this great reality and does not bow itself down to the ground before Allah, the One, the Irresistible—this heart swinging between fear and hope? Only a heart hewn of rock could fail to bow itself down.

What! Astaghfirullah! I seek Allah’s forgiveness for this, for rocks do fear Allah.

Yet still your hearts hardened after all this, and they became like stones—or even harder; for assuredly there are some stones from which rivers burst forth! And, indeed, some of them split asunder, so that water issues from them! And some of them fall down in fear of Allah! And never is Allah at all heedless of what you do. [2:74]

Had We sent this Quran down upon a mountain, you would have most surely seen it utterly humbled, breaking apart from fear of Allah.

And such are the parables We set forth for all people, so that they may reflect. [59:21]

The parables that Allah sets forth are real, not metaphorical. Have you not read what Allah said about Prophet David?

Indeed, We subjugated the very mountains to give due exaltation to Allah with him—in the evenings and at sunrise—and the birds in assembly. Each would resort to Him in penitence.

[38:18-19]

And what of Allah's statement?

And when [Moses'] Lord manifested Himself to the mountain, He made it crumble. And Moses fell down in a swoon. Then when he recovered his senses, he said: "Glory be to You! I repent to you, and I am the foremost to believe [in You]."

[7:143].

Doubting the Doubtless

The Speech of Allah is the Speech of the Lord of the Universe. And when Allah speaks, He speaks from on high, for He is the Most High, the Supreme! He is above all things, comprehending all things in knowledge and power. Reflect then on His words:

Most surely, they are, indeed, mired in doubt about the promised Meeting of their Lord.

Most surely, He is, indeed, all-encompassing of all things! [41:54]

Thus the Quran encompasses the entire universe and talks about many of its marvels. In reference to the majesty of the Quran, Allah says:

But no, indeed! I do swear by the positions of the stars! And it is, most surely, a great oath, if only you were to know [its magnitude].

Indeed, this is, most surely, a gracious Quran in a Book, well preserved [in Heaven]. No one touches it, but the purified. It is [a Revelation] sent down from the Lord of All the Worlds.

Then is this the [Heavenly] discourse that you would slight? And do you render [due thanks to Allah for] your provision by belying [His promise of Resurrection]? [56:75-82]

Glory be to You our Lord! None of Your signs we Belie!

Such is the Quran! The Speech of the One who encompasses the positions of the stars, which He creates, commands, and overmasters. He sent down a Book reflecting all these immense realities. He sent it down to Muhammad œ , after He had prepared him for the massive message:

For We shall most surely cast upon you a weighty word. [73:5]

Thus when the disbelievers belied the Quran, Allah dismissed the shallowness of their thought, the deficiency of their perception, and the feebleness of their foresight, which rendered them incapable of comprehending the cosmic dimension of the Quran deeply immersed in the oceans of the Unseen:

And they say [about the Quran]: "Tales of the ancients, which he has sought to write down.

Thus are they dictated to him early morning and late afternoon." Say [O Prophet]: "The One who alone knows every secret in the heavens and the earth has most surely sent it down. Indeed, ever is He all-forgiving, mercy-giving."

[25:5-6]

What a singularly profound response! And truly the Quran speaks to so much of the mystery in the heavens and the earth:

Now truly, indeed, We have varied in this Quran something of every kind of illustration for the good of all people. Yet of all things man is most argumentative. [18:54]

And also:

We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in themselves—until it becomes utterly clear to them that this Quran is indeed, the divine truth. Is it not sufficient that your Lord Himself is witness over all things? [Sûrat

No wonder, then, that the reciter of the Quran is linked to the world of the Unseen—and rewarded with a Criterion (a *Furqân*) from the Unseen. Each letter earns its reciter *hasana*, a good deed, and each *hasana* is multiplied tenfold.

In language, the letter is but a phonetic unit that, by itself, confers no linguistic meaning. Yes, in language. But in the Quran, even the letter has meaning—and I do not mean a deviant esoteric meaning, but an upright, divine meaning. For is it not Allah who has uttered it? This is how it becomes meaningful. Ibn Mas'ûd narrated that the Prophet (SAWS) said:

He who recites a single letter from the Quran receives a hasana, and each hasana is multiplied to tenfold. I do not say Alif Lâm Mîm is one letter. Rather Alif is a letter. Lâm is a letter.

And Mîm is a letter. (Tirmidhi)

It is for this reason that the diligent reciter of the Quran attains such lofty stations in the Garden of Delight. The Prophet (SAWS) said:

It will be said to the reciter of the Quran [on the Day of Judgment]: 'Recite and ascend! Just as you used to recite in worldly life! For most surely your [Heavenly] station is at the last verse of the Quran you recited before death.

(Ahmed)

Another version of this hadîth reads:

The Quran comes on the Day of Judgment and says: 'O Allah! Adorn the Quran reciter.' So Allah places the crown of dignity on the reciter's head. Then the Quran says: 'O Allah! "Dignify him more,' whereupon Allah bedecks him with the mantle of distinction. Then the Quran says: 'O Allah. Be pleased with him.' So Allah declares His pleasure with him and says: 'Recite and rise!' (Tirmidhi)

Such is the Bounty of Allah,. He bestows it upon whomever He so wills. For Allah alone is the Possessor of the Magnificent Bounty. [62:4]

Rejoicing for the Rope of Allah

Allah has spoken. Allah still speaks. He is the One that hears and sees. Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted with all things. To Him belong the Most Beautiful Names, the Loftiest Attributes. We believe in all these Attributes and affirm them as did the pious early Muslims, neither divesting them of their meaning, interpreting them, nor anthropomorphizing by way of them.

Allah has spoken. The Quran is part of His speech. And He sent it exclusively to this honorable Ummah: The Ummah of Muhammad œ. The Quran serves as a conjoining link between the slaves and their Lord, a sturdy bond, extending rope-like between Heaven and Earth. Its upper end is in Hand of Allah. Its lower end is in the hands of whomever chooses to hold it from His righteous slaves.

The Prophet (SAWS) said in this regard: *The Book of Allah is the rope of Allah that conjoins Heaven and Earth. (Tabarâni)*

The Prophet (SAWS) also said addressing his Companions:

Rejoice! Rejoice! Bear you not witness that none save Allah is worthy of worship, and that I am the Messenger of Allah?" "Yes, indeed!" they answered. He said to them: "This Quran is a cord. Its upper end is in the Hand of Allah. The lower end is in your hands. So hold fast to it! For if you do this, never shall you stray or perish!"

The Message from the Lord of the Worlds has reached you, O human being! So do not think it is not intended for you exclusively. Do not say: "I am but a single, insignificant individual amid billions of human beings." No! No!

