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

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Question.

My daughter is 9-year-old and studying in class 4. Her final exams are due. She is not willing to focus on her studies. We have done extensive tests etc as recommended by the doctor but all are well. She is an average child. We are worried in spite of helping her with the studies she is not coping with. She lacks attention and focus. She is easily distracted. When we pressurise her she back answers too of late.

Answer

We will always have concerns for our children for one reason or another, be it their health, their safety, their education..etc.. In this case, you are worried about her education particularly because she is having some problems with an attention which is making it difficult for her. Furthermore, she now seems to behaving disrespectfully towards you too.

Firstly, do remember that she is only 9 years old. Whilst her education is very important, and it's useful to encourage good study habits from a young age, exams and testing at this your age can be incredibly stressful. Even as adults exams bring us stress, so for a child at the age of 9 to face the stress of exams you can imagine how she must be feeling.

At the age of 9 she will not yet have developed all the skills to cope with such stress. Even as adults we commonly resort to maladaptive

coping mechanisms to manage similar stressors. It is therefore important that you remain supportive during a time that is particularly stressful for her.

At the age of 9 she won't yet understand the importance or relevance of performing well in her exams as it will not likely have any consequences on her immediate future in the same way that more important exams that are undertaken in later life do. When there are consequences, such as attaining a place in college/university..etc.. we become more invested in studying and performing well, but with exams at 9 it is not likely that her results will be used in any significant way.

You can also remember this when thinking about how much pressure you put on her to study and perform well. Think about whether it really matters much at this stage how well she performs. This might help you to put less pressure on her to do well at this point. It may be that this reduced pressure placed upon her will make her relax more and place her in a better position to perform well.

It is quite likely that her disrespectful attitude towards you is a result of her frustrations. It may be that she genuinely does want to study and perform well in her exams, but due to her inability to concentrate and pay attention she is unable to study and perform as well as she really wants to and this will be frustrating for

her. Even if it is not that she is particularly concerned about performing well, it may be that she is feeling pressured by you to perform well and study more than she feels able to.

She may therefore be feeling frustrated and upset that she's not living up to your expectations and is expressing this in the form of answering back and disrespecting you. This might not be a result of actually not respecting you, but more her way of managing her frustrations and stress. Again, it might be better, especially at her young age to reduce the pressure on her to perform well and take a more gentle approach. Perhaps instead of focusing on her actual results, be focusing on gently nurturing good study habits that are compatible with her levels of attention. You can do this by encouraging shorter study times more frequently, rather than longer study sessions. Sit with her and offer her encouragement so she feels supported by you and you are in hand to direct her attention back to her work if she gets distracted.

Reward her with smiles and encouragement focusing more on her efforts and intentions than actual performance as such. This positive reinforcement will make her more likely to enjoy study and feel more inclined and happy to study as it becomes a positive experience with reduced pressure.

aboutislam

Question

What is the meaning of this word Tirmidhi?

Answer.

Tirmidh is a city in the southernmost part of Uzbekistan. It is from here that one of the famous scholars of Hadith, Abu Isa Muhammad ibn Isa at-Tirmidhi (Rahimahullah) hailed from. He is commonly known as Imaam Tirmidhi in attribution to his home town. He passed away in the year 279 AH.

The most famous of his Hadith works is Sunan at-Tirmidhi which is commonly referred to,

simply as Tirmidhi. Sunan at-Tirmidhi is one of the Kutub al-Sittah (six major hadith collections) which have gained global prominence and have been accepted by the Muslim Ummah throughout the ages. It contains approximately 4400 hadiths (with repetitions) in 46 chapters. The Kitab, Tirmidhi, is part of the curriculum of the final year of the Aalim course in Darul Uloom and is a very often quoted source of Ahadith.

Mufti Moosa

Question

I put on mozas at home on Friday morning at 1000hrs. I travelled to a town 160km away. I returned home the next day at 1500hrs. Does the three days validity continue at home or must the mozas be removed and the feet washed before performing Asar Salaat on Saturday.

Answer

The three days allowance for Masah on mozas (leather/waterproof socks) only applies to a Musaafir (traveller). Once a person becomes Muqem (resident), the three days' allowance ends immediately and only one day's allowance is permitted.

Hence, if a Musaafir wore his mozas for more than 24 hours, the Masah ends immediately upon becoming Muqem; and if he wore it for less than 24 hours, then he can complete the 24 hour period upon becoming Muqem. (Nurul Idaah pg. 36)

Mufti Moosa

Question

I have read that the heirs in a deceased partners estate do not automatically become partners in the business. Can the heirs claim the assets in the business instead of receiving a payout of it? A. The heirs of a deceased partner are actually entitled to the deceased's assets in the business and not a pay-out. Hence, it is their right to claim the deceased's assets from the business. At times, it may not be practical to take pos-

session of the assets in the business. In such instances, the heirs and the remaining partners may agree on a pay-out if they so wish.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

An eight-year-old child is in school. The parents cannot afford the school fees for the child. Can we assist them by paying their child's school fees with Zakaat money?

Answer

In normal cases, parents enrol their child at a school and are responsible for paying the school fees on their behalf. The payment of the school fees are not levied on the child. Rather, it is levied on the parents.

Therefore, if the parents of the child are eligible recipients of Zakaat, the parents may be assisted with Zakaat to pay their child's school fees. If the parents of the child are not eligible recipients of Zakaat, they cannot be assisted with Zakaat to pay their child's school fees. They may only be assisted with Lillah.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

I run a T-shirt printing business. I buy plain T-shirts, print on it and sell it to schools, colleges, hospitals, hotels, small business owners, etc. Can I print T-shirts of people, cartoon characters, mobile phones, symbols, buildings, logos, slogans, taglines, business names, trees, plants and flowers?

Answer

It is permissible to run a T-shirt business if the T-shirts printed do not contain any animate pictures.

Therefore, in the enquired situation, it would be permissible for you to print T-shirts of mobile phones, symbols, buildings, logos, slogans, taglines, business names, trees, plants and flowers so long as they do not contain any impermissible elements.

Hence, it will not be permissible for you to print T-shirts of people or animate cartoon characters.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

There are a few partner's in a business. One of the partners passed away. Do the heirs of the deceased partner automatically become partners in the business?

Answer

The partnership of a partner in a business terminates upon death. The heirs of a partner do not automatically become partners in the business. The heirs are entitled only to a pay-out of their shares in the business.

However, the heirs may discuss an option of continuing the partnership with the existing partners, which will be subject to the terms and conditions of the new partnership. (Shaami 4/327)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

Can the trustees of a Masjid accept donations from non-Muslims for the construction or renovation of a Masjid?

Answer

There are many people in the Muslim community who would appreciate the opportunity of donating towards a Masjid. The wealth of Muslims, which is pure and Halaal should be given preference over the wealth of non-Muslims. More so, the Masjid is considered the pride and honour of Muslims and not non-Muslims. In any event, if non-Muslims wish to donate towards the construction or renovation of a Masjid, their donation can be accepted under the following conditions:

- 1) They make their donation freely and willingly as an act of charity.
- 2) They do not expect Muslims to reciprocate them by supporting them or attending their re-

ligious programmes and events.

3) There is no fear of them boasting of their donations and making the Muslims feel indebted to them. (Kitaabul Fataawa 4/209/Fataawa Uthmaani 2/537)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

What is the Islamic ruling on celebrating Halloween?

Answer

The celebration of Halloween originated with the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, when people would light bonfires and wear costumes to ward off ghosts. Over time, Halloween evolved into a day of activities like trick-or-treating, carving jack-o-lanterns, festive gatherings, donning costumes and eating sweet treats.

Concerning Halloween, The Encyclopaedia of Religion writes: "On this occasion, it was believed that a gathering of supernatural forces occurred as during no other period of the year. The eve and day of Samhain were characterized as a time when the barriers between the human and supernatural worlds were broken. Otherworldly entities, such as the souls of the dead, were able to visit earthly inhabitants, and humans could take the opportunity to penetrate the domains of the gods and supernatural creatures. Fiery tributes and sacrifices of animals, crops, and possibly human beings were made to appease supernatural powers who controlled the fertility of the land." (pp. 176-177)

In terms of Shariah, it will not be permissible to participate in the celebration of Halloween as it is based on satanic practices and beliefs. As Muslims, we are required to preserve our beliefs and not imitate un-Islamic practices.

Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam said, "Whoever imitates a nation will be amongst them" (Abu Dawood)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

We notice that the Imaams of the Haram in Mecca lead the farz salaahs (also taraweeh) from the first floor and no longer on the mataaaf close to the Kaaba. The musallees on the mataaaf are thus performing salaah in front of the Imaam. What is the ruling with regards to musallees performing salaah in front of the Imaam.

Answer

According to the majority of the Jurists, if a follower (Muqtadi) follows and stands in front of the Imaam, the Salaah will be invalid. A follower (Muqtadi) must stand behind the Imaam for the validity of the Salaah.

In the case of performing Salaah in the Haram, the above ruling applies to the follower (Muqtadi) following the Imaam in the same direction of the Imaam facing the Ka'bah. If a follower, (Muqtadi) is facing one side of the Ka'bah and the Imaam is facing another side of the Ka'bah, the above ruling will not apply and the Salaah performed will be valid. (Al-Fiqhul Islaami Wa Idillatuhu 2/1246)

Note: The followers of the Hanafi, Shafi' and Hanbali school of thought should ensure that they are behind the Imaam of the Haram when performing Salaah in the same direction of the Imaam facing the Ka'bah to avoid their Salaah becoming invalid.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

Can a man wear tungsten carbide ring? If so, what weight? The 3 compounds are tungsten, carbide, cobalt

Answer

It will not be permissible for men to wear rings made of any metal including tungsten carbide rings. It is only permissible for men to wear rings made of silver upto a maximum weight of 4.374 grams.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

Can a husband take back a divorce after he gives the power of divorce to another person?

Answer

Although the husband has the primary right of issuing divorce to his wife, the husband may delegate the right of divorce to a third party for various reasons. The limitations of the delegation will be subject to the terms and conditions of the husband at the time of delegating the divorce to a third party. In an event of the husband delegating the right of divorce to a third party, the husband cannot revoke the delegated divorce. (Shaami 3/332)

Once the husband delegates the right of divorce to a third party, it does not mean that the husband does not have the power to issue a divorce to his wife himself. The husband still retains the power of issuing divorce to his wife even after delegating it to a third party. (Fataawa Mahmoodiyyah 19/112)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

Will a miscarried foetus intercede on its mother's behalf if the mother miscarries at six weeks? I have heard that only a miscarriage after 120 days when the Rooh is blown into the foetus, will the foetus intercede on behalf of its mother. Is this correct?

Answer

In the case of a miscarriage, there is no restriction such as the passing of 120 days for an embryo/foetus interceding on behalf of its mother. The intercession of a miscarried embryo/foetus even at six weeks will still be applicable. (Tahtaawi Ala Maraaqil Falaah 1/598)

Mufti Ismaeel Bassa

Question

There are people who only keep the 10th fast

of Muharram. They do not fast a day before or after. They say that the Jews Today do not fast on the 10th of Muharram so they are in no imitation of the Jews. Is this correct?

Answer

Initially, Muslims and Jews used to follow the same lunar calendar. However, today, Muslims and Jews do not follow the same lunar calendar. Muslims follow the lunar calendar whilst Jews follow the lunisolar calendar i.e. the Hebrew calendar. Accordingly, Muslims fast on the 10th of Muharram, which is a different day on which Jews fast, which they refer to as Yaum-Kippur, "the day of atonement."

This year, Yaum-Kippur of the Jews on which they fast for approximately 24 hours fell on the eve of Tuesday, 18th September 2018 and finished by the eve of Wednesday, 19th September 2018.

In terms of the Islamic (Lunar) calendar of 1440, the 10th of Muharram fell and commenced on the eve of Wednesday, 19th September 2018 and finished by the eve of Thursday, 20th September 2018. As it is clear, for Muslims, the 10th of Muharram is a different day and for Jews, it is a different day based on following two different calendars.

Accordingly, there are Ulama who opine and allow for fasting only on the 10th of Muharram as the Jews do not observe the fast on the same day as Muslims. Therefore, the fast of Muslims on the 10th of Muharram is distinguished from the Jews and hence there is no imitation of fasting on the same day as the Jews which was the basis for fasting a day before or after the 10th of Muharram.

Having said that, the fasting on the 10th of Muharram with a day before or after should still be adhered to according to many Ulamas this was Rasulullah's Sallallahu Alayhi Wasalam advice prior to his demise.

Fatwa Department, Jamiatul Ulama (KZN)

Lesson from
The Qur'an



Prohibited Things

Prohibited for you are: the carrion, the blood, the flesh of swine, and what has been invoked upon with (a name) other than that of Allah, and the animals dead by strangulation, dead by blow, dead by a fall, dead by goring, and that which a beast has eaten unless you have properly slaughtered it; and that which has been slaughtered before the idols and that you determine shares through the arrows. This is sin.
(Ma'idah-5:3)

This is the third Verse of Surah al-Ma'idah where a number of fundamental and subsidiary injunctions and rulings have been described. The first problem relates to lawful and unlawful animals. As for animals whose meat is harmful for human beings - whether physically, for it may pose the danger of disease in the human body, or spiritually, for it may hold the danger of spoilage in human morals or its many emotional states - these the Qur'an has classed as evil declaring them to be unlawful. Then there are animals which have no physical or spiritual harmfulness, these the Qur'an has declared to be good, pure and lawful.

The first prohibition in this verse is that of dead animals. These refer to animals which die without having been slaughtered, either because of some sickness or because of their natural death. The meat of such dead animals is extremely harmful for human consumption, not simply 'medically', but spiritually as well.

However, the Holy Prophet has exempted fish and locust as reported in Ahadith narrated in the Musnad of Ahmad, Ibn Majah, Darqutni and al-Baihaqi and elsewhere.

The second thing declared unlawful in this verse is blood. By saying: (Or, flowing blood - 6:145) in another verse of the Holy Qur'an, it was made clear that blood here means blood which flows. For this reason, liver and spleen, despite being blood, stand exempted from the purview of this injunction. The Hadith referred to a little earlier where fish and locust have been exempted from the purview of 'Maitah' or carrion also carries the exemption of liver and spleen from the definition of blood.

The third thing declared unlawful is the flesh of swine. 'Lahm' or flesh means the whole body of the swine which includes fat, ligaments, everything.

The fourth prohibition is that of an animal which has been invoked upon with (a name) other than that of Allah (dedicated in this manner, or slaughtered). And, at the time of slaughtering it as well, the act of invoking any name other than that of Allah will amount

to flagrant Shirk, which is the ascribing of partners, sharers or associates in the pure divinity of Allah. This animal, thus slaughtered, shall fall under the injunction of a dead animal with the consensus of Muslim jurists. This is what was done by the disbelievers of Arabia when they slaughtered animals invoking the name of their idols, or as some ignorant people would do when they would slaughter animals in the name of some saint or savant. It is also possible that someone does invoke the name of Allah at the time of slaughtering but actually offers it for one other than Allah making that sacrifice for the pleasure of whatever that non-Allah is. If so, this too, according to a consensus of Muslim jurists, is unlawful under the injunction of: (what has been invoked upon with [a name] other than that of Allah).

The fifth category made unlawful is that of an animal which has been strangled to death, or which has choked itself to death while struggling out of some trap. Though Munkhaniqah (dead by strangulation) and Mawqudhah (dead by blow) are included under the broad Qur'anic term of 'Maitah' (carrion), but they have been mentioned here particularly because the people of Jahiliyyah took them to be permissible.

The sixth category of animals is Mawqudhah (dead by blow). It means an animal which has been killed by some hard blow, the kind of blow that comes from being hit by a staff, rod or rock. Should an arrow strike and kill its game in a manner that the arrow does not hit it with the sharp arrow head but does end up killing it just the same from the force of the blow itself, then, this too will be counted as Mawqudhah and will, as such, be unlawful. Sayyidna 'Adi ibn Hatim said to the Holy Prophet : 'There are times when I hunt with an arrow heavy in the middle. If the game is killed with this arrow, can I eat it?' He said: 'If the animal has been killed by a blow from the heavy side of the arrow, it is included under Mawqudhah - do not eat it (and if it has been hit by the sharp-edged point and

it has wounded the game, then, you can eat it). Al-Jassas has reported this narration in Ahkam al-Qur'an citing his own chain of authorities. Here, the condition is that the arrow should have been released from the bow after having said Bismillah.

The game killed by a gun bullet has also been ruled by Muslim Jurists as included under the category of 'Mawqudhah' and is, therefore, unlawful. Imam al-Jassas reports from Sayyidna Abdullah ibn 'Umar that he used to say: which means that an animal killed by gun shot is the 'Mawqudhah'; therefore, it is unlawful. Imams Abu Hanifah, Shafi'i, Malik and others are all in agreement with this view (al-Qurtubi).

The seventh category is called 'al-Mutaraddiyah' (killed by a fall). It means that an animal which dies by falling from a mountain, mound or a high building, or which dies by falling into a well or some similar depth is also unlawful. Therefore, says a report from Sayyidna 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud: If you see a game standing on top of a mountain and you shoot your arrow at it after reciting Bismillah and the hit of the arrow causes the game to fall down and die, then, do not eat it.

Because, here too, the probability exists that the animal did not die with a hit from the arrow. Maybe, it died from the shock of the fall - if so, it will be counted under the category of 'Mutaraddiyah' (dead by a fall). Similarly, if an arrow is shot at a bird and it falls down in water, its eating has also been prohibited for the same reason that probability exists that the hunted bird had died by drowning (al-Jassas).

It should also be noted that Sayyidna 'Adiyy ibn Hatim too has reported the same ruling from the Holy Prophet - (al-Jassas).

The eighth category is that of 'An-Natihah' (dead by goring). It refers to an animal which has died in some collision such as by bumping against a train or vehicle, or it has been gored by butting against another animal.

The ninth category is of an animal which

died when torn apart by some beast.

After describing the unlawfulness of these nine categories, an exception has been mentioned. It was said: . It means: If you find any of these animals alive and you slaughter it properly, then, it becomes lawful - eating it is permissible.

This exemption cannot be applied to the first four categories, because in Maitah (carrion) and Dam (blood), the very possibility does not exist; and as for Khinzir (swine) and what falls under : ma uhillah li-ghayrillah (what has been invoked upon with [a name] other than that of Allah), they are unlawful in themselves - slaughtering or not slaughtering them is equally irrelevant. Therefore, there is a consensus of Sayyidna 'Ali, Ibn 'Abbas, Hasan al-Basri, Qatadah and other righteous elders on the view that this exemption applies to categories after the first four, that is, to the 'Munkhaniqah' (dead by strangulation) and what comes after it. So, it comes to mean that, should the animal be found alive under all these circumstances with commonly discernable signs of life, and slaughtered with the name of Allah while in the same condition, then, it is lawful - whether dead by strangulation, dead by blow, dead by a fall, dead by goring or that which a beast has eaten. Any of these slaughtered while sensing signs of life in it shall become lawful.

Under the tenth category, an animal which has been slaughtered at an altar is unlawful. The altar refers to slabs of rocks placed around the Ka'bah which the people of Jahiliyyah took as objects of worship and they would bring animals near the altars and sacrifice them dedicated to these rock slabs. They thought it was worship.

The people of Jahiliyyah used to eat all these kinds of animals, animals which are evil. The Holy Qur'an declared all of them to be unlawful.

The eleventh practice declared unlawful in this verse is the determining of shares with arrows: al-istiqsam bi al-azlam. The Arabic word, 'al-azlam' used in the Qur'an is the plural of zalam. This was an arrow used to determine shares during the days of Jahiliyyah. They were

seven in number. One would have 'yes' and the other would have 'no' or some similar words written on them. These arrows were kept in the custody of the keeper of the Ka'bah.

When someone wanted his fortune told or wished to find out whether doing something in the future will be beneficial or harmful, they would go to the keeper of the Ka'bah, present money gift to him in anticipation of his service, who would, then, take out these arrows from the quiver one by one. If the arrow so drawn turned out to be the one with the word 'yes' on it, they thought that doing what they wanted to do was beneficial; and if, the arrow drawn had a 'no' on it, they drew the conclusion that they should not do what they wanted to do. The reason why this has been mentioned in the context of unlawful animals is that small groups of pagan Arabs used to have a joint slaughter of a camel or some other animal but, rather than divide up shares from the meat to all participants in accordance with the number of shares originally subscribed to, they would decide it by drawing these arrows. Obviously, by doing that, someone would remain totally deprived, someone else would get too much and there would be someone getting less than what was his right. Therefore, the unlawfulness of this procedure was explained along with the unlawfulness of animals.

'Ulama' say that all methods used to divine future happenings or to find out what is 'Ghayb' (Unseen) - whether divination through numbers ('Ilm al-Jafr or Jafar), or palm-reading, or the taking of omen - fall under the injunction of 'determining shares with arrows.'

The Arabic term for 'determining shares with arrows' is sometimes used for Qimar or gambling as well wherein rights are determined by the methods of lots or lottery. This too is Haram (unlawful) on the authority of the Qur'an which prohibits it under the name, 'Maisir' (gambling). Therefore, righteous early elders Sa'id ibn Jubayr, Mujahid and Al-Sha'bi said that the way the

Cont'd on page 22

Lessons from Sahih Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

The Book of the Times of Salah

Chapter 4 : Salāh is expiation.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Bāb

To further stress its importance, salāh is an expiation against sins - an added advantage, says Imām Bukhāri. According to the learned scholar, this expiation will be for the minor sins only, and for the major sins, 'tawba' (repentance) is a must. Salāh, when offered properly has an inherent potential to prevent a person from committing sins. The Holy Qur'an says:

Surely salah restrains one from shameful and evil acts. (29:45)

Hadith No. 497

Narrated Shaqiq

That he had heard Hudhaifa saying, "Once I was sitting with Umar and he said, 'Who amongst you remembers the statement of Allah's Apostle about the afflictions?' I said, 'I know it as the Prophet had said it.' Umar said, 'No doubt you are bold.' I said, 'The afflictions caused for a man by his wife, money, children and neighbor are expiated by his prayers, fasting, charity and by enjoining (what is good) and forbidding (what is evil).' Umar said, 'I did not mean that but I asked about that affliction which will spread like the waves of the sea.'

I (Hudhaifa) said, 'O leader of the faithful believers! You need not be afraid of it as there is a closed door between you and it.' Umar asked, 'Will the door be broken or opened?' I replied, 'It will be broken.' Umar said, 'Then it will never be closed again.' I was asked whether Umar knew that door. I replied that he knew it as one knows that there will be night before the tomorrow morning. I narrated a hadith that was free from any misstatement" The sub narrator added that they deputed Masruq to ask Hudhaifa (about the door). Hudhaifa said, "The door was Umar himself."

Hadith No. 498

Narrated Ibn Mas'ud

A man kissed a woman (unlawfully) and then went to the Prophet and informed him. Allah revealed: And offer prayers perfectly at the two ends of the day And in some hours of the night (i.e. the five compulsory prayers). Verily! good deeds remove (annul) the evil deeds (small sins) (11.114). The man asked Allah's Apostle, "Is it for me?" He said, "It is for all my followers."

Ummah will face affliction after affliction

Rasulullah (saws) said:

"Best generation is my generation, then, the

next and then the next after next”

There are two aspects of man’s life, ‘the material or materialistic’ and ‘the spiritual’. The people since the recent past have become totally materialistic and forgotten their spiritual development. Whenever the causes of rise or fall, progress or degradation, of an individual or a nation are discussed, only the materialistic causes are taken into count. For example, nowadays, the backwardness and weakness of a nation is attributed to the lack of modern democracy, not catching up with the globalisation, not giving women equal rights as men and so on and so forth. Even the so-called Islamic scholars (modernists) who see Islam through the spectacles of the West, deliver lectures and write books wherein they vehemently argue that the main cause of the backwardness and weakness which the Muslim Ummah is going through is because of these very reasons. Considering themselves ‘wise’ and ‘true’ representatives of Islam, they, in reality, are bereft of the real spiritual aspects of Islam. It is a simple dictum that a person not possessing the correct knowledge about a particular thing cannot plead for it. May we ask these so-called representatives the meaning of the above quoted hadith according to which the best age or generation was the one lived by the Prophet (saws) and his companions; this, I am sure, they cannot afford to refute. Was it the modern form of democracy, interest based banking, globalisation, the mixed gender work culture in a totally immoral atmosphere or other similar such entities which these self styled advocates of Islam plead for, responsible for the success of Ummah in that period? They present Rasulullah (saws) as an excellent military commander who personally participated in a number of battles showing remarkable skills of an able commander, or present him as an excellent administrator possessing marvellous administrative skills. The Prophet (saws) definitely had these capabilities and many more

but above all these he was the prophet of Allah, the Almighty and All-powerful. The most important aspect of his character is offered in a least and insignificant manner in their writings. They need to understand the significance and lofty status of a prophet, and what it means when he is addressed in the holy Qur’an as:

Do not grieve. Allah is surely with us. (9:40)

Do not lose heart and do not grieve, and you are the uppermost if you are believers. (3:139)

These people appreciate the power of a nuclear bomb, a hydrogen bomb, a super jet bomber but fail to appreciate the invisible strength of Allah. They forget how Allah helped Musa (AS) and his powerless weak nation against the tyrant and powerful Pharaoh. How He helped His bellowed messenger Ibrahim (AS), how He arranged for Yousuf (AS) to become the king of Egypt, and above all how He helped His most beloved Prophet Muhammad (saws) to accomplish a herculean task in a very short span of time.

The Holy Qur’an was not revealed in one go but in piecemeal for 23 long years, i.e., the whole prophetic life of Rasulullah (saws). Whenever the spiritually powerful archangel Jibra’el came with the revelation he used to be escorted by thousands of angels, each one of them being an embodiment of high spiritual power. The Holy Qur’an says:

“The one possessing power and a high status with the Lord of the Throne, the one obeyed there, trusted.” (81:20,21)

The Holy Qur’an says:

“Said those who disbelieved, “Why has the Qur’an not been revealed to him all at once?” (It has been sent down) in this way (i.e., in parts) so that We make your heart firm, and We revealed it little by little.”