The Quran is a communication from the Lord of the Worlds. It comprises all the properties of the speech of the Divine. It is majestic and perfect. I mean to say that this divine communication is addressed—at one and the same time—to the group and to the individual per-

son. *You.* Allah monitors and gauges the feelings of communities and individuals:

Say [to them O Prophet]: Whether you conceal what is in your breast or you disclose it, Allah knows it. And He knows what is in the heavens and what is in the earth. For Allah is powerful over all things. [3:29]

Glory be to Allah! The part does not distract Him from the whole, and the reverse is true, as well. Otherwise, what is the meaning and perfection of rubûbiyya, Lordship? Just as He is able to answer the supplications of each and every single caller, every seeker of relief, of every sort of creature, those of them living on the earth, or those of them living beneath its soil, or in the depths of seas, or in the heavenly orbits—to both these and those, He responds –concurrently– while He is above and beyond time and space! Not a thing distracts Him from any other thing. The dominion is His completely, as is the praise. And He is over all things powerful.

Thus by this same logic, read the Quran. You will find that the Quran addresses you – personally. Beware! Lest you miss this meaning. Remember that the Quran is the speech of Allah. Then reflect. Then open your eyes and see! Allah says:

Will they not then earnestly seek to understand the Quran? Or is it rather that on some hearts there are their own [self-imposed]locks? [47:24]

He says, as well:

Will they not, then, reflect on [the meaning of] the Quran? Had it been from other than Allah, they would most surely have found in it much discrepancy. [4:82]

Such is the Quran: The Great Cosmic Book. Read it and Reflect.

For behind each and every one of its words lies a spectacular wisdom, a heavenly or earthly secret, a truth about life or destiny, a key to your own soul in its obligatory march toward its end.

So reflect, reflect.

In the Quran, there is all that you want, all that you need.

Do you not ardently desire to be of the People of Allah? Then befriend the Quran. Apply yourself assiduously to it. And if you do, you will most surely be of His people. The Prophet ﷺ said:

Allah has His own people from among His creations: The People of the Quran are the People of Allah, His intimate company. [Ahmad, Ibn Mâjah, Al-Hâkim]

A Heart of Gold

The Sahaabi of the Prophet (SAWS), Qays bin Sa'd bin Ubaadah (RAA), once fell ill. While recovering from the illness, he realized that none of his friends had come to visit him. On enquiry, he learned that they were reluctant to visit him due to the fact that they all owed him money (and were thus embarrassed or afraid that he would ask them to repay the loan).

When he heard this, Qays bin Sa'd (RAA) spontaneously said, "May Allah disgrace the wealth that deters my brothers from visiting me!" He thereafter instructed a person to go out and announce that he had absolved all his debtors of the amounts they owed him.

After the announcement was made, so many visitors arrived to visit him that by nightfall, his doorstep had collapsed due to the weight of the people climbing to his door! (Siraajul Mulook pg. 155)

Halaal Livelihood and Barakah

Maulana Yunus Patel

To do business is not haraam. In fact it is very virtuous. Rasulallah (SAWS) said:

“To earn a halaal (lawful) livelihood is compulsory after the completion of other faraa'idh (obligatory duties).”

In another hadeeth, Rasulallah (SAWS) said: *“Glad tidings (of Jannah) are for that person whose income is pure (halaal), his interior and exterior is good and he does not cause any harm to people. Glad tidings (of Jannah) are for that person who practices on his knowledge, spends his excess wealth (on the needy) and does not engage in useless talk.” (Tabraani)*

So earning a halaal livelihood is 100% deen ...but certainly not the way we are doing it at present. ...What are we really chasing after? Our rizq (sustenance) is muqaddar (predestined) and it is chasing after us. Allah wants to give it to us easily but we want it the hard way; so it comes like that. ...And if a person falls into the traps of haraam and into unlawful and deceptive dealings, the barakah is all lost and problems prevail.

Employees

Nowadays we work seven days a week, from 7 to 7. If we don't work like this, then we make our staff slog in this manner. We have no mercy, no sympathy and no compassion for them – no thought that they have families – parents, wife

and children – and they need to spend some quality time with their families, that they too are human and need some rest.

We like to spend time with our families on weekends. We take a rest and even go on holidays. But when it comes to our staff, then sadly we do not like the same for them. Even if they are sick, they are forced to come to work because we do not allow them sick leave or we will cut their pay. Such injustices and grievances are brought to our attention time and again. ...This is due to the greed we have. This is the result of hubbud-dunya. Rasulallah (SAWS) said:

“The love of the world is the root of all evil.” [Mishkaat]

The hadeeth shareef mentions clearly: “Whoever has faith in Allah and the Last Day, then let him meet his end while he treats people the way he would love to be treated.” [Al-Mu'jamul Ka-beer]

In another hadeeth, Rasulallah (SAWS) said: *“None of you will believe until you love for your brother what you love for yourself.” [Bukhari, Muslim]*

Even if you open 24/7 – 365 days a year, only what is destined for you, will reach you. It will not be anything more! It will not be a single cent more than what Allah has already decreed. May Allah grant us the understanding because we

have lost all perspective of the Aakhirah (Hereafter) in our pursuit for dunya. It is an obsession. In the process, we make zulm on our employees. Often it is the curses of the mazloom that sometimes tears our lives apart, because Allah promises to assist the oppressed.

In addition to giving other advice, Rasulullah (SAWS) would caution his Companions who were deputed as governors:

“Fear the pleading prayer of a wronged one (mazloom), for there is no veil between it and Allah.”

There is a proverb: “Beware of the sigh of the oppressed when they pray; Divine acceptance readily greets them.”

Sukoon and Barakah

Change the pattern of work. Work in the obedience of Allah and you, yourself, will see how much of sukoon (tranquility) and barakah (blessings) you will experience. All the stress, anxiety and depression will disappear. At present, we ourselves are suppressing and oppressing our souls. The physical body has got a soul. The soul wants to rise and wants to connect with Allah and become a true lover of Allah and Rasulullah (SAWS). We are suppressing and oppressing that soul. When there is suppression and oppression of the soul, depression will then follow.

All the money of dunya cannot buy the happiness and peace of the heart and soul. When we give the soul its sustenance and nourishment, which is taqwa, then Allah gives sukoon. Even in the midst of problems, we will still have sukoon – like a rose blooming amidst thorns. Then there will be no evidence needed to see the sukoon in the person’s life.

Learn Business the Islamic Way

Hazrat ‘Umar (RA) would not allow a person to engage in any business or trade until he had learnt the rules and regulations which governs business in Islam. Learn the Islamic way of doing trade and business. Make the business

sharee‘ah compliant.

Look at how the Sahaabah-e-Kiraam (RAA) did business. It was neither a diversion from Allah nor from deen. Their tijaarah was ‘ibaadah. Their business and trade brought so much of barakah. As an example: Hazrat ‘Abdur Rahmaan bin ‘Auf (RA), who is also one of the ‘Asharah Mubasharah [the ten companions of the Prophet (SAWS) who were given the glad tidings of Paradise in one sitting], would say, in explaining how successful Allah had made him: “If I lift a stone, I find gold and silver beneath it!”