In this verse Allah informs Rasulullah (saws) that He is revealing the Qur’an to him

in piecemeals in order to strengthen his heart from time to time. What does this strengthening of the heart mean? Is it something materialistic in nature or any something else which these so-called modern Islamic scholars cannot comprehend. They need to ponder the Qur'an in real sense and clear their confusions, then only they can derive realistic conclusions. Allah Ta'ala further says:

And Allah was not to send scourge upon them while you (O Prophet), were in their midst, nor would Allah send scourge upon them while they are seeking forgiveness. (8:33)

Withdrawal of punishment to infidels

1. No punishment while the prophet is in their midst

Mere presence of the Prophet (saws) amidst is becoming a reason for the infidels not to get annihilated by the divine wrath which otherwise they deserved because of their mischief. Here one can easily comprehend the tremendous spiritual power of the Prophet (saws) which is becoming a cause of safety for the people (glory be to Allah).

2. No punishment while they are seeking forgiveness

The Prophet (saws) is not amidst us physically but his teachings, his ultimate miracle—the Holy Qur'an, and his mercy is there. If we ponder the Qur'anic injunctions we will be able to know the people who will be saved from annihilation or afflictions? It is they who fear Allah, repent for their sins, and seek forgiveness from Allah with sincere heart. It is they who will not be punished because of afflictions in this world. We know well the materialistic causes of our worldly problems but we have to understand the spiritual causes as well. The way bacteria and viruses cause physical ailments and medicines like antibiotics and antiviral drugs cure us, similarly, the sins

are causative organisms for the overall degradation the Muslim Ummah is afflicted with in almost all spheres of their life. After refraining from sins, which is the essential prerequisite for attaining divine help, Muslim Ummah needs to act upon the Qur'anic injunctions which will cure its spiritual ailments the way antibiotic medicine cures infection.

The remedy against sins

Sayyidna Hudhaifa, the distinguished companion of Rasulullah (saws) also called 'the companion of secrets', quotes from Sayyidna Umar that the remedy for saving oneself from the afflictions lies in:

1. Salāh.
2. Fasting.
3. Charity.
4. Enjoining the good.
5. Forbidding the evil.

This is a complete code of conduct which the Ummah has to adopt in true spirit if it wants to come out of the present scenario of indignity, weakness, backwardness to regain its lost glory.

Imām Mālik's advice which every Muslim should understand and try to follow is worth to be written with golden ink, he says:

"The later part of this Ummah will regain its past glory only by applying same means which the earlier people of the Ummah had exercised for the cause".

So, it is imperative for the Ummah to find out the means adopted by the Companions and their followers, responsible for the fall of the great Roman and Persian Empires on their feet like a pack of cards.

Sayyidna Umar—a symbol of great spiritual power

A hadith says, "Afflictions will descend on this Ummah like rains from skies". Sayyidna Hudhaifa said to Sayyidna Umar, "So far there is a door stopping these afflictions

to confront this Ummah”. On this, Sayyidna Umar asked him if the door will be broken or will it be opened. Hudhaifa told him that it will be broken. This door which served as a shield against the afflictions confronting the Ummah was—the personality of Sayyidna Umar himself. In other words, it meant that till the man of such spiritual calibre as Sayyidna Umar was amidst the believers, they are safe from afflictions. His spiritual status was an impediment to these afflictions confronting the Ummah. In no way does it mean that the spirituality has vanished from the Muslim Ummah. There have always been people possessing tremendous spiritual stature but at the same time nobody in the later generations can match Sayyidna Umar. It is not out of place to mention here that Sayyidna Abu Bakr Siddiq was unique in all recommended qualities as is evident by the following statement of Sayyidna Umar:

“Abu Bakr’s one day and one night is better than Umar’s whole life, the day that of Hudhaibiya and the night that of cave Thaur which he spent with Rasulallah (saws) during the migration from Makkah to Madinah”.

Good deeds serve as expiation for the evil

In the second hadith, according to Sayyidna Ibn Mas’ud, a person felt extremely

ashamed of his sin when he kissed a woman. Fearing that the wrath of Allah might engulf him, he immediately came to Rasulallah (saws) with the request of punishment that will serve as an expiation for his sin. Allahu-Akbar, such was Allah’s fear in the hearts of the Companions. To err is human, but no sooner did the sahaba err due of negligence etc., they would immediately repent in such a way so that the sin is rendered null. Allah says in the Holy Qur’an:

Surely, good deeds erase bad deeds. (11:114)

This Companion met Rasulallah (saws) at the time when he was going to offer salāh. Rasulallah (saws) asked him to follow him and offer salāh first. During that course of time the following verse of the Qur’an was revealed to Rasulallah (saws).

And offer prayers perfectly at the two ends of the day And in some hours of the night (i.e. the five compulsory prayers). Verily! good deeds remove (annul) the evil deeds (small sins) (11.114).

After finishing his salāh, this man again repeated his request. Rasulallah asked him if he didn’t offer salāh, he replied in affirmation. In other words Rasulallah (saws) told him that since good deeds remove evil deeds, so his salāh was enough to expiate for his sin.

THE BELLY AND THE OTHER BODY PARTS

One day it occurred to the members of the body that they were doing all the work while the belly had all the food. So they held a meeting and decided to strike till the belly consented to its proper share of the work. For a day or two, the hands refused to take the food, the mouth refused to receive it, and the teeth had no work to do.

After a day or two, the Members began to find that their health was deteriorating... The hands could hardly move, the mouth was parched and dry, while the legs were unable to support the rest.

Hence, they realized that even the belly does necessary work for the body, and all must work together or the body will deteriorate.

MORAL: Support for our leaders.

The End

*Straight
Talk*



Syed Iqbal Zaheer

In a cyclic story, one can start from any point. Our story starts with a mother suggesting to her son that its time he got married and assumed the responsibility of sharing house-hold expenses with his father, retired last year. She makes the suggestion, although half-heartedly, because she thinks that as the only solution to be tried, to get over her 32-year son's lethargy – a charge he vigorously refutes. She does it half-heartedly because she is witness to her son's failure (just last week) to fix a short-circuited socket, let alone repair the chair lying one-foot broken since several months. She is hopeful that her son might let loose his hidden abilities, if he gets married, talented as he has always claimed to be.

Outwardly displaying half-willingness, (at heart quite excited), the son responds, "I don't mind, especially, if that will make you happy." He cautions her to look for someone like herself (she is a saree-clad uneducated traditional woman). "Additionally," he adds, "she might be modern, educated, decent, homely, employed (if the girl so insists)."

The mother's eyes turn binocular as she scans the society.

During the dinner invitations, and upon enquiries, she informs the parties interested in her son, that her son, although presently unemployed, is full of packed energy and should have

no difficulty in finding a job, if he tried seriously. "As for not having completed his degree," she tells parents of the sought-after girl, "It is because his teachers were so very prejudiced against him. One or two of them in fact told him point blank that it wouldn't make any difference to the college, if he dropped out altogether. "Can you believe it?" she asks, "a teacher saying such a thing to a student, instead of encouraging him? My husband always says that these institutes have become commercial. In fact, the Chemistry teacher told my son, out of pure spite, being a non-Muslim (you know!) that she would not allow my son get a hall-ticket."

"But why," the parents exclaim, "should he be denied the exam-hall-ticket?"

She replies, "Well the pretext was that my son hardly attends her class."

The other party is now alarmed, "Well, was that the reason?"

She exclaims, "Of course not. But the truth is that my son was absent from her classes a few days when one of his aunts was in the hospital and he had to deliver dinner to her. Moreover, my son was mentally so disturbed by her sickness, out of his unbound love for his dear aunt, that he was in no position to attend college." (She conceals the fact that her son thinks that much of his troubles, if not all, have something to do with his aunt, who, he strongly suspects,

has cast an evil eye on him, or maybe magic, and so, he wouldn't be too sorry if she didn't recover).

Having lost interest, the other party hastens to say the mother of our hero goodbye, regretting the cakes and cool drinks they purchased for the occasion, a little generously.

"I have tried at quite a few places," the mother reports back to her son, "but the problem is that I see jaws dropping when I tell them that you are unemployed. Should you not then look for a job?"

His dreams of a beautiful beau had been the occupant of his mind – day and night – for so long that he soon gets over the disappointment, and continues with his dreams, except that he feels that it is perhaps time he convinced the stupid world of his latent talents, and, consequently bind himself to slavery; for, to him a job is slavery. He looks into the advertisement pages of a newspaper, borrowed from the neighbor, and, going by at least three advertisements that he sees, concludes that there must be a terrible shortage of salesmen in the world.

But having received no reply from any of the three ads he saw, he decides to present himself to prospective employers, whether they advertised or not.

With no luck with any, and very angry at the Recruitment Managers looking up, scanning him, and uttering dryly, "No. We don't need any salesman," he consults some friends. One of them suggests that some combing of his hair and a necktie might improve the situation. "Will a bow do?" he asks his friend, "I have seen some film-heroes looking so smart in a bow." His friend tells him that he has not seen any salesman with a bow around his neck. (He asked about the bow, because he recalls having seen a piece in the attic, given as a retirement-gift to his father by the factory he worked for, manufacturing neckties, bows, napkins, and other such paraphernalia. The friend's approval would have saved him from buying a necktie).

Ultimately, he does find a job. He will sell soap and deodorants, door to door. No salary, only commission. No quick buck that would put him into the list of millionaires overnight. Most of his friend's circle believes that that's how the economy works. So disappointing! But by now he realizes that the world cannot read from his face the talents hidden in him, and that, after all, he has to take off from somewhere: Tatas and Birlas started small.

The news is passed on to his mother that now he is a Sales Manager. She is happy that at least her son has acquired a smart look with that necktie on. Bride-hunting is resumed.

She proudly informs those who have decided to take the risk, that her son is employed. He is a Sales Manager in a Multinational Company.

A deal is struck. The girl is educated and employed. There are no demands, of course, she lets them know. "I am aware," she says, "that parents love their children, and would like to equip their daughter well as she steps into her new home. After all," she cautions against her words being taken literally, "today a girl receives as gift from her parents things like: a refrigerator, sofa set, beddings, dining table, a bureau, and a few other petty things." (The petty things include: a meat and vegetable grinder, oven, dinner set, make-up table, etc.). Her message is carefully noted, but the demand for a motor cycle is turned down.

Noticing curls on the foreheads, she tries to raise their spirit by saying to them to follow her own example. "To our daughter we gave," she says, "a lorry-load of goods (she doesn't know the difference between a lorry and a van), and so much gold that they still thank us."

Religion and its demands are never mentioned during the negotiations. God is on our side, they are sure. A date is set. He blunders a little when the Qadi asked him to repeat the Kalimah after him, but otherwise, the wedding is smoothly got over. "Weren't you paid by the bride's party?" He asks the Qadi, when he steers

himself to him through the crowd to remind that he too should be offering a gift to him, for his holy services conducted flawlessly.

At the stage, the two sitting on high chairs, the mobiles constantly filming the event, while the girl is thinking, again and again, about how should she be adjusting herself to best-please her mother-in-law, the mother-in-law herself is checking on the dowry items, (some material had been delivered yesterday, has the rest arrived today?) On his part, the groom is secretly counting the cash that is coming in, in lieu of gifts.

The dinner that followed was truly grand. His parents, who hardly earned any credit for their attention to Qur'an and Sunnah, Salah and Zakah through their lives, suddenly became conscious of a Sunnah called Valimah. They insisted that they would conduct it on a grand-scale, since the party will be attended by a thousand people. Ignoring the girl's party's weakly pronounced pleas that they didn't think a dinner by the bride's party was an obligation, or a thousand ravagers were necessary, the groom's party had said that, "If that's what you think, then, let us combine the two, yours and ours." Thus they succeeded in extracting half the Sunnah-cost from the grumbling party.

There soon appeared, tie-clad, some in suites, dozens of volunteers, friends of the groom, smiling, laughing, merrily serving food to the hungry nation. Some of the invitees thought they were a pretty lot, but those at the bitter end of life thought they were buffoons. As for the groom, that was the best part of the function. He hadn't been able to host any party to his friends, and hadn't known that his friends loved him so much.

Nature is kind, so disappointment crawls in gradually, stealthily, although the girl's first disappointment homed in on the first night, when the man sneezed almost in her heavily powdered face, and forgot that, on any occasion, a tissue comes in handy on the nose and mouth,

instead of the two hands.

It is three months now, and Sales Manager hasn't been to his job for a single day and his wife is getting a little concerned about her jewelry that her mother-in-law says would only be safe in her custody. (She is unaware that it is already in safe custody of the pawn-shop).

Time seems to be in a hurry. It is six months since the wedding. The dowry cash that he received, only partly, because the rest was pocketed by his father: the date for renewal of the house mortgage was approaching fast. Our hero had thought he would get all the money, after all, it had been obtained in his name. Taxis to attend dinner invitations have become expensive. If not for autorickshaws he would be in a worse situation. (Next dinner, the girl will be on foot). Tension between husband and wife is brewing. Issues are several. Money taken as loan by her husband, not infrequently, is depleting wife's account. Another issue is her salary. She gives him only one-half of it, while the rest is spent jointly. "Isn't my money yours and your money mine?" the husband asks in anger. There are other complaints, declared legitimate by Mawlawis and Mawlanas when consulted. For instance, she is not spending enough time in the kitchen: "a woman is for the kitchen," is the Fatwa by them. They cite the example of their own wives. (That the Prophet's house had no kitchen, is a piece of information the two of the clergy class hadn't heard. But wouldn't have changed their Fatwa if they had. They would cite latter-day authorities and saints as examples).

"Why have you not wiped dark patches off the fridge?" the mother-in-law demands to know. The complaint-list is long. Mortgaging stuff (the kitchen-ware) she brought at marriage, should be, the in-law family tells her, should be of little concern to her because that is a common practice now in the society. The family has now shifted to a place at the border of the slums. Apart from the dingy new house, in a dingier wet room where you can't walk without

stepping on something, she can't stand the stench.

Fights are commoner now. Issues are petty, insults are many, and for her it's like walking on egg-shells. She is fed up. The husband is fed up too, but not so much on her account, which he pretentiously claims, as on account of sorrow-filled life. Sickly parents are now less dear. Educational costs of his two children are borne by the wife. Earnings from autorickshaw driving offers some relief, but not enough to meet with the medical costs of his parents. Food costs are almost borne out by the wife. He himself is not a burden on her, because he spends three-fourths of his auto-earning on himself. Home-life is almost none. He goes home only to sleep off the night. His relationship with children, if any, is customary. He has been thinking and thinking.

One evening he doesn't turn up. Then the next, and the next too. The children miss the wrapped torso in the corner they used to see fast asleep every morning before they went to the corporation-run, hateful, school. Enquiries with the mother yield the answer, "I have no idea."

She is not lying.

Next that we hear of her is that she has moved into a slum, and the next she hears of our hero is that he has moved to another slum, and that he has married another woman, and that he has received some beating by the slum-lord for not paying the rent, and, it appears, he has taken to drinking.

We are at the fag-end of the story, but we cannot say 'the End' yet, because the process of slum-filling by Muslims continues.

YMD: July 2018

Submitting to the Book of Allah

'Ali bin Husain (ra), also known by the title Zainul 'Aabideen, was the grandson of Sayyiduna 'Ali (ra) and the son of Sayyiduna Husain (ra).

On one occasion, Zainul 'Aabideen (ra) was performing wudhu while his slave girl was assisting him by pouring the water onto his limbs from a pitcher. As she was pouring the water, it so happened that the pitcher fell from her hand, striking Zainul 'Aabideen (ra) on his head and injuring him. On suffering the injury, Zainul 'Aabideen (ra) looked up at the slave girl (in anger).

The slave girl addressed him saying, "Allah mentions (while describing the people of taq-wa):

And those who suppress their anger

As soon as he heard this, Zainul 'Aabideen (ra) responded, "I have suppressed my anger."

The slave girl then continued reciting the verse,

And those who forgive people

Hearing this, Zainul 'Aabideen (ra) submitted, "(I have forgiven you), may Allah forgive you."

Finally, the slave girl recited:

And Allah loves those who do good.

When he heard this, Zainul 'Aabideen (ra) replied, "Go, for I have set you free!"

(Shu'abul Imaan)

Steps of the Seeker

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim

The Virtue of the Quran

Allah has revealed the Book for us [His servants]—to read and to ponder it, to reflect on it with attention and vigilance, to enrich our souls through its remembrance, to construe it in the best of manners, to affirm it, to strive to establish its commands and prohibitions, and to reap the fruit of its precious sciences that connect us to God, the Exalted, and to inhale the wisdom of its meadows and flowers.

For this is His Book, which guides to Him whomsoever seeks His inner knowledge. It is the sure way that leads the seeker to Him. It is His brilliant light that illuminates all darkness, His compassionate guidance, the boon of all creation.

It is His rope that connects His servants to Him when all else fails, His greatest door to Him that remains open when all else is closed. It is the Straight Path. Opinions of men do not taint it. Nor do base desires stain its wisdom. Nor are sages ever sated with its generous feast.

Its wonders never end. Its clouds never dry. Its signs never exhaust. Its meanings never contradict. The more a soul plumbs its depths, the more it attains discernment and guidance. No sooner are its wells uncovered than burst forth



all wellsprings of wisdom.

For it is the light of the eyes against blindness, the cure for all humankind against the myriad ailments of the heart. It is life itself of the heart, the rapture of the soul. Here is the shepherd that herds the soul toward the cities of bliss; here the harbinger that calls out, night and day:

“O seekers of righteousness, make haste!” It is the proclaimer of faith at the head of the Straight Path: O our people! Answer God’s Proclaimer, and believe in Him. He will forgive your sins and save you from a painful chastisement (Sûrat Al-Ahqâf, 46:31).

By Allah! It shall surely pierce, if only it chances upon ears that are open. It will illuminate, if only it chances upon hearts cleansed of corruption.

The Failing of Man

But alas! Low desires have put out the lamps of the hearts. The opinions of mortal men have shut the doors of divine guidance and lost the keys.

Hearts are encrusted with the rust of their deeds and shut out of the realities of the Quran. The ailment of ignorance has so overcome them that even righteous deeds are of no avail.

How odd, indeed! They choose to feast upon the vain opinions of mortals that neither replenish nor quell hunger, and to reject nourishment from the Words of the Lord of all the worlds, and the words of His Messenger (saws). How shall they find their way in the darkness of men's opinions and separate right from wrong when they fail to do this by the radiant light of the Sunnah and the Book?[2]

How odd, indeed! They have managed to conflate the right teachings with the wrong, the accepted with the rejected, the favored with the untenable. They have thus found a way to render themselves incapable of receiving guidance and knowledge from the discourse of the One whose speech is immune to falsehood from before and behind, and who guarantees to elucidate the truth with utmost clarity;[3] and so too the discourse of the one who was given the most comprehensive of words and whose speech was clear in the utmost?[4]

Nay, by God! It is but a trial that has veiled hearts from the sources of righteousness and thus bedeviled intellects, making them stray from their goal—a trial so endemic that the young are brought up into it and the old grow senile in it. Those blind as bats imagine these deceptions to be the ultimate accomplishment to which they race and the end to which they rush in hordes.

Revelation and Estimation

How far!

How far is a faint distant star from the brilliant midday sun!

How far the dark underworld from the brilliant stars of Gemini!

How far the discourse whose author has no guarantee of inerrancy or any established proof from the truthful transmission on the authority of an infallible one!

How far are opinions whose highest honor may be “acceptance” to be followed from the clear Texts that every Muslim must, by definition, put above all else and submit and turn to for judgment in all questions of disagreement!

How far the opinions whose author has prohibited and warned against blindly following from the Texts that it is incumbent on every servant of God to follow and contemplate!

How far the schools [of thought] counted among the bygones, their need passing away from Scriptures that shall not pass, even to the end of the heavens and the earth! Exalted be God! How deprived are those who turn away from the [two] Texts of Revelation, from seeking knowledge from this niche of light, from that treasure trove!

What life of heart and radiance of sight they have lost who have contented themselves with opinions dug up with conjecture's spades, who have divided up their matter of religion into groups, rousing each other with ornate words in conceit, for whose sake they take the Quran as little more than a thing shunned!

So utterly erased are the signposts of the Quran from their hearts that they are alert to none of them; its covenants so dimmed that they abide by none of them; its standards and banners so fallen from their hands that they raise none of them; its brilliant stars so darkened on the horizons of their souls that they have no love for them; its sun to them so eclipsed behind the shadows of their opinions that they see nothing of it.

They have dethroned Revelation from the realm of reality, deposed it from the province of certitude, and assailed it with false interpretations. Ambush after ambush, their attacks have yet to cease.

[Revelation] has come to them like a guest to a sordid, miserly host who fails to show him fitting honor or gracious munificence, but rather receives him at arm's length, with hesitation and ineptitude, saying to him: "We have no passage for you here. Yet if you must pass, then pass quickly."

They have reduced Scripture to the status of the caliph in our times: His is the mint, and ritual mention in the sermons, but no authority or actual say in ruling.[5] One who adheres to the Book and the Sunnah is to them a "literalist," lacking in intelligence, while the follower of the mutually contradicting and incoherent opinions of men is accomplished and learned.

The possessors of the Book and the Sunnah, who rank Revealed Texts above all else, are, in their view, ignorant and deficient: When it is said to them, Believe as the people believe, they say, Shall we believe, as fools believe? Truly, they are the foolish ones, but they do not know (Sûrat Al-Baqarah, 2:13).

They are deprived by God of attainment to God, for they have diverted from the path of Revelation, lost its foundations, and cleaved instead to rootless trunks. The opinions of men have robbed them of what they most long for; they have cut them off from the ropes they most need—until the time shall come when all that lays in the graves is scattered about, and all that was in the breasts of men is collected, and every group's attainment has become distinct and clear, and the reality is uncovered as to what [folly] they took as beliefs and preferred over all else: And there has appeared to them the evil of what they have earned (Sûrat Al-Zumar, 39:48) as they stand aghast at the sight of the harvest that they have sown.

O how devastating the loser's lament as he

stands beholding all his effort and toil turned to scattered dust! What utter calamity when his wishful hopes prove barren as lightning without a downpour, nothing more than falsehood and conceit.

What do they think, those whose intentions harbor heretical innovations, vain desire, and prejudice for the opinions of mortals over divine Revelation? What do they think that their Lord will do on the Day when the secrets are tried?

What excuse shall there be for those who throw the two Scriptures (the Quran and the Sunnah) behind their backs on a Day when their excuses will be of no avail to the wrongdoers? Do such men deem they can save themselves from their Lord by dint of the opinions of mortals; by the abundance of their discourse and disputation; by their analogies and suppositions; by their allusions, ecstatic outbursts, or fanciful imaginations?

How far from truth, by God!

Such a one entertains the falsest of hopes and most unlikely of fancies. For salvation is assured only for the one who takes God's guidance to be the ultimate judge above all else, who stores up piety for his journey, who follows the true guide and walks the Straight Path, who holds on to the Revelation with a firm tie that cannot be undone.

Allah is All-Hearing and All-Knowing.

[1] Translated as God.

[2] The contrast here and in the subsequent paragraphs is drawn between the source-texts of Islam, the Qur'an and Prophetic teachings, on the one hand and the classical tradition of derived religious sciences, on the other.

[3] The reference is to Qur'anic verses such as: Q 41:42, 41:3, 41:44, 11:1, and the like.

[4] The reference is to a tradition: "I have been sent with the most comprehensive of words, and I was made victorious with awe, and while I was sleeping, the keys of the treasures of the earth were brought to me and placed in my hand." al-Bukhari (bk. "Interpretation of Dreams").

[5] The Abbasid caliph had been killed at the hands of the invading Mongols in 656/1258 and with that the institution that gave connected to Sunni Muslims to each other and temporally to the Prophet had been interrupted. Already, for about three centuries, the Abbasid caliphs had reigned but rarely ruled; still, the prestige and sanctity of the Abbasid caliph in the Early Middle Period had been a symbolic force to be reckoned with, and no Sultans could enjoy legitimacy without its approval. But after the Mongol destruction of the traditional seat of caliphate in Baghdad, even that symbolic force greatly suffered, and even though a symbolic caliph was reinstalled in Cairo by the Mamluk Sultans, his prestige was a shadow of its past. Our author lived in this period.

Translation English: Dr. Ovamir Anjum

KNOW OUR SCHOLARS

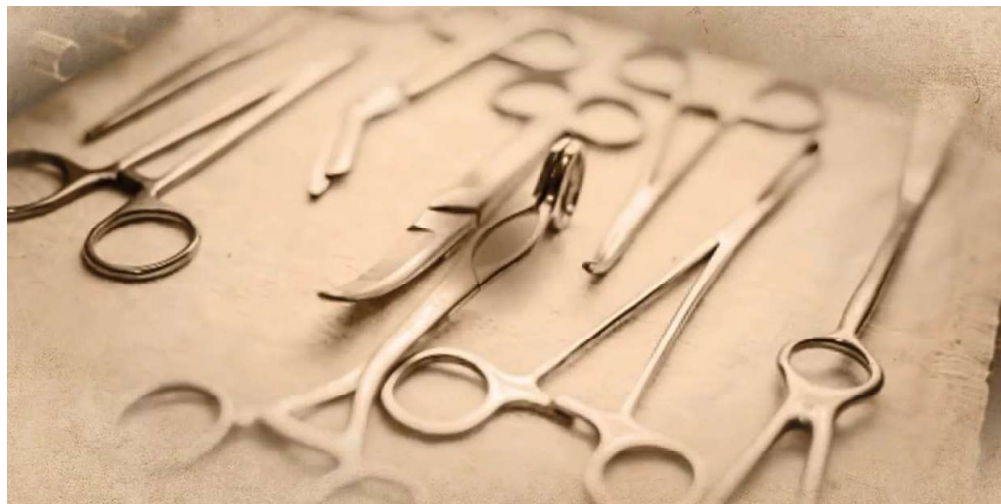
Irfan Shahid

Abul Qasim al-Zahrawi

Al-Zahrawi was the great surgeon of Islam and one of the great medical scientists of the world for all time, giving new direction to medical science and inventing hundreds of surgical instruments still used in medical surgery. His encyclopedic medical work, al-Tasrif, was a major textbook and was included in the syllabus of the universities in Europe for several centuries. It describes a number of surgical operations and instruments and contains ideas from several regions.