They did not pursue the dunya. No. They pursued the Aakhirah and sought the pleasure of Allah in everything they did. So Allah made their sustenance extremely easy and blessed them in their earnings, because their business and trade was in accordance to the demands of sharee‘ah.

In any effort to earn dunya, deen should never be considered as secondary, or be given the back seat – so to say. Deen should always take precedence and be our main concern. Our work and activities of dunya must conform to deen and sharee‘ah. Deen is the nucleus, or the heart and soul of our lives.

May Allah inspire our hearts in His obedience, grant us the understanding of the reality of this worldly life and the realization that we need to pursue the Aakhirah instead of the dunya – since it is the Aakhirah that is everlasting while the dunya will be left behind very soon. May Allah grant us the taufeeq of ‘amal.

“The intelligent one is he who suppresses his desires and practises for what is after death, and the foolish one is he who makes his nafs follow its desires and (he) places (baseless) hope on Allah.” (Tirmizi)

Abu'l-Hasan al-Ash'ari

Born in 873 AD in Basra of parents who were themselves 'Ulama'. His forefather was the famous Abu Musa al-Ash'ari (ra), the great Companion, who was one of the two mediators appointed after the Battle of Siffin by Ali ibn Abi Talib RA and Mu'awiya (RA). The other mediator was Amr ibn al-Aas (RA).

His father Shaykh Isma'il was a renowned alim of his time and he took special care to give the right type of education to his brilliant son in Qur'an, Hadith, fiqh, usul, ad-din, etc. from his early boyhood. The father took special care to educate the boy on the lines recommended by the Shari'a and he asked him not to get in touch with the Mu'tazilite group of scholars who were very active in those days and who were spreading their controversial ideas.

But Abu'l-Hasan frustrated all attempts of his father, went to Baghdad and became a disciple of the principal advocate of the Mu'tazilite group, Abu'l-Wahhab al-Jubba'i. Under his guidance he learnt philosophy, logic, and literature as well, and soon made his name as a good speaker and philosopher. But the Mu'tazilites had already, by that time, lost the power and patronage that they had previously enjoyed, and they were being hunted out by the enraged theologians and other Muslim scholars, who bore an inborn hatred towards the sect.

The Mu'tazilites used to interpret the Qur'an and Hadith in a purely rationalistic way. They were known as 'free thinkers' and they were influenced by the old Greek and other an-

cient philosophers from whom they borrowed freely when propounding their theories. In the name of the development of Islamic philosophy and Arabic literature, they borrowed so freely and indiscriminately from these alien sources that they lost touch with the Qur'an and Sunnah. They started interpreting the Qur'an in a new way and held that the Qur'an was a 'created' thing and that the Miraj took place in dream or by the imagination. In short, these Mu'tazilites by their resort to 'free thinking' corrupted the roots of Islam from within and they convinced the luxury-loving Abbasid Khalifs, particularly Khalif al-Ma'mun, to accept their idea of the interpretation of the Qur'an.

Since he was earlier trained by the Mu'tazilites, he knew their weaknesses and sensitive issues and thus he started replying to their points one after another. He introduced the science of al-Kalam that is scholastic theology which saved the Muslim nation from the cursed rationalism of the Mu'tazilites.

Soon he became widely acclaimed as a scholar throughout the Muslim world. The 'Ulama' all accepted him as their leader in their fight against the Mu'tazilites.

Abu'l-Hasan al-Ash'ari was a born genius. He wrote more than one hundred books on different subjects of Islam. Of these, his Maqalat al-Islamiyya is the greatest book on 'ilm al-Kalam. In this book, he compared Greek philosophy with Islamic philosophy and pointed out those things which are irrelevant to the require-

ments of Islam and made 'ilm al-Kalam the basis of our philosophy. In this respect, he is the father of 'ilm al-Kalam or Islamic theology, and Imam al-Ghazzali is its perfecter.

The ideas and teachings of Abu'l-Hasan al-Ash'ari made their impact in the East. In its initial stage the Ash'ari school of thought was strongly opposed by the Mu'tazilites, but gradually, with the strong support it received from the khalifate, particularly from men like Nizamul-Mulk and Imam al-Ghazzali, his doctrine became very popular all over the Muslim world. Al-Ash'ari and al-Ghazzali were criticised for their strong opposition to the study of science and philosophy for the sake of study only, without considering the need to study religion and the Shari'a. But it is they who saved the Muslim nation from the onslaught of the Mu'tazilites, who were taking the nation to secularism.

THE MESSAGE

Allaah only gives increase to this Ummah on account of its being grateful to Allaah and its being grateful to Allaah is not achieved except by worshipping Him in the precise manner requested by Him in what He has sent down for us as Guidance.

"If you are grateful I will give you increase." [Ibraheem 14:7] Increase in sustenance, wealth, resources and other such things of benefit and blessing.

This great blessing of success was not taken away except by the deviation of the Muslims from the clear and straight path, in terms of belief and action, by Allaah's permission and design, to gain mastery in the land and to take from us our nobility, strength, resources and knowledge. It is not correct that our present condition is due to weakness and lack of technology and resources. That is a symptom not a cause and the wise doctor's concern is to remove the cause.

The Messenger (SAWS) said: "When you deal in 'Eenah' transactions (to sell something for a price to be paid at a later date, then to buy it back for a lower price to be paid immediately), when you take hold of the tails of cows, when you content yourself with agriculture...; Allaah will cover you with humiliation and will not lift this humiliation, until you return to your Deen" [Abu Daawood, Bayhaqee]

He (SAWS) also said: "(Consider) a town safe and secure to which its means of subsistence come in abundance from every quarter. But it became ungrateful (Allah made it to taste the utmost degree of hunger and fear because of what they used to do).

This is how we lose our safety and security from Allaah. When we become ungrateful to Allaah and when we do not worship Him in the manner He has prescribed and requested but rather stick to our own ways and inventions, when we abandon the Sunnah of the Messenger (SAWS) in our lives and homes.

~ Taken from the book 'Shaytaan, his ways of Misleading' ~

Learning from Others

Dr. Jamal Badawi

Host: Could the Prophet have learned the Quran from some other source?

Jamal Badawi:

First of all, a part of the answer was covered in a previous program. This assumption implies that the Prophet did not tell the truth when he said that the Quran came from Allah. We have already analyzed from the study of his own character, recognition of his own enemy that this is not the type of person who falsifies things. If the Prophet learned the Quran or the teachings of Islam from somebody then who is that person and in what context. First of all, the Prophet was unlettered and did not know how to read or write until he died. Second, we know that he was raised in a community that was predominantly pagan and was not a community that believed in some form of monotheism. Indeed if one were to be skeptical he should be less skeptical towards Prophet Muhammad (SAWS).