Abul Qasim Khalaf ibn Abbas al-Zahrawi was born in 324 AH/936 CE at al-Zahra, near Qurtaba (Cordoba), in Islamic Spain. Al-Zahra was a satellite town built by Sultan Abd al-Rahman al-Nasir near the capital Qurtaba and was named after his wife Queen Zahra. Al-Zahrawi spent most of his life in Cordoba and al-Zahra which

were major centres of education and culture in Europe those days. He hailed from a family of Ansars who came from Arabia to Spain when it was conquered by Muslims. He had a good early education. Later, he studied medicine and specialized in surgery. After the completion of his studies he joined, one of several government hospitals at Cordoba, where he practised medicine and surgery for the rest of his life. After 40 years of experience, he wrote his famous book Al-Tasrif. He died at al-Zahra in 404 AH/1013 CE at the age of eighty lunar years. He was known as Abulcasis (from Abul Qasim) in Europe.



Al-Zahrawi has been greatly admired for the surgical section of his book al-Tasrif liman ajiz an al-talif. A large number of inventions and innovations are attributed to him. The book is a medical encyclopaedia which discusses various aspects of medical science, such as Materia Medica, pharmaceutical, dietic, medical Chemistry, therapeutics, psychotherapy, midwifery, diseases, surgical operations surgical instruments, etc.

Al-Zahrawi performed various types of operations, including eye operations. He was the first to recommend surgical removal of a broken patella (knee-cap), first to perform lithotomy (the removal of a stone from the bladder) on women. He was the first to describe haemophilia and to describe tracheotomy. He introduced the 'Walcher Position' for women in child birth. He described the removal of a dead foetus from the womb. He mentioned several types of threads and catguts for suturing (stitching). An important aspect of al-Zahrawi's surgical study is the large number of surgical instruments that he used during surgical operations described graphically in his encyclopaedia. He wrote about the manufacturing of surgical instruments and provided over two hundred drawings of instruments in his book. He mentioned catheters, knives, scissors, probes, saws, needles, syringes, forceps, scalpels, hooks, lancets, etc.



Before Al-Zahrawi, medicine was considered a branch of theology and chemistry; he separated medical education from alchemy and theology, and emphasized the scientific nature of medicine. He advocated the study of medicine by intelligent men. Al-Tasrif was first translated into Latin by Gerard of Cremona in the twelfth century CE and this was followed by several other translations and printings in Europe. It was translated into English in 1881 CE.

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pagan Arabs used arrows to determine shares, people of Persia and Asia Minor used chessmen and pieces of backgammon for the same purpose. They all fall under the injunction about arrows.

After explaining the unlawfulness of determining shares with arrows al-Tafsir al-Mazhari has particularly pointed out that the Qur'anic statement: (This is sin) which follows immediately after this injunction means that this method of divination or determining of shares is an act of sin which leads people astray.

Adopted from: Ma'ariful Qur'an by Mufti Muhammad Shafi (ra)

When Scientism Takes Over Tradition

Muhammad Ghilan

We have made you [believers] into a just community, so that you may bear witness [to the truth] before others and so that the Messenger may bear witness [to it] before you. We only made the direction the one you used to face [Prophet] in order to distinguish those who follow the Messenger from those who turn on their heels: that test was hard, except for those God has guided. God would never let your faith go to waste [believers], for God is most compassionate and most merciful towards people. [2:143]

Contrary to the dominant narrative peddled by historically illiterate new atheists, every major civilization has engaged in what we call the “scientific enterprise”. What was different about past peoples was the philosophical foundations upon which science was done and the cosmological perspective it fit within. Human beings were not superstitious dumb beasts roaming around the earth looking for the next source of food and water. No matter where you go on this planet, you can find evidence in remnants that indicates advancements in technology that would boggle the modern mind only because the modern mind has so much contempt for the past that it does not expect more than barbarism from it. This is a product of assuming

that technological progress is equivalent to human progress and that it is qualitatively unique to our time. It is an attitude that is reminiscent of the people of ‘Ad, who God says about in the Quran:

The people of ‘Ad behaved arrogantly throughout the land without any right, saying, ‘Who could be stronger than us?’ Did they not realize that God, who created them, was stronger than them? They continued to reject Our message. [41:15]

It is also an attitude for which God asks a question in the Quran:

Have they not travelled through the land and seen how their predecessors met their end? They were mightier than them: they cultivated the earth more and built more upon it. Their own messengers also came to them with clear signs: God did not wrong them; they wronged themselves. [30:9]

There was a time when Europeans traveled to Muslims and had enough of an inferiority complex to cover their heads with Arab turbans. Now the tables have turned, and Muslims have the inferiority complex that drives many of us to cover our intellects with “Enlightenment” sophistry. We just do not recognize it as soph-

istry because we want to be acknowledged as “rational”. Why anyone would want to be given approval by an intellectually incoherent group filled with individuals who revel in circular reasoning is an odd thing. But it is not so odd when we recognize that to have a seat at the academic and “intellectual” table, we must pay homage to those who set it up. Otherwise, we will be eating leftovers outside with the peasants. At least, that is how it is presented and may appear at first glance until you look closer and realize the food on the table is spoiled, and if it was not for our transient case of anosmia we would not be producing so much unwarranted skepticism and vomit then calling it “reform” and “progress”.

As an increasing number of influential Muslims appear to be capitulating to the social pressures in the academic and public intellectual spheres, it is important more now than ever to be acutely aware of the truism that there is no science without philosophy. Every scientific theory is an intellectual construct produced to model how the patterns we observe and measure in the world are thought to behave. It is not only the explanatory value of the theories that gives them merit, but also their predictive one. That is why a proposal like Intelligent Design is not considered science. Anyone can look at how things are now and propose an explanation. But the progress of science does not depend on post hoc accounts. One needs to put their theories to the test by using them as predictive models. This is the primary reason why evolutionary theory continues to exist. In the scientific world, evolutionary theory is not an atheist project bent on the destruction of religion. Actually, if you step outside of YouTube and stop paying attention to the Richard Dawkinses and Sam HARRISES of the world, most scientists do not even bring up religion when they are engaged in their work. It is really not all that glamorous when you go behind the scenes: you have an idea about how something is/functions/came to be, you measure it, you make a prediction based on your idea

and initial measurements, you carry out an experiment or a search to test whether your prediction will pan out, and then put up the findings against your idea. Sometimes you find out you were right, but most of the time it does not work out in your favour, and you have to go back to the drawing board and either adjust your idea or throw it out completely and come up with an alternative. This is all, of course, within the context of a general theoretical paradigm you are operating within. Sometimes the paradigm itself needs to be completely thrown out if it continues to accumulate predictions that are irreconcilable with empirical observations, and a new paradigm can begin to take hold. This will typically take at least a full generation before it is realized.

It all sounds neat, but it really is not. What happens in real life is that no theory has a perfect predictive record. Even when it looks like it does, such as in the case of gravity, it is a product of our limited observations. Gravity is not even a thing in and of itself. It is a relationship between material objects, and the grand narrative we made about it is based on our observations thus far. You only believe that what you throw up will come down if you did not have enough force behind it to overcome gravity because that has been our collective experience. It is not necessarily true. We just have faith that it will work out that way because we never experienced it otherwise. This insight is usually attributed by the selectively amnesic Western mind to David Hume, but it has been recognized by Muslims long before and as was famously articulated by Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali in his discussion on miracles, a scholar whose thought Neil deGrasse Tyson has made declarations about and its negative impact on the “Golden Age” of Islam despite not having read his work or Islamic history for that matter.

The convincing power of a scientific theory is not inherent to it. It is in the combination of selective reporting in an image-based culture that

gives the impression of it having a neat predictive record and in the general application of science as technology. Outsiders to the daily practice of science do not make distinctions between physics, chemistry, and biology, let alone make distinctions between subfields within these areas of science. It is therefore untenable to expect them to grasp the underlying philosophical assumptions and by extension implications of theories proposed in these different areas. Abstract discussions tend to frustrate most people when they have no apparent immediate practical utility. Sensory experience tends to overpower the intellect, often in ways that can be harmful. The ascent of scientists has less to do with the validity of theoretical claims they make and more to do with their ability to produce technology that facilitates modern ways of living. It is easy to fall into the error of assuming that we “know” how something is because we can manipulate it and subject it to our use. However, the simple example of the phenomenon of light refutes this notion.

The challenge Muslims have today is to sift through modern science and separate between valid conclusions, the theoretical constructs and philosophical assumptions upon which they were built, the equivocations between quantity and quality, and the grand narrative mythologies that make it on the New York Times Best Sellers list as popular science books. The Quran affirms that despite their indefatigable attempts at negating God, there will be truth in every theory, and the advancements being made will serve as proof on the Day of Rising against those who make them and continue to reject God:

They only know the outer surface of this present life and are heedless of the life to come. Have they not thought about their own selves? God did not create the heavens and earth and everything between them without a serious purpose and an appointed time, yet many people deny that they will meet their Lord. [30-7-8]

We shall show them Our signs in every region of the earth and in themselves, until it becomes clear to them that this is the Truth. Is it not enough that your Lord witnesses everything? [41:53]

We must resist the reflexive binary reaction where we feel the need to reject either science or religion, or fall into unwarranted skepticism that bends the religion to make it congruent with whatever science happens to be in vogue at the time. Indeed, the latter reaction is a type of rejecting religion, for it removes its theology in exchange for philosophical naturalism as Islam is paradoxically made to have no conflict with scientism. We need to get beyond Christian apologetics that seeks to affirm the validity of a text we believe was corrupted and a theology we reject as an anathema against God. We must take responsibility as witnesses and produce nuanced responses that use Islamic primary sources as the guiding compass, where we recognize the contextual realities that influenced our past scholars’ perspectives as well as those that currently influence us when we approach the tradition. Otherwise, we risk having Muslims turn into essentially atheists who happen to perform Islamic rituals. But hey, at least we can call ourselves “rational” that way.

Do not do evil to those who do evil to you, but deal with them with forgiveness and kindness.

(Bukhari)

...I Found it Reading Me

Dr. Jeffrey Lang

Lang is an Associate Professor of Mathematics at the University of Kansas, one of the biggest universities in the United States. He started his religious journey on Jan 30, 1954, when he was born in a Roman Catholic family in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The first 18 years of his life were spent in Catholic schools, which left him with many unanswered questions.

Like most kids back in the late 60s and early 70s, I started questioning all the values that we had at those times, political, social and religious

I rebelled against all the institutions that society held sacred, including the Catholic Church.

Becoming Atheist

By the time he reached the age of 18, Lang had become a full-fledged atheist.

“If there is a God, and He is all merciful and all loving, then why is there suffering on this earth?

Why does not He just take us to heaven? Why create all these people to suffer?”

Such were the questions that came up in his mind in those days.

Finding God in Islam

As a young lecturer in mathematics at San

Francisco University, Lang found his religion where God is finally a reality. That was shown to him by a few of the Muslim friends he had met at the university.

“We talked about religion. I asked them my questions, and I was really surprised by how carefully they had thought out their answers,” Lang said.

Dr. Lang met Mahmoud Qandeel, a regal looking Saudi student who attracted the attention of the entire class the moment he walked in. When Lang asked a question about medical research, Qandeel answered the question in perfect English and with great self assurance. Everyone knew Qandeel – the mayor, the police chief and the common people.

Together the professor and the student went to all the glittering places where “there was no joy or happiness, only laughter.”

Yet at the end, Qandeel surprisingly gave him a copy of the Quran and some books on Islam.

Lang read the Quran on his own, found his way to the student-run prayer hall at the university, and basically surrendered without much struggle. He was conquered by the Quran. The first two chapters are an account of that encounter and it is a fascinating one.

“Painters can make the eyes of a portrait ap-

pear to be following you from one place to another, but which author can write a scripture that anticipates your daily vicissitudes?...

Each night I would formulate questions and objections and somehow discover the answer the next day. It seemed that the author was reading my ideas and writing in the appropriate lines in time for my next reading. I have met myself in its pages..."

Lang performs the daily five-time prayers regularly and finds much spiritual satisfaction. He finds the Fajr (pre-dawn) prayer as one of the most beautiful and moving rituals in Islam.

To the question how he finds it so captivating when the recitation of the Quran is in Arabic, he responds:

"Why is a baby comforted by his mother's voice?"

Spiritual Growth

He said reading the Quran gave him a great deal of comfort and strength in difficult times. From there, faith was a matter of practice for Lang's spiritual growth.

On the other hand, Lang pursued a career in mathematics. He received his master's and doctoral degrees from Purdue University. Lang said that he had always been fascinated by mathematics. "Math is logical. It consists of using facts and figures to find concrete answers," Lang said.

"That is the way my mind works, and it is frustrating when I deal with things that do not have concrete answers."

Having a mind that accepts ideas on their factual merit makes believing in a religion difficult because most religions require acceptance by faith. Islam appeals to man's reasoning."

As faculty advisor for the Muslim Student Association, Lang said he viewed himself as the liaison between the students and their universities. He gets approval from university authorities to hold Islamic lectures.

"The object of being their faculty advisor is

to help them get their needs met as far as adjusting to the American culture and to procedures of the university. They appreciate the opportunity to have misconceptions corrected."

Lang has written several Islamic books which are best sellers among the Muslim community in the US. One of his important books is "Even Angels ask; A Journey to Islam in America".

In this book, Dr. Lang shares with his readers the many insights that have unfolded for him through his self discovery and progress within the religion of Islam

Supplication for the Prophet (saws)

Abu Muhammad Ka`b bin `Ujrah (ra) reported: The Prophet (saws) came to us and we asked him, "O Messenger of Allah, we already know how to greet you (i.e., say As-salamu `alaikum), but how should we supplicate for you?" He said, "Say:

Allahumma salli `ala Muhammadin, wa `ala `ali Muhammadin, kama sallaita `ala `ali Ibrahima, innaka Hamidum Majid. Allahumma barik `ala Muhammadin, wa `ala `ali Muhammadin, kama barakta `ala `ali Ibrahima, innaka Hamidum Majid.

O Allah, exalt the mention of Muhammad and the family of Muhammad as you exalted the family of Ibrahim. You are Praised and Glorious. O Allah, bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad as You blessed the family of Ibrahim. You are Praised and Glorious."

[Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

Reviving the Names of the Messenger

Mohammed Saleem

Reviving the Prophetic Names

What's in a name? Juliet asked this rhetorical question in Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet*, declaring, "That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet." The implicit argument she was making was that it is not the names of things that matter, but the essence of things that matter.

Fundamentally, she was right, a rose would smell just as sweet regardless of what name we call it. But what if we've never seen a rose or we never learned how to smell its sweet fragrance? Would its name matter then? Does a name of a thing point us closer towards understanding that thing?

It is common in nearly all cultures that things which are deemed important are given multiple names. The Arabs a millennium ago were no different, and from that linguistic and cultural context, the Qur'an and the Messenger (saws) taught us the Divine Names and Attributes of God. These are names that to this day we are readily familiar with: Ar-Rahman, Ar-Raheem, and countless others.

Yet while we preserve the Divine Names, we often neglect the names and attributes given to describe the Messenger himself. Previous generations used these names to describe, understand and emulate the Messenger. Some of them are found in the Qur'an, others in Prophetic narrations, while others are found in the

works of scholars. It is therefore a reflection of our modern disconnect with the Muhammadan reality that today we have largely forgotten these names.

Connecting with the Messenger requires us to get to know him, and this is where his many names can help us. That he has so many names in itself is an indicator of his rank and importance. Each highlights different facets of his character that teach us about him. Even if we never saw him, pondering over these descriptive names can bring us closer towards experiencing the spiritual fragrance he has left behind.

Visiting the Praised One

When the visitor to the Prophet's Mosque enters through the Gate of Peace, they are greeted by Ottoman calligraphy along its front wall (picture on right). Most of the Qur'anic calligraphy extends high up the wall, appropriate for its heavenly, awe-inspiring nature. The lowest inscription, though still well above eye level, however, is a row of gold calligraphic script in red, which begins with the statement, "These are the names of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him." Its vertical position is befitting. It is high enough that one must look up to read it, but not so high to cause fatigue in doing so, just as the Prophet (saws), as exalted and lofty in rank as he is, remains accessible, comforting, and close to the one who seeks to learn from

him. The true follower of the Prophet (saws) will never tire from learning from him or from remembering him abundantly.

The first two boxes (on the right in the bottom picture) contain four names, all derived from the root of hamd (praise): Muhammad, Ahmad, Mahmud and Haamid. In between the two boxes is a circle containing the words, “sal-lallahu alaihi wasallam, or peace and blessings be upon him”, a recurring pattern throughout the row of Prophetic names that span the entire length of the wall of the masjid.

The name Muhammad (saws) describes him as someone who is praised and has praiseworthy traits. It speaks to both the internal beauty of his character and to the external beauty and honor bestowed on him. The word obscures the identity of praiser; this ambiguity points to the extent of the praise bestowed on Muhammad. Not just one person praises Muhammad; everything praises him, in both the worldly and celestial realm.

Ahmad has a different nuance, with one interpretation that it means the best of those who give praise to God, and the best of those who are praised. He carries the Banner of Praise on the Day of Judgement, and is the most deserving of praise, elevated to the most praiseworthy station with God.

Mahmud also means the praised, with some commentators indicating that it may be a form of Muhammad found in earlier scriptures. Haamid, meanwhile, connotes an emphasis on Muhammad as the one who praises God in the best way. His major intercession on the Day of Judgment, when he will be inspired by God to glorify Him in ways no other creature had done before, is illustrative of this name.

The subtle shades of meanings in the names of the Prophet (saws), starting with these variations derived from hamd, should tell us there is more to the Prophet (saws) than can ever be encompassed in just one word. Everything about him, every beautiful aspect of his charac-

ter, was ornamented with even more beauty. He was not simply “praised”, but he was and is the praised, emphatically, above all creation. He was the best of all those given praise and he was the best who praised God. In these names alone, it is an indication that we cannot fully enumerate his praiseworthy qualities. We can only give emphatic and continuous praise of him.

For the Prophet (saws), we glimpse his essence in his name, the totality of which we can never fully grasp. As Al-Qastallani said, “The name Muhammad matches its meaning exactly and Allah thus named him Himself, before he was thus named. It constitutes one of the signposts of his Prophethood, for his name confirms his truth.”¹

What’s in a name? For the Prophet (saws), more than we can ever know.

1. Al-Qastallani, *al-Mawahib al-Laduniyya (al-Zarqani’s Sharh 3:174)*, as cited by Haddad, 2005)

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Whoever embraces Islam from the people of the two books (i.e. Jews and Christians) will be given a double reward... [7]

Many people are distressed, but the conventions of the time or their hardened hearts prevent them from weeping. Many have forgotten the beauty of Islam and the effect it can have on those of us who let go of the constraints of this life and hold tight only to the rope of God.

The hearts of many converts fall effortlessly into the sweetness and pleasure of pure faith. Their weeping reminds us that Islam is an amazing gift.

[1] <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/01/26/the-share-of-americans-who-leave-islam-is-offset-by-those-who-become-muslim/>

[2] *At Tirmidhi*

[3] *Sahih Al-Bukhari and Muslim*

[4] *Quran 12:86.*

[5] *Provisions for the Hereafter (Zaad al Maad) by Ibn al Qayyim*

[6] *Al Hakim*

[7] *Imam Ahmad*

Optimism in Life

Monique Hassan

We have all heard the expression, is the glass half full or half empty. How you perceive it tells you something about your own perception on life. Do you choose to be optimistic and feel gratitude for the half full glass or do you choose pessimism and feel disappointment that the glass is half empty. This glass can represent your career, your marriage and even your faith.

Optimism is more than just having a sunny disposition. It embodies an attitude of perseverance, patience and not giving up in the face of difficulty. An optimistic person will notice opportunities instead of focusing on the hardships. This all describes positive thinking patterns which in turn makes your emotions more stable. This cycle of positive thought patterns and emotions will undoubtedly lead to better behaviors.

Can you be Overly Optimistic?

Some will say that being optimistic opens people up for disappointment and greater let downs. While that can be true to an extent, if you actively try to bring optimism into your life it gives you more resilience when faced with hardship. We know that even a test or difficulty can have great reward and outcomes in the end. Focusing on that end result and having patience is more beneficial than focusing on the hardship.

“For indeed, with hardship [will be] ease” [Quran 94:5]

This is not to say that we should be unreal-

istic and always expect rainbows and kittens, sometimes hardships will come into your life. It is healthy to be logical and acknowledge risks associated with your actions. Ideally you should strive for optimistic thought patterns that are also rational. I am not advocating for grandiose illusions that you will become a millionaire overnight and have the perfect marriage all because you chose to see the glass as half-full, that is not realistic.

Anxiety and Optimism

If we think about anxiety, we can summarize that as fear of the unknown which can hinder someone's ability to function when not controlled. Anxiety disorders hold people back from going after their dreams because they are so afraid to fail that they don't even try.

An optimist is more likely to pursue their ambitions because of their positive outlook; they see opportunity and believe they can achieve it. We like to know we are right and often encounter self-fulfilling prophecies, which simply means we alter our behavior and thought patterns in order to cause those self-expectations to come true.

For example, an optimistic teacher expects a student to get an A on the exam so they spend extra time helping them study which results in them getting an A. On the other side of that, a pessimistic teacher may expect a student to perform poorly so they don't pay them much atten-

tion in class which results in a lower grade. We are not actually predicting anything; we are altering our own behaviors in order to make those expectations a reality.

Now imagine if you expected yourself to succeed at work, do you think this would cause you to work harder? What if you expected your marriage to fail, would you self-sabotage without realizing it just to prove yourself right?

Impact of Optimism

When someone decides to take steps forward to increase their optimism, they are choosing to bring more positivity and gratefulness into their life. If you take on an optimistic perspective when failure happens, instead of becoming defeated you will have the power to see that as a temporary setback and even a lesson. If you have ever heard of failing forward, that is an optimistic mindset.

You can even expect physical health benefits from increased optimism. Studies show that pessimistic people are at a higher risk for hypertension, a hindered immune system and some even claim a reduced life span. It makes logical sense that choosing to see the world with more positivity will lower health risks associated with stress.

You increase your chances of success. The person who goes into a job interview second guessing themselves will not come off as competent to the manager, but the optimistic interviewee that knows they are qualified are more likely to exude confidence and garner trust from the manager.

Your marriage can even increase in happiness if you approach everyday as a blessing to be with them and have optimistic views for your future together. Your wife or husband would feel happier if they get a sense of positivity and happiness from you instead of negative comments.

5 Tips to Increase Optimism

Fake it till you make it. Even if you are unsure of your abilities, do your best and tell yourself

that you can achieve success. Keep trying and do it with a smile. The more you believe you can achieve success, the more likely you will.

Avoid negative/pessimistic people as much as you can. The social circles you choose to be around will impact your thought patterns and behaviors. It is not easy to be an optimistic in a room full of negative-nancies. Even your faith can be impacted by those you choose to keep as friends.

Man follows his friend's religion, you should be careful who you take for friends [At-Tirmidhi and Abu Dawud]

Focus on what you can change. I have always liked the expression don't cry over spilt milk. Which simply means, if you can't change something then don't let it bring down your mood. Focus on the things you can positively impact and let the rest go.

Eliminate negative self-talk. The next time you hear yourself saying "I can't..." stop yourself and rephrase that to "I can because..." or "I will try my best". This goes back to self-fulfilling prophecies; don't set yourself up for failure by thinking you will not succeed before you even try.

Exercise gratitude daily. Every evening after maghrib take a moment to reflect on 3 positive things from your day. Allow yourself to feel gratitude and say Alhamdulillah after each one.

Final Thoughts

We know that nothing is too difficult or out of grasp for Allah (most glorified and exalted), taking time to really reflect on this reminds us that we can make dua for anything as long as it is just and in line with our faith.

His command is only when He intends a thing that He says to it, "Be," and it is. [Quran 36:82]

How can we not feel optimism and hope when we are servants of the one that created everything and has ultimate power over everything.

Avoiding Extremes

Khalid Baig

Does Islam require --- or even permit ---- a coed masjid?

Without using the term ---for obvious reasons---- many people in the US are making suggestions that point in that direction. They begin by referring to real problems women face in some of the masajid where they are denied even minimal facilities to use the masjid but then take a “leap of faith” and go to the extreme position that men and women must be in the same physical space without any barriers and that both must have an equal share in administering the masjid. They call it the Prophetic example and the practice of this ummah over the centuries as a deviation from that Sunnah. They want to correct a historic wrong!

So let us take a careful and balanced look at the role of the masjid and that of our sisters in it according to Islamic teachings.

Does the Qur’an Require Masjid Attendance by Women?

The answer is no. Neither the Qur’an nor the Hadith make it a religious obligation for women to pray in a masjid. It is permitted, with conditions, as we shall see below. But it is never required.

Some people have tried to use the ayah from Surah al-Ahzab to imply a requirement. The ayah says:

“For the Muslim men and women,- for the be-

lieving men and women, for the devout men and women, for the truthful men and women, for the men and women who are patient and constant, for the men and women who humble themselves, for the men and women who give charity, for the men and women who fast, for the men and women who guard their chastity, and for the men and women who are exceedingly mindful of Allah—for them has Allah prepared forgiveness and great rewards.” [Al-Ahzab 33: 35]

What this very important ayah tells us is that women and men are equal in being servants of Allah and being responsible for whatever obligations have been placed on them. Allah’s forgiveness and great rewards are open to both men and women as they become sincere believers and devout worshipers, and as they develop qualities of humbleness, chastity, charity, and taqwa. It does not say that their obligations are the same or they work in a coed world.

Some people used this alleged quote from the Qur’an:

“They (collaborate) to promote all that is good and oppose all that is evil.” [Al-Tawbah 9:71]

to make their case. The word “collaborate” has been inserted to suggest that the Qur’an is praising men and women collaborating with each other in a coed campaign. If that is the idea, that is a blatant lie. For the word is not there and it

is not implied. The Qur'an is simply asking men and women to command good and forbid evil in their own spheres. Here, for comparison, are three translations:

YUSUFALI: they enjoin what is just, and forbid what is evil.

PICKTHAL: they enjoin the right and forbid the wrong.

SHAKIR: they enjoin good and forbid evil.

None of them hints at the word "collaborate."