For example the case of Moses and Jesus (SAWS). Moses was raised in the midst of the house of a Pharaoh during civilization and a time of religious discussions. So if anyone was skeptical they could say that Moses might have learned from someone. Jesus was raised in Jerusalem in the heart of Hebrew tradition, learned all and according to the New Testament he engaged in lots of discussions with the Jewish

scholars. I am not saying that there is any reason to doubt them because in the Quran both Moses and Jesus are considered to be Prophets of Allah who received revelation from God. I am simply saying that if there were any questions raised they are least applicable to the case of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) who was unlettered and raised in a community who was raised in an environment which was not monotheistic in orientation.

Host: Were there any exceptions to the predominantly pagan community around the Prophet?

Jamal Badawi:

In any community there are exceptions. We can not say 100% of the people in that community were pagan. Again we are talking about the predominant atmosphere and culture. Some historians refer to a minor exception who don't really have any significance. They refer to a few individuals who used to call themselves Hanafies, people who did not participate in the mode of idol worship and who had a different way of contemplating but they did not constitute a religion as they did not have a church, scriptures or a set of teachings. This is far from having any relevance to the comprehensive coverage of the Quran. This is far from the various

aspects of the Quran and the various aspects of history, creed, the hereafter, life, economic, social and political aspects of life. There is nothing that can really be correlated, and there is no historical record of what they believed in. It was just a vague feeling of monotheism which might have trickled down to them from the days of Abraham and Ishmael.

In addition one can not eliminate the fact that there were already a few individuals who may not have necessarily been pagans but who may have had Christians backgrounds. Those few people as historians tell us were not necessarily a predominant culture and did not mingle much with the other Qurishites. These people were not allowed to reside near the Kaaba because it was the most holy shrine even among pagans so they kept them on the outskirts of the city of Mecca. In addition they were among the illiterate people from mostly served as workers and servant but not people who had any influence on the culture and they didn't have a level of learning where they could have possibly been responsible. This kind of caliber could not possibly explain the comprehensiveness coverage and wisdom of the Quran. In fact the Quran refers to some of the unfounded accusations that the Pagans made with a very strong rebuttal.

Host: What does the Quran have to say and the nature of the rebuttals in the Quran?

Jamal Badawi:

Some of those who were really desperate to discredit the Prophet wanted to find a way to disclaim the divine source of the Quran. They started throwing out all kinds of accusations one of which was to make doubt in the case that they could not prove that the Quran was not from a divine source. They said that he learned from a Christian Roman blacksmith. This person was real and he used to work in his shop, the Prophet used to be curious about his work and would watch the blacksmith work. Aside from the fact that it is unreasonable to assume that in

the midsts of fire, banging and smoke that the Prophet would learn from an illiterate person all the high concepts of monotheism that we find in the Quran and all its content which organizes human life and the concepts which relate to the creator. This is totally irrelevant.

The Quran puts it very nicely and shows an important logical flow for this accusation which appears in Surah (16:103) "We know indeed that they say, "It is a man that teaches him." The tongue of him they wickedly point to is notably foreign, while this is Arabic, pure and clear." This fellow actually only knew broken Arabic, so how could a person with that foreign tongue with broken Arabic be the teacher of the Prophet in producing a Book which challenged the most eloquent of the eloquent to produce something similar to it. It is similar to saying that a Chinese immigrant in Britain was the one who taught Shakespeare. This just doesn't make any sense at all. These are examples of people who were known not to be pagan but there was obviously no grounds to relate that the source of the Quran was from them.

Host: Were there other Jews or Christians in Mecca who were perhaps more learned and to what extent was the Prophet in contact with these people?

Jamal Badawi:

Yes there was a notable case which was known and recorded in history; an old man who was blind towards the end of his life by the name of Waraqa Ibn Nowfal. He was a cousin of Khadijah, the wife of the Prophet (SAWS). Some historians say that even though he comes from Arabic descent that he became Christian at one point in his life and had some knowledge of the New Testament. However, the extent of his acquaintance with the Prophet was very rare. In fact, there are only two incidents that we have information on where there were encounters between this man and the Prophet. One was when Waraqa was walking around the Kaaba he en-

countered Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) and affectionately kissed his head. The other occasion is an incident which is very well documented and is his encounter with Prophet Muhammad after Prophet Muhammad received the first revelation. Neither of these give any indication of there being a connection in terms to the source of revelation.

Basically when Prophet Muhammad was meditating in the Cave of Hira outside of Mecca and the angel of revelation, Gabriel, came to him he came down from the cave trembling and afraid. As we said in the previous program he never anticipated or hoped to be a prophet and he was not sure whether this was a genuine angel of revelation or whether it was an evil spirit. He rushed trembling to his wife Khadijah who took him to her relative Waraqa who asked him a number of questions as to what exactly happened. He concluded clearly that “By the name of God this is the same angel of revelation that came before” and he told Khadijah that her husband was going to be a very important person and will have great influence. Some historians say that he said that this was the long awaited Prophet and that he gave a prophecy that he would be driven out of your home and that if this happens he would give him all the support that he could. So the Prophet asked him if they were going to drive him out of his home and he replied that there was no prophet in history who came with a teaching similar to what he was about to receive except that he was apposed and driven out by opposition and persecutors. After this it was said that Waraqa died shortly after their meeting. The most trustworthy resources indicate that he died early and we know that the revelation of the Quran came to the Prophet over a period of 23 years. They conclude that he died in the first three years and the Quran continued to be revealed for an additional 20 years after his death as he was advanced in age and blind. Again looking at it this way there was not any connection.

Host: Could the Prophet have learned some of the religious teachings from other Jews and Christians from other parts of the Arabian peninsula?

Jamal Badawi

This is a matter of history and geography. Yes, there were some Christian tribes living in Najran which was in what we call today Yemen which is to the south of Mecca. To the north there were some Jewish tribes in Yathrim which is known as Medina. It is interesting to notice that there is absolutely no record in history about Prophet Muhammad traveling to Najran (Yemen) before or after Prophethood. Second, with respect to the Jews living in Medina first the Prophet was not recorded to have gone to Medina before Prophethood except when he was six years old and in the company of his mother in order to visit his relatives Bani Najjar and to let the Prophet visit the grave of his father because his father died while he was still in his mother’s womb. I don’t think that we can say that at the age of six that a person during a visit to Medina learned all the Judaeo concepts and the information from The Old Testament. Furthermore we are talking about a place which is hundreds of kilometers away from Mecca. This is not a one hour flight, nor is it a matter of 4-5 hours of driving on a super highway but we are talking about a place in the context of the transportation of the 7th century. We are talking about traveling on a camel or horse for a matter of weeks. I really don’t see a connection at all between the existence of those communities far from the immediate environment where the Prophet was located.

Host: None Muslim writers claim that there were cases when the the Prophet was engaged in discussions with learned Jews and Christians, including priests: is this not true?