The Qur'an on Mixed Gatherings

To understand the Qur'an's view of mixed gatherings, we can turn to this verse: "O you who believe! Let not some men among you laugh at others: It may be that the (latter) are better than the (former): Nor let some women laugh at others: It may be that the (latter) are better than the (former)" [Al-Hujarat, 49:11]. Here men have been admonished against laughing at other men and women from laughing at other women. But there is no mention of cross gender possibilities. Why? Because in Islam there is no concept of a mixed gathering. So the question of men laughing at women or vice versa simply does not arise.

Ahadith on Women's Prayers

Given below are some of the ahadith that address the issue of women's prayers.

A) Um Salama (ra) narrates that the Messenger of Allah (saws), said: "The best masjid for women is the innermost part of their houses." [Ahmad 6/297, Tabrani in Al-Kabeer, Ibn Khuzaima, Mustadrak Hakim 1/209].

B) Um Humayd, the wife of Abu Humayd As-Sadi, Radi-Allahu anhumu, narrates that she came to the Prophet (saws) and said: "O Messenger of Allah, I love to pray with you. He said, "I know that you love to pray with me, but your prayer in your bayt [e.g. bedroom] is better than your prayer in your hujra [e.g. living room], and your prayer in your hujra is better than your prayer in your daar [e.g. courtyard], and your prayer in your daar is better than your prayer in

your neighborhood masjid, and your prayer in your neighborhood masjid is better than your prayer in my masjid." The narrator says: "So she ordered and a masjid was constructed for her in the farthest and darkest corner of her house, and she continued to pray there until she died." [Ahmad 6/371, Ibn Khuzaima 3/95, Ibn Hibban 2214]

C) Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, Radi-Allahu anhu, narrates that the Messenger of Allah (saws), said: "No woman prays a prayer more beloved to Allah, than that in the darkest part of her home." [At-Tabrani in Al-Kabeer. Also Ibn Khuzaimah 3/96]

D) Abdullah Ibn Umar, Radi-Allahu anhu, narrates that the Messenger of Allah (saws), said: "The woman is worth hiding ('awrat) and when she leaves her home, the Shaytaan raises his glance to her, and she is never closer to Allah than when she is in the innermost part of her home." [Tabrani in Al-Awsat. For similar ahadith see Tirmidhi, Abwaab-ur-Ridaa' 1173; Ibn Khuzaima 3/93; Ibn Hibban 5570]

E) Abdullah Ibn Umar, Radi-Allahu anhu, narrates that the Messenger of Allah (saws), said: "Do not prevent your women from (entering) the mosques, but their houses are better for them." [Abu Dawud Kitab-us-Salat. Bab Ma Jaa' fi Khuroojin-nisaa-i ilal Masjid]

F) Abdullah Ibn Umar, Radi-Allahu anhu, narrates that the Messenger of Allah (saws), said: "Do not prevent your women from (entering) the mosques of Allah." [Sahih Muslim. Kitab-us-Salat, Babu Khuroojin Nisaa'i ilal masjid iza lam utarattab. #668]

Imam Nawawi's Commentary on the Hadith prohibiting Stopping Women from Masjid

This last hadith has been used as a justification for an unmitigated and unconditional right of women to fully participate in the main hall of a masjid. But this is not how it has been understood by hadith scholars and Muslim jurists. In his commentary of Sahih Muslim, Imam Nawa-

wi writes:

“From this hadith and other ahadith like this it appears that women should not be prohibited from the masjid, but with conditions that the scholars have mentioned and which are deduced from ahadith and these are:

- 1) She should not wear any perfume.
- 3) She should not be wearing jingling jewelry
- 4) She should not be wearing fancy clothes.
- 5) She should not mix with the men.
- 6) She should not be young, through whom fitna can erupt
- 7) The path to the masjid should be safe (i.e. there should be no fear of any problem on her way to and from the masjid).

Stopping them from going to the masjid will be lightly discouraged (makruh tanzih) if she meets all the conditions listed here and has a husband or guardian. Stopping them will be haram when she meets all the conditions and does not have a husband or guardian.”

Women in the Masjid in the Time of the Prophet (Sall-Allahu Alayhi wa sallam)

Certainly there are authentic reports that tell us that women did attend the prayers at the masjid during the time of the Prophet, Sall-Allahu Alayhi wa sallam. But they do not support the overall picture being painted by the coed masjid campaigners. Regarding women’s prayers in the masjid, we get this account:

Aishah (ra) narrates that the Prophet (saws), used to pray Fajr at dusk and then the women would leave immediately without being recognized because of darkness and they would not recognize each other. [Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Azan Bab Sur’ati Insiraaf-inisaa-i min as-subh]

Another narration tells us:

Um Salamah (ra) reports that when the Prophet (saws), finished the prayer by saying salam, the women would stand up and leave while he was saying the salam. And he would stay in his place for a little while before standing up. [Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Azan Bab Salat-un-Ni-

sa khalf-ar-Rijal]. Other narrations tell us that men also stayed with the Prophet, Salla-Allahu alayhi wa sallam, so the women could leave before men.

While both of these ahadith tell us that women were praying in the masjid, they also inform us that an overriding concern was that they should not be seen by men. The women left even as the Prophet (saws), was saying the salam. This act would be extremely rude if conducted by a man. Yet it was desirable for women, clearly pointing out that men and women are not the same. Further, all men stayed behind so the women could leave without encountering them. Needless to say, this is poles-apart from the mutual discussion, full participation, and collaboration being advocated.

Masjid Setting the Tone for the Islamic Society

There is something else worth reflecting upon here. Islam brought about a sea-change in the Jahilya society, including its ethics, morality, and cultural practices. The pre-Islamic Jahilya society was a coed society, just like the modern Jahilya society. Islam transformed it, introducing, among other things, the laws of hijab and segregation of men and women. Of course the masjid was the center of this cultural and moral revolution. It had to depict the new teachings in the purest way possible so they would be emulated everywhere. And it did. Women were fully covered, wore no perfume or jingling jewelry, stayed as far away from men as possible and left the masjid quickly after the salat so there would be no intermixing. Even on the way to and from the masjid, they would stay so far to the sides that they were practically scraping the walls of the buildings. (See Abu Dawud, Kitab-ul-Adab. Bab “Fi Mashyin nisaa-i ma’ar-rijaali fit-tareeq”)

Blocking the Means

Another thing to keep in mind is the well-established Islamic juristic principle of Sadd-udh-

dharaai', or the principle of blocking the means to sin. In life often one thing leads to another. An act of sin is not an isolated event but is preceded by chains of other events, which facilitate it. Therefore, Islam does not just forbid the final act, but also the preceding acts that can lead to it. There are hundreds of laws in Islamic jurisprudence that are based on this important principle. Consider alcohol. All its problems arise from its consumption. But Islam banned not just consumption of alcohol, but also making it, storing it, selling it, offering it, and even eating at a table where it is being served. This is blocking the means. One only needs to look at the spectacular success that Islam had in prohibiting alcohol and keeping the lands of Islam dry compared to the miserable failure of other societies in achieving that goal to appreciate the wisdom of the Islamic teachings.

Islam's laws of hijab follow the same principle. Ultimately, it is the illicit extramarital relationships that are prohibited. But Islam does not limit itself to banning this final result. It also prohibits a number of other practices that could lead to this final sin. Again, the result speaks for itself. For centuries, Islam has provided an atmosphere of chastity and decency in its societies that remains unmatched by any other society. And this has been accomplished through the same laws of hijab and segregation of sexes that are under attack today.

Fuqaha on Women in the Masjid

We can gain further insight into this issue by looking at the positions of the schools of fiqh. This should dispel the myth that it is only some misguided Mullahs from the subcontinent that stand in the way of coed masajid.

Shafi'i Fiqh (Taken from the Reliance of the Traveler):

It is better for women to pray at home than at the mosque (A: whether they are young or old). It is offensive for an attractive or young woman to come to the mosque to pray (O: or for

her husband to permit her), though not offensive for women who are not young or attractive when this is unlikely to cause temptation. (N: the authors words here must be interpreted in the light of the following details: If a woman in going to a group prayer or elsewhere will definitely lead to temptation between the sexes, it is unlawful for her to go. If such temptation can be definitely prevented her going to attend group prayer remains sunnah, as is attested to by the ahadith that have reached us on the subject. If temptation is feared but not certain to occur, her going becomes offensive. Whether such temptation is likely to occur is something that differs with different times, places, and people. An old woman is not like a young one, nor a righteous society like one in which temptation between the sexes is the rule; nor is a special prayer place set aside for women in a mosque like a prayer place which they share with men. This is why A'isha (ra) said:

“Had the Prophet (saws) seen what women do now, he would have forbidden them the mosque as the women of Bani-Israel were forbidden.” (A hadith reported by Bukhari and Muslim)

Hanafi Fiqh (Translated from Al-Lubaab):

And it is offensive for young women to attend the congregation at all, because in that there is a fear of fitna (but there is no harm that old women attend Fajr, Maghrib, and Isha). And that is according to Imam Abu Hanifah. And according to them (Imam Abu Yusuf and Imam Muhammad) old women can go out in every salah, because there is no fear of fitna because they lack attractiveness. According to Jawharatun Nayyara, the offensiveness is in all salah because of the appearance of fisq in our time period. The bad people come more during Zuhr, Asr, and Jumuah prayers while they are sleeping at the time of Fajr and Isha and eating at the time of Maghrib.

The positions of the Maliki and Hambali

schools are also similar.

Conclusion

As has been shown above, the case for a full and equal participation by men and women without barriers in the main hall of the masjid, therefore, has no foundation in the Shariah.

However, women may have genuine needs for using the masjid and they have been permitted to do so. It is the responsibility of the administrators of a masjid to see to it that these needs are met by providing them with a safe, protected, and private space. Where women are denied entry in the masjid, or where they are required to enter the main hall, the situation should be corrected.

The central argument of the proponents of the coed masjid is that segregation is exclusion. But it is not. No one would take the demand seriously that medical and engineering students at a university must share the same classroom to prove that they are not unequal. Their needs are different, and so are their spaces.

The prohibition of free mixing of men and women and their equal, unrestrained participation in public affairs is not something to be ashamed of. This has been meant to provide for chastity and purity of hearts and conduct and that has been its result. In contrast, houses of worship of other religions became horrible centers of corruption on this account precisely because their leaders chose to ignore this principle. And as we become lax in this area we are seeing similar unfortunate incidents in the masjid in the West as well.

While the advocates of the coed masjid claim that they are asserting the rights of women, they are in fact denying the right of a private space to both men and women. The masjid is the pivot for the Muslim community. It has to be the place that sets the standards for proper behavior. It is the responsibility of everyone to protect it from all corruption, including the one promoted in the name of reform.

WAIT PATIENTLY FOR A HAPPY OUTCOME - PAUSE TO REFLECT

By Sh Aaidh Al-Qarni

Do not worry about your wealth that is stored in vaults. Unless you have faith in Allah, your high castles and your green gardens will only bring you worry, grief, and hopelessness.

Do not be sad: even the diagnosis of the doctor and his medicine cannot make you happy if you have allowed sadness to dwell in your heart, letting it permeate your emotions and your existence.

Do not be sad: you have the ability to supplicate to Allah and thus excel at humbling yourself at the doorstep of the King of kings. You have the blessed last third of the night to invoke Allah and to rub your head upon the ground in prostration.

Do not be sad: Allah has created for you the earth and what is in it. He has caused gardens of beauty to grow, filling them with many kinds of plants and flowers in pairs, both male and female. And He has made tall palm trees, shining stars, forests, rivers and streams, yet you are sad!

Do not be sad: you drink water that is pure, you breathe fresh air, you walk upon your two feet in health, and you sleep the evenings in peace.

Do not be sad: Seek forgiveness from Allah often, for your Lord is Oft-Forgiving... “[Noah} said [to them]: ‘Ask forgiveness from your Lord; verily, He is Oft-Forgiving. He will send rain to you in abundance; and give you increase in wealth and children, and bestow on you gardens; and bestow on you rivers.’” (71:10-12)

So seek forgiveness from Allah more often and you will reap the benefits of doing so: peace of mind, lawful provisions, righteous offspring, and plentiful rain.

Indecent, Immoral, and Gratuitous

Abdul Malik Mujahid

Every Friday we hear the Imam conclude his sermon by reciting the following verse of the Quran:

“Surely God enjoins justice, kindness and the doing of good, to kith and kin; and He forbids all that is shameful, indecent, evil, rebellious and oppressive.” InnaAllah Yamuru bil adel, wal ehsane, wa itae zil qurba; wa yanha anil fuhshae, wal munkari walbaghi; yaizukhum lallakum tazakkaroon. (Quran 16:90)

Pornography and the culture of pornography has all the three elements which God has prohibited in the above verse of the Quran: Fahsha; Munkar, baghi. Here is a bit of terminology before we review the rest of the evidence prohibiting pornography.

Fahsha:

According to the Al-Mawrid Arabic-English dictionary of Munir Baalbaki, Fahsha is obscenity, vulgarity, indecency, shamelessness and something that is dirty, filthy and foul. Al-Mawrid's English-Arabic dictionary translates por-

nographic as Fahish. The Hans Wehr Dictionary Of Modern Written Arabic adds monstrosity, abomination, vile deed and fornication to its meaning as well.