Jamal Badawi:

It is true. Sometimes however timing is not mentioned. Timing in this case is crucial. The

emphasis of my answers in the previous questions was that before he was commissioned as a Prophet and started to receive the revelation of the Quran did he have any contact? This makes a big difference because yes there were incidents and the Quran refers to the dialogue between the Prophet and the Jewish and Christian religious leaders. This took place long after he became a Prophet and long after the Quran was revealed. Many of these discussions took place in Medina after the Prophet migrated. We know that the Prophet was in Mecca for 13 years before the migration. These discussions took place more than 13 years after the beginning of his mission as the Prophet of God. The timing is crucial. How could he learn from them if he already if he already taught so much and had so many revelations?

The second thing is the context where he met with them. Did he meet with them as a student learning from them or as a teacher and corrector of some of the notions they used to claim? History tells us that he met them as a Prophet, to invite them to the path of Islam and to indicate to them and correct some of the dogmas that they introduced into the pure monotheistic faiths of Allah. The Quran refers to his example of the correction some of the dogmas that they introduced into the pure monotheistic faith of Allah. The Quran refers to his corrections of notions of trinity etc. Third, many of those religious people ended up following him and becoming his students. History tell us of very learned people like Abd Allah Ibn Salam, Kaab Alahbar, Salman who were known to have good knowledge. In fact the Quran in (5:83) makes reference that when they heard the Prophet recite their eyes flowed with tears and they believed in the Prophet "And when they listen to the revelation received by the Messenger, thou wilt see their eyes overflowing with tears, for they recognize the truth: they pray: "Our Lord! we believe; write us down among the witnesses." So yes they had this meeting but the context and

capacity is quite revealing.

Host: Because Prophet Muhammad traveled extensively as a part of his trade in early years, could he have learned it through his travels outside of Arabia?

Jamal Badawi:

The first correction to this common statement is that those who used to travel extensively are the Qurayshites in general and the Quran makes reference to that in a Surah called Quraysh. The Qurayshites used to make a trip in the summer which would go north to Syria and in the Winter they would go south to Yaman. That generalization about Arabs who were involved in trade doesn't mean that the Prophet was involved in these travels too. In fact historically we know of two trips that he took outside of the Arabian Peninsula made by the Prophet (SAWS). One was when he was nine (no older than 12) years of age in the company of his uncle Abi Talib when they went to Syria for trade on a caravan. Obviously one can not say that at that age he learned something that people spend their whole lives learning. In one of the stories narrated in Al Tirmidhi that on the way one Christian monk, Al Bahira, saw strange signs about the Prophet, asked him some questions and warned his uncle that he was the anticipated long awaited Prophet and to be careful because some people may hurt him if they knew and advised him to go back as soon as possible. Of course it is obvious that in a caravan passing a monk and resting from the heat of the sun that a 9 year old boy would learn all the secrets of theology and come up with something that really has enlightened the hearts of hundreds of millions of people is too grand an assumption to make.

The second record of his travel was when he was 25 years old, after he married Khadijah, and he was responsible for her caravan. Imagine a person traveling with the responsibility of a whole caravan, busy buying, selling, negotiating, packing and traveling could have learned something

that would result in faith of the magnitude of Islam and as comprehensive as the Quran. Not only is this kind of claim historically unjustified but it can not even be justified on logical grounds. There are additional reasons as the life of the Prophet was open to all. The Quran testifies to that fact in Surah 49 and that he did not even have sufficient privacy in his own home because were around him at all times and were trying to record each and every that he says. They tried to observe his action as a model for them. This was the case so how could it be that he was secretly meeting with a teacher while people were around him and in his presence at all times. How could he have escaped the open eyes that were around him all the time? These eyes included who were independent and had strong personalities like Abu Bakr and Uthman.

How could such wise people believe in him and sacrifice their property and lives by putting it on the line in defense of what he teaches while they know that he is not telling the truth. How could it be that a person who was his enemy like Omar who was strong and wise and was an enemy and turned around and offered his life and put it on the line in defense of Islam and what he saw as the truth. His enemies who kept their eyes open for any flaw or mistake or anything that may have justified their accusations that he was a false prophet or that he claimed something that he in reality learned from someone else. If there were such a teacher they would have made a big fuss about it and said that not only is he learning from others but they would have revealed his name and that they caught him learning from him. What kind of teacher let the Prophet learn all of that without claiming the credit for himself. It would have had to be an invisible teacher who evaded the other teachers. His teacher was no other than Gabriel the Angel of revelation. This is the only viable explanation.

It Switched off the Mind

We are repeatedly asked in the Quraan Majeed to ponder and reflect, as this is the means to recognize Allah Ta'ala. However, the science and technology that man uses to bring pleasure and entertainment into his life, has unfortunately taken over his heart and switched off his mind, hence his ability to ponder and reflect has been paralyzed.

Let us take the example of the television. It feeds us with a swift contamination of pictures. Before we can decide to even think about an image, there is another eye-catching picture to distract us. Thus the television does not even permit us to ponder or to reflect. It implants images containing hidden messages into our heart, and not concepts based on sound reasoning into our mind.

Thus the heart seems to be alive with feelings and emotions whereas the mind is paralyzed and the intelligence is switched off. This in turn provides the fertile ground in which man is moulded and programmed to react and move in a particular course and direction. Hence we find very few people in the world who truly think for themselves, let alone pondering and reflecting. Their thoughts and perceptions come through the mould shaped by the television. Thus he then looks at and understands everything through the "eyes" and "mind" of the TV propaganda.

Predestination or Free Choice

Misbah Rafiq

Are we torn between two seemingly extreme viewpoints!

Destiny and choice are often seen as two antithetical concepts, it is an either destiny or choice debate - which resonates our philosophical and at times commonsensical discussions. We think that the two are incompatible to each other, say for instance I can be either destined to be a professional writer or I choose to be one. But by no means I think of blending the two apparently extreme forces of destiny and choice to explain my fortunes or misfortunes in life, whatever the case maybe.

However in this debate of either destiny or choice we forget some critical factors, especially the will-power of man and the important attributes of Allah being al-Aleem (The All Knowing), al-Qadeer (The All Powerful) and al-Hakeem (The All Wise).

It is actually the interplay of destiny, will power and choice along with these attributes of Allah that make our belief in destiny sensible to our limited intellect. As in our age we seem to be bent on being rational, to the extent we start questioning faith, realising little that rationality is both limited and flawed at times.

Anyhow let us first consider the first force-man's will-power, which answers the question 'If everything is going to happen as it is destined,

then how am I responsible for the actions I do, and how does Heaven and Hell make sense'? Allah (SWT) made man free in his will power. It is man who is independent in willing to choose good or bad, whether he is able to execute that choice or not is another question. But the crux is that he is given an independent will power which is actually what makes him accountable for his actions and sometimes even his thoughts and makes him worthy of Paradise or condemned to Hell fire. As the very famous Hadith goes, "Verily the actions are judged by their intentions". So it is far from truth that belief in destiny takes away a sense of personal responsibility for the 'intended' and 'voluntary' actions of a person. For instance, if a person intentionally harms another person, and then having even a little understanding of religion, he will not use his belief in destiny as a defence. Majority does not do it, so the people who say that belief in destiny takes away the sense of personal responsibility- use this for mere argument's sake. Notice that I selectively use the words 'intended' and 'voluntary' because what this belief in destiny does for explaining the involuntary things that happen in life is remarkable which will appear in the following text.

After the intention is made by the man, the power of Allah which is far superior than ours

helps answer the question ‘Is it that Allah’s plans depend on ours?’ Rather the case is that the power to execute actions is given to us by Allah. It becomes quite clear that without Allah’s supreme power we are not able to materialise our intended efforts, which implies that Allah’s Will is not subservient to ours rather the case is vice versa. Adam (AS)’s intention to eat the forbidden fruit was his but the power to execute that intention was given to him by Allah. So the attribute of being al-Qadeer, the All-Powerful shows the supremacy of Allah’s will over ours.

Now we are left with the point that how come our actions are written before we perform them, in other words it amounts to saying how come Allah knows our actions beforehand? But we are forgetting the fact that we are talking about our Creator, Allah- who created us, so it is logical to think that He knows His creation and owing to His perfect knowledge He wrote man’s destiny prior to his creation. It implies that Allah by His attribute of being al-Khabir knows that what a person will choose in a particular situation. Allah (SWT) says in His Holy Book: “Does He, who created, not know, while He is the Subtle, the Acquainted?”(Surah-Mulk-14). How amazing is the rhetoric of this verse! Allah says, does He not know who created? As it is not logical to assume that an inventor does not know his invention, likewise it is illogical to assume that Allah does not know His creation. In explaining this beautiful verse Imam Qurtubi lists six attributes of Allah pertaining to His divine knowledge, he writes Allah is al-Aleem which means that He has wide and generalised knowledge, then His being al-Khabir specifies His knowledge of something prior to its happening, moreover His being al-Hakeem specifies His having knowledge of subtleties of the things, further His being as-Shaheed specifies His knowledge of the hidden and the apparent, that means nothing is hidden from Allah, besides His being al-Hafiz specifies His knowledge which is not forgotten, lastly but not the least His being al-Muhsi spec-

ifies His abundance of knowledge that doesn’t overwhelm Him. It is simply amazing the way in which these nuances in the Divine Names of Allah provide a comprehensive view of Divine knowledge to a large extent.

We often say that a child, right at the time of his birth has his destiny written, so what is the point then? Here I would like to draw an analogy, I guess it is a crude one! Anyhow just to make the point, think of a teacher, who out of his experience makes prophecies about his students, for instance he says that Student A will become a scientist and Student B a rogue. If at all these prophecies come out to be true, does it mean that the teacher is responsible for the students fate. That sounds illogical! It is rather the experience of the teacher which is why the prophecies come out to be true. In the similar vein, when we say destiny is written, it means that Allah knows things beforehand, He gives us power to perform them, but the will to perform them is ours. However It is also to be considered what essentially is destiny? It is Allah’s perfect knowledge which encompasses past, present and future. So to question destiny, amounts to questioning Allah’s perfect knowledge.

Lastly I want to underscore the importance of this belief in destiny which forms the bases of our Iman (faith). Had this belief not been there, it simply meant no material for the critics or sceptics to criticise. But as Allah’s divine wisdom had it, this belief does wonders in coping with that part of our fate which falls ‘beyond our volition’. Any bad or bitter thing which we would like not to have happened, it is belief in destiny that that helps us overcome it. For a believer a loss of life, property or even health is something, he believes was destined to happen and it could not have happened otherwise, and he hopes to be compensated with something better as Allah promises His bondsmen. For a non believer it may ensue distorted and pessimistic thinking and eventually the result may be a depressed person.

Teaching Moral Lessons

Sheikh Abdul Wahhab Turayri

In Madinah, Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) used to set aside time every morning to teach his Companions. He was renowned for his eloquence and clarity of speech. He did not speak too quickly, and though his phrasing was precise, he did not speak slowly, or in fragments with lots of pauses. It was easy for everyone to follow what he said.

‘A’ishah described (RA) his way of speaking as follows: “Allah’s Messenger did not ramble on the way you do these days. His speech was clear and precise. Those who listened to him easily remembered what he said.” [Bukhari, Muslim]

Almost every day, he would sit in the mosque in Madinah with his Companions gathered around him. He would often start a discussion by posing a question. Once, he asked: “Might I inform you of the gravest of major sins?” When his Companions replied in the affirmative, he said: “The gravest of major sins are to associate partners in worship with Allah, to disrespect your parents, and to bear false witness.” [Bukhari]

Sometimes, he posed questions to open their eyes to some new idea or perspective that they had not thought of before. For instance, once he asked: “Do you know what it means to

be bankrupt?”

They replied that it means to possess neither money nor goods. He said: With respect to my followers, the one who is bankrupt is one who is brought forth on the day of judgment with prayers, fasts, and charity to his credit, but he had spoken ill of some people, falsely accused some people, misappropriated the wealth of others, and assaulted people or shed their blood. Those he had wronged will be compensated from his good deeds until he has no more to his credit. Then the remainder of those he had wronged will be compensated by having some of their sins placed on him. As a consequence, he is consigned to Hell. [Muslim]

Sometimes, he simply wanted to stimulate their minds. Once he asked: “Tell me which tree is like a Muslim. Its leaves do not scatter everywhere and it yields up its fruit on a regular basis.” His Companions suggested one desert tree after another, and each time the Prophet replied in the negative.

Then it occurred to ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar b. Al-Khattab (RA) that the tree in question might be the date palm. However, he was the youngest of the ten Companions in the Prophet’s company on that occasion, and his father

'Umar as well as Abu Bakr were also present, so he felt shy to speak. Then the Prophet said: "It is the date palm." [Bukhari, Muslim]

The Prophet (SAWS) would sometimes repeat a statement three times to emphasize its importance. For instance, once when enumerating the major sins, he came to the point where he said: "And beware of making false testimony; beware of bearing false witness." He began repeating it over and over again, until his Companions started to utter: "If he would only desist..." [Bukhari]

They were not saying this out of boredom, but out of anxiety and concern for the Prophet (SAWS), because they could see how much it was affecting him.

Sometimes, the Prophet (SAWS) took his Companions by surprise with a question in order to bring the discussion to a surprising conclusion. For instance, once he asked: "Who among you is fasting today?" This question took them off guard, since he had not even hinted to them earlier that they should fast on this day. Had he done so, they would have all been fasting.

They all sat silently for a while. Then Abu Bakr (RA) spoke up:

"I am fasting, O Messenger of Allah."

Then the Prophet asked:

"Who visited a sick person today?"

Again, they were all quite, until Abu Bakr (RA) again spoke up saying that he had done so.

Then he asked two further questions:

"Who followed a funeral procession today?"
and

"Who fed a poor person?"

Each question was met with silence until Abu Bakr (RA) spoke up admitting that he had done so.

Finally the Prophet (SAWS) said:

"Anyone who carries out these four deeds in a single day will enter Paradise." [Muslim]

Sometimes, the Prophet (SAWS) used drawings to illustrate his point. On one occasion, he drew a square on the ground. He then drew a straight line going through the middle of the square but emerging out of it at the top end. Then he drew other smaller lines coming from the edges of the square and pointing inwards towards the larger straight line. Then he asked his Companions:

"Do you know what this means?"

They replied: "Allah and His Messenger know best."

He said:

The line going through the middle of the box represents the human being. The other lines aiming towards it are the trials of life that come at him from all directions. If a person manages to avoid one of those trials, he will run into one of the others. The surrounding square is the lifespan that encompasses a person. The extension of the line outside the box represent his hopes. The person remains busy with those hopes, but the term of life comes to an end before they are fulfilled. [Bukhari]

The purpose of these daily gatherings in the mosque was to teach his Companions about Islam and provide them with moral lessons. However, it was not about lecturing or preaching. It is always a dynamic discussion; never a one-way exchange, and it was always thought-provoking.

God made the Hereafter an abode to reward his believing servants only because this world cannot contain what He wishes to bestow upon them and because He deemed their worth too high to reward them in a world without permanence. [Ibn Ata' Allah]

Expect the best from Allah

Jinan Bastaki

“Allah probably hates me. I am so bad; I always mess up. I don’t deserve any good from Allah, and as punishment, I probably will not be given success in my other endeavors.”

How many people have felt this way at some point? Sometimes, our sins weigh heavily on us. We recognize our mistakes but instead of turning back to Allah, we turn away. We feel that we must be so bad that even the All-Merciful will reject us. Other times, we do not see the fruits of our perseverance and believe that we will not be given what we have worked so hard for. Perhaps we do not even begin an endeavor, thinking there is no use.

Unfortunately, when we do this, we attribute human qualities to Allah. We act as if Allah has some grudge against us that will heal as soon as He punishes us or rejects one of our requests. We act as though Allah is just waiting for us to slip up and say “Ha! Caught you!” We assume that we have to “deserve” the mercy of Allah by being almost perfect. This sounds absurd when articulated, but our actions unfortunately indicate that we believe otherwise.

What does this thought process actually tell us about ourselves? It tells us that we did not really have hope in Him to begin with. Rather,

our hope was in what we believed to be our own good deeds or abilities. Once we slip up or feel that we do not have the strength to continue, we do not think well enough of Allah to believe that He will guide us through. We must understand that when we think well of Allah, that is what we will find.

Think well of Allah when embarking on something difficult, even if you fail

When the most beloved person to Allah, the Prophet (SAWS), was thinking of migrating to Madina, he started talking to all of the different tribes that came for Hajj in the hopes that one of them would accept Islam or at least offer the believers protection. He spoke to twenty-six different tribes and was rejected by all of them. Some of the tribes even cursed and mocked him. Let’s stop here. He made da`wah (calling to Islam) to twenty-six tribes. Can you imagine the feeling of being rejected by five? What would happen after ten rejected you? How low would your morale be? When would you have given up?

Finally, he met a few youth from Madina who believed in his message. He did not despair because he had a good opinion of Allah, which motivated him; he knew Allah would not leave

him .

Many people give up in the face of something seemingly impossible. Sometimes, we give up on an individual level: getting married, getting that job we want; sometimes it is on a global level, such as injustice in the Muslim world. But the point of the struggle is to realize who is in charge. It is Allah . Allah has told us that He is as His servant's think of Him. If we think well, then that is what we will find. If we do not, then that is what we will find. Your opinion should be that Allah is so Merciful that He will come to your aid.

What happens when we are faced with failure? When one does not get something, even if their intention was for the sake of Allah , they should not feel disheartened. You have a good opinion of Allah ; "failure" is just a minor setback. You need to be tested to strengthen your resolve. If you do not get that amazing job you want, know that Allah has saved something better for you. Only He knows what is best for you.

Think well of Allah when you sin

What about when we constantly slip-up and cannot leave a certain sin? For some of us, this makes us give up on ourselves; we believe we don't deserve any good from Allah. We have to remember that Allah is al-Wadud (the Most Loving). His Mercy overcomes His blame. It is not about deserving. If you thank Allah, He gives you more. It is not because we deserve more, it is because Allah is that Great. He is that Generous. Shaytan (the devil) makes us focus on how bad we are in order that we despair of Allah's mercy, when the Prophet (SAWS) taught us: "All the children of Adam constantly err, but the best of those who constantly err are those who constantly repent." [Tirmidhi]

The Prophet (SAWS) said that "One of the signs of excellence of one's worship is thinking well of Allah ." [Ahmad] This does not mean that we should not reflect on our state. Al-Hasan al-Basri said "A true believer is one who thinks

well of Allah and therefore does good, whereas the disobedient one thinks bad of Allah and therefore does bad." If we think well of Allah, no matter how bad we are, we also have hope that we can be better and thus we strive to do good deeds. If we think badly of Allah, we assume that He will never forgive us nor can He make us better; so we continue to sin. However, we should not make a mockery of this concept and deliberately sin, thinking Allah will forgive us anyway. One of the key principles of repentance is regret. If we do not truly regret the sin, and simply ask for forgiveness to have that sin erased, we are paying lip service. Remember, "You will only get what you intend." [Bukhari]

When we do wrong, let us feel guilty, but let us also flee to Allah. Have a good opinion of Allah. If you are sincere, He will forgive you. He is that forgiving. He is that Great. He is that Magnanimous. Even when we commit the same sin again and again and again, our good opinion of Allah should let us know that as long as we constantly strive against our nafs (lower self) and against that part of us that wants to indulge in that sin, we have already been forgiven. At the end of the day, it is shaytan who wants us to go to hell, not Allah. Allah tells us in the Qur'an:

"Allah wants to accept your repentance, but those who follow [their] passions want you to digress [into] a great deviation." (4:27)

Shaytan does not just want you to go to hell, but also wants to ensure you live in hell in this world. Just like he despaired, he wants you to despair. Our good opinion of Allah should never allow us to do that. Allah wants to accept your repentance, because your repenting is recognition of His Name al-Ghaffar (the One who constantly forgives).

Just as the Prophet (SAWS) told us that Allah is too gracious to turn away the hand that asks Him , He is also too Merciful to disappoint you and your good opinion of Him.

Think well of Allah when you are tested

Tests come to us in a myriad of ways. We have already discussed why tests happen in a previous post, so I will not discuss it too much here. We should just know that thinking well of Allah should make us look beyond the test. This test is something from Allah, and He wants to teach us, to purify us from sin, to strengthen us, and to bring us closer to Him. We do not have a cruel God; our God is the Most Merciful of those who show Mercy. When we approach our tests with that frame of mind, we cannot but gain from our experience, insha'Allah.

So what does it mean to think well of Allah ?

It means to take that step. When we mess up, even if we messed up in a major way, we return to Him. We return to Him recognizing that what we did was truly horrible, but we ask for His forgiveness because we know He is that forgiving, and that His Mercy encompasses everything. When we mess up again and again, and feel sick of ourselves, we return to Him with a sincere du'a (supplication) to help us stop, knowing that He will respond. It means having grand hopes and aspirations, and working towards them knowing that Allah "will not allow to be lost the reward of any who did well in deeds." (Qur'an, 18:30)

The Debt that can Never be Repaid

'Abdullah bin 'Umar (RA) was once performing tawaaf when he saw a man from Yemen who was carrying his mother on his back in tawaaf. As the man carried her, he was uttering the following

words of poetry:

I am her subservient camel

Although her conveyance may frighten and worry her, I will never cause her concern

Though I am carrying her (on my back), the period for which she carried me (in her womb) was longer

The man thereafter turned to Ibnu 'Umar (radhiyallahu 'anhuma) and asked, "Have I fulfilled the right of my mother (by carrying her in tawaaf)?" Ibnu 'Umar (RA) replied, "No! In fact, you have not even repaid her for one gasp she emitted (due to the pain of labor)." (Shu'abul Imaan)

The son of Husain (RA), 'Ali bin Husain (ra), who was also known as Zainul 'Aabideen (ra), was once asked, "You are a person who always ensures that he is obedient to his parents. Why is it that you then refrain from eating out of one utensil with your mother?" Zainul 'Aabideen (ra) replied, "I fear that my hand will reach for a morsel of food whereas my mother's gaze may have fallen on it and she may have wished it for herself. If I have to take a morsel which my mother wished for herself, I will be regarded as a disobedient son." ('Uyoonul Akhbaar vol. 3 pg. 97)

Lessons:

1. When the kindness and favor of the mother is such that it can never be repaid, then how shameless indeed is the person who causes his mother inconvenience!
2. Inconvenience to mothers can be caused in many ways; physical, mental, emotional, etc. The pious people of the past would exercise such caution in this regard, that they refrained from any action that could, in even the slightest manner, cause their parents disappointment.
3. When we are unable to repay our parents for their kindness, we should never ever make them feel that our service to them in their old age is a burden and a favor to them. Rather, always make them feel as if you are honored to have the chance to serve them.

Better, Try to See the Light

Khalid Baig?

Modern day Christianity and Judaism have been through a series of “reformation” processes. Over the centuries tens of thousands of “reformed churches” and “reformed synagogues” have been established throughout Europe and America. Many see this revision and update as a continuous process.

So, why not Islam?

This question is a perplexing one for those looking at Islam from the outside. Unfortunately for many, it brings rage rather than reflection. Some are driven to do whatever it takes to make it happen. It is a measure of the intensity of such desire that, today, any ignoramus with a Muslim sounding name can become instant celebrity by declaring that Qur’an needs to be updated or Shariah needs to be rethought. In fact during the Satanic Verses affairs, when the entire Muslim world had been outraged by the support for pure filth shown by all sorts of pundits, many of these “experts” were secretly thrilled that the moment had arrived. A professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Southern California informed the Los Angeles Times readers at that time that the big question the Muslim world was debating was: “Who had really authored the Qur’an.”

Such psychotic scholarship has also been

enlisted in all kinds of research projects as well as in secret plans by the U.N. and big powers to find ways of bringing “reform” to Islam. Some come disguised as friends. They appear to applaud Islam’s teachings on tolerance and compassion. Islam does preach tolerance for those outside its boundaries. At the same time it is also very sensitive about its own boundaries and would not allow them to be blurred in a haze of tolerance. Some point to the principles of Ijtihad in Islam. But they fail to realize that Ijtihad does not mean second-guessing the Qur’an, Sunnah or consensus of the companions. Then there are those who resort to ridiculing Muslims for lagging behind the times. When all else fails, they may simply try to order an abrogation of Shariah, as the U.N. is trying to do now under the banner of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Wasted efforts, all!

Their fight is with the Qur’an and they only need to turn to the Qur’an to get a response. Here it is, loud and clear:

“But when Our clear revelations are recited unto them, they who look not for the meeting with Us, say: ‘Bring us a Qur’an other than this, or change it.’ Say (O Muhammad): It is not for me to change it of my own accord. I can only follow that which is revealed unto me. Lo! If I

disobey my Lord I fear the retribution of an awful Day.” [Yunus 10:15]

If Qur’an could have been changed by worldly powers, it would have been changed long time ago. If it could be made controversial by secretly publishing and distributing corrupt versions, that would have been already done. But not an iota has changed in the Book that was revealed 1400 years ago. It is the only revealed book in the world that exists in the original language of its revelation. And if all the printed copies of it were to be destroyed today, the Book would remain for it is the only Book in the world that is memorized from cover to cover by millions upon millions of people.

And it is the only revealed book that begins with this claim:

“This is the Scripture whereof there is no doubt, a guidance unto those who ward off evil.”[Albaqarah 2:2]

There is no doubt that it is the Word of Allah. No doubt that it contains the ultimate truth. No doubt that it was sent through the last Messenger (SAWS) of Allah who also explained what it means. No doubt that all success and happiness and bliss lies in faithfully following its commands and all failure and sorrow and misery lies in rejecting it.

You either believe in this statement or you do not. There is no third option.

A Muslim, by definition, is the person who attests to the truth of this statement. He has received Allah’s Word through Allah’s Messenger (SAWS), and he, by force of conviction, submits to this revealed truth. In fact, he stands as a witness to the mankind to the truth of this message.

This witnessing is not meant to convert others, but only to deliver the Message, as a trust from Allah. The Message has been preserved precisely because no one is allowed to change it

to make it attractive to the would be believers. Muslims do not do in Rome as the Romans do, because then they will have Islam no more. They rise above their surroundings by submitting to the Word of Allah and invite the whole world to the same. Those who accept it do it for their own good; those who reject it do so at their own peril.

So, why is there no “reform” movement in Islam ala Christianity or Judaism? Because the latter lost their scriptures, Islam did not. Words of man replaced the words of God in their scriptures making the whole thing fallible. One can find hundreds of statements in the Bible that can be tested and found untrue. Or statements that contradict each other. There is not a single such instance in the Qur’an, and there will never be. Islam was never deformed that it should need reform. It is not dated that it should need to be updated. Its message is as true today as it was yesterday. All of its commands are as life giving today as they were yesterday and they will be tomorrow. It remains as the eternal beacon of light as humanity jumps from one extreme to the other in its ignorance.

Right and wrong are eternal. Definitions of good and evil have to be constant. Otherwise, they will lose all meaning. In a world of shifting standards of good, there is no good. It is a great blessing for humanity that Islam provides that constant.

If the entire world agrees that homosexuality is ok, Islam will still call it a great abomination. If the entire world agrees to destroy the institution of family, Islam will still be there to uphold it. If the entire world agrees that sickness is health and health is sickness, Islam will still be there to remove the confusion and safeguard health. You cannot ban light and legislate darkness. Better, try to see the light yourself.



Appeal

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