Fahsha, translated as anything shameful, is a Quranic term which in the Quran and Hadith has been used widely for unIslamic sexual behavior. The Quran uses it as in the above verse (Quran 16:90). It is a set of vices that embraces the whole range of evil and

shameful deeds. Scholars of the Quran have included every vice which is intrinsically of a highly reprehensible character into this category whether it be fornication, nudity, public foreplay as depicted in films and photos, pornography, hurling abuses and curse words, promiscuous mixing, or dresses designed to expose the body. At the highest level of Fahsha, Allah has included adultery (Quran 17:32) and same gender sex (Quran 7:80; 27:54).

All scholars agree pornography is included in the term Fahsha.

Al-Munkar

Al-Mawrid English – Arabic Dictionary describes Munkar as gross, abominable, detestable, atrocious, outrageous, flagrant.

As a major Quranic term it means something which is universally acknowledged as bad and immoral. This category includes all evils which have been unanimously condemned by the human conscience and which have been forbidden by Divine Law in all ages.

People of all faiths abhor pornography. Even the norms of American society do not allow its propagation in mainstream newspapers and

prime time TV, forcing it to hide in dark alleys. Those who are addicted to pornography try to watch it mostly discreetly. This indicates that it is a universally accepted immoral act which Quran calls al-Munkar.

Al-Baghi

According to Al-Mawrid English – Arabic dictionary, this term means wrong, injustice, outrage, and transgression.

Al-Baghi in the Quranic terminology means transgression and trespassing into the space and the rights of others, whether those rights be of God or of a fellow human being. Pornography is a transgression towards God as well as towards human beings and animals. The pornographic industry trespasses on the rights of women especially by turning them into sex objects. Pornographic emails trespass the private email boxes of Americans at least four times a day.

God is Against Pornography (Fahsha) whether Open or Hidden

“Tell them (O Muhammad): ‘My Lord has only forbidden indecent acts, whether overt or hidden’” (Quran 7:33).

Therefore, watching pornography or other indecent acts in the privacy of the home or on the internet is also forbidden.

Allah Asks Us Not to Even Go Close to It

“Say to them (O Muhammad!) ‘Do not even draw near to things shameful—be they open or secret’...” (Quran 6:151)

Allah has mentioned this instruction along with shirk and murder which means that Allah considered shameful things like pornography among the major sins.

Allah knows best. He knows His creation. He knows that we are weak. Therefore, He likes us to stay away from shameful things.

Those who Propagate Shameful things among the Believers

“Verily those who love that indecency should spread among the believers deserve a painful chastisement in the world and in the Hereafter. Allah knows, but you do not know.” Quran 24:19

The words used in the verse (fahishatu) embrace all the various forms that might be used to spread shameful and lewd behavior though any means be it pictures, films, or internet.

Don't follow Satan

At several places in the Quran, God warns us not to follow the steps of Satan:

“He will incite you for shameful things (fuhsha) and encourage you to do universally accepted wrong things (al-munkar) Quran 24:21

Restrain Your Gaze & Guard Your Private Parts

“Enjoin believing men to restrain their gaze and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Surely Allah is well aware of all what they do.

And enjoin believing women to restrain their gaze and guard their private parts and additionally not to reveal their adornment except that which is revealed of itself.” Quran 24:30-31

Sayings of the Prophet: Hadith

“No man or woman should look at the naked body of each other (unless married).” (Sahih Muslim)

“By God, I would prefer to be thrown from the skies and smashed to pieces than to look at someone's private parts or let someone look at my private parts.” (This is a saying narrated from Salman in Sarakhsi's “Mabsut”).

“Don't expose your thigh to anyone and don't look at the thigh of any person even if s/he is dead.” Narrated Ali ibn abi Talib. (Ibn e Maja, Abi Dawud, Darqutani)

“Once someone’s thigh was open in public. The Prophet said don’t you know thigh is supposed to be kept covered?” (Muwatta Imam Malik, Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud)

“Allah has written for Adam’s son his share of adultery which he commits inevitably. The adultery of the eyes is the sight (to gaze at a forbidden thing), the adultery of the tongue is the talk, and the inner self wishes and desires and the private parts testify all this or deny it.” Abu Hurairah. (Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud.)

Other Scholarly Perspectives

“It’s absolutely Haram,” notes Shaykh Muhammad Nur Abdullah. He is the Imam of the Islamic Foundation of Greater St. Louis in Missouri.

“If someone is looking at someone committing Zina (sex outside of marriage) whether it is in movies or pictures or the actual thing, it’s all Haram,” he adds.

“Pornographic pictures and movies are haram (prohibited). Muslims should not watch, sell or make such movies. The Prophet (saws) is reported to have said: “The eyes commit adultery, the tongue commits adultery, the hands commit adultery, the feet commit adultery and then the private parts confirm it or deny it.” (Reported by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal)

“This means that watching pornographic movies, listening to such songs or singing them, using one’s hands and feet for this purpose, all these are sins that are related to Zina and then the final act of Zina takes place through haram intercourse.” Dr. Mu-zammil Siddiqi

Logging in and browsing pornographic sites is forbidden because a Muslim is always commanded to lower his/her gaze, let alone give a loose rein to his/her ? eyes to look at the private parts of others.

Down and Moody

Sometimes we do have those unpleasant days, where we feel down and low, moody and irritable. Often on such occasions we tend to make the biggest mistake by blurting out our thoughts and feelings. The devil and our base desires deceive us to think that we are getting everything off our chests and we will thereafter feel much lighter and better. However our explosive reaction only adds to our pain and makes us later regret. The wiser and more intelligent thing to do is to turn our gaze away from all the negatives around us and focus on the positives. This will help to bring about some balance within us. Thereafter we should smile and others will smile with us. We should speak good and do good to others, and we ourselves will automatically feel good again. Before we know it, we will once more be feeling better and in high spirits. Then, in a rational and positive manner, address the issues that are necessary to attend to. Otherwise, adopt patience and take the innumerable rewards from Allah.

Mercy Stories

Muhammad Fathi



Can you define the whole message of Prophet Muhammad (saws) in one word?

The best to do that, of course, is the One Who sent the message and Who chose the Messenger. In the Qur'an, Allah Almighty makes this brief yet crystal-clear statement:

{And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds} (Al-Anbiyaa' 21:107)

Mercy is the keyword here. It is the spirit of Islam and the core of the message. That's no strange since its originator is Allah, the Compassionate, the Most Merciful. He says in the Qur'an:

{My mercy encompasses all things.} (Al-A`raf 7:156)

The Messenger chosen by the Most Merciful to deliver the message of mercy set a great example in this regard. His life reflected this sublime value. In his sayings, actions and dealings, he reflected the highest level of mercy that could be ever reached by a human being.

In this collection, we list a number of sayings, testimonials, stories and situations that show the significance as well as the application of this value. The collection is divided into parts but it is by no means exhaustive. Examples of the Prophet's mercy cannot be fully contained in such brief articles.

Divine Mercy Prevails

1. Abu Hurairah (ra) reported: I heard the Messenger of Allah (saws) saying,

"When Allah created the creatures, He wrote in a Book, which is with Him over [His] Throne: 'Verily, My Mercy prevails over My Wrath' (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

2. Abu Hurairah (ra) also narrated that the Messenger of Allah (saws) said,

"Allah has divided mercy into one hundred parts; and He retained with Him ninety-nine parts, and sent down to earth one part. Through this one part creatures deal with one another with compassion, so much so that an animal lifts baby animal, lest it should trample on it." (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Mercy: A Proof of Faith

3. Jarir (ra) narrated that the Prophet (saws) said:

"Allah does not show mercy to those who do not show mercy to people." (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

4. `Abdullah ibn `Amr (ra) narrated that the Prophet (saws) said:

"Those who show mercy will be shown mercy by the Merciful [Lord.] Show mercy to those on earth, and He Who is in the heavens will show mercy to you." (At-Tirmidhi and authenticated by Al-Albani)

5. Abu Musa Al-Ash`ari (ra) narrated that the Prophet (saws) said:

“You can never be (true) believers until you show mercy to one another.”

The Companions said, “We all show mercy, O Messenger of Allah.”

The Prophet replied,

“It is not the compassion that any one of you shows to his friend. It is the compassion and mercy that you show the people in general [that I mean].” (At-Tirmidhi)

Kind Correction of Mistakes

6. Once a Bedouin entered the Prophet’s mosque for the first time. He raised his voice in supplication, “O Allah, forgive me and Muhammad, but don’t forgive anyone else!” The Prophet smiled at him and remarked gently, “You are limiting something that is vast.” Later, the man urinated on the masjid floor. The Prophet calmed the dismayed onlookers, and told them to leave the man alone. He reminded his companions that they were sent to make things easy on people, not difficult. The bedouin later recounted his experience with the Prophet:

May my mother and father be sacrificed for him. He did not scold or insult me. He just said, ‘We do not urinate in these mosques—they were built for prayer and remembrance of Allah.’ Then he called for a bucket of water to be poured on the ground. (Ibn Majah and authenticated by Al-Albani)

7. A man once confessed he was doomed because he slept with his wife while fasting in Ramadan. The Prophet asked if he was able to free a slave. The man said no.

– “Can you fast two consecutive months?”

– “No.”

– “Can you feed sixty poor people?”

– “No.”

The Prophet stayed quiet. Soon, a basket of dates was presented to him. The Prophet took the dates, and looked for the man.

“Take these dates and give them in charity.”

The man said dejectedly, “No one is poorer than me, Messenger of Allah. By Allah, there is no family in all of Madinah poorer than mine.”

At this, the Prophet’s face broke into a smile.

“Take it and feed your family,” he said. (Al-Bukhari)

The above two incidents are taken from the article 7 Prophetic Strategies of Correcting Mistakes. Read more examples in Part 1 and Part 2 of the article.

Care for Vulnerable People

8. Anas ibn Malik (ra) said:

I served the Prophet at home and on journeys. By Allah, he never said to me for anything which I did: Why have you done this like this? Or for anything which I did not do: Why have you not done this like this? (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

9. Once Mu`adh ibn Jabal (ra) led people in prayer and prolonged it. The Prophet (saws) rebuked him and directed him to recite short chapters of the Qur’an saying:

“O Mu`adh! Are you putting the people to trial? [Thrice]

It would have been better if you had recited *Sabbihis-sma Rabbika-l-a`la* [Surah 87], *Wash-shamsi waduhaha* [Surah 91], or *Wal-layli idha yaghsha* [Surah 92], for the old, the weak, and the needy pray behind you.” (Al-Bukhari)

10. Anas ibn Malik (ra) narrated that the Prophet said,

“(It happens that) I start the prayer intending to prolong it, but on hearing the cries of a child, I shorten the prayer because I know that the cries of the child will incite its mother’s passions.” (Al-Bukhari)

11. Abu Hurairah (ra) also narrated that the Messenger of Allah (saws) said:

I am closer to the believers than their own selves. So, if one of the believers dies leaving debts [unpaid off], I will repay it, but if he leaves wealth, it will be for his heirs. (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Why Do Converts Cry

Aisha Stacy

If you type converts crying into the Google search bar, you will find no shortage of videos, images, and articles about people converting to Islam and being overcome by strong emotions.

These overwhelming reactions often result in tears and feelings of liberation, as if the soul has been unburdened and set free.

Those who have not experienced this emotional release have trouble understanding the deep response felt by those who repeat the Shahadah (testimony of faith) and find themselves part of the world wide Muslim community.

Many converts to Islam have described their experience. “And I was so overwhelmed with love for Him (God) and appreciation at all the beauty He has created that I burst into tears.”

“It is a very emotional moment to come to this realization and finally calling yourself a Muslim and submitting yourself to God...”

It is difficult to get up to date research about how many people convert to Islam, but statistics point to the majority of converts in western countries coming from Christian backgrounds.

In 2017 the Pew Research Center estimated that 77% of American converts to Islam were previously Christian.[1]

Finding the Truth

Many converts cry during and after taking their Shahadah, and it appears that having a Christian background is somewhat significant.

And when they (those who call themselves Christian) listen to what has been sent down to the Messenger (Muhammad) you see their eyes overflowing with tears because of the truth they have recognized. They say, “Our Lord we believe, so write us down among the witnesses”. (Quran 5:83)

God described the reaction of Christians converting to Islam, after having called them those nearest in love to the believers. Because of their background, and their understanding of God, when they hear the true words of God they are able to recognize the truth. Their eyes overflow with tears because there literally are no words to describe how it feels to absorb a universal truth.

There is no going back, because once you know the truth, it cannot be unknown. It is an amazing experience and the convert’s world has been forever changed.

This verse does not imply that those from other religions, or indeed no religion at all, are not overcome with emotion. Their experience is

no less overwhelming. However those who followed the Christian religion report often feeling that there was something missing in their belief system. Islam allows them to reach out and grasp that missing dimension.

God rewards Christians who convert to Islam in a particular way. He says in Quran (5:85) that because of what they (the Christians who recognized the truth) said He will reward them with gardens under which rivers flow, where they will abide forever.

Tears are Power

While modern western culture might tell us that crying is a sign of weakness, Islam elevates the person who cries to a high status. Prophet Muhammad would remind his companions about the benefits of crying because of love, or fear, of God.

There are two eyes that will not be touched by the fire, the eye that weeps because of the fear of God and the eye that stands vigil at night guarding for the sake of God.[2]

The Prophet and his companions were known to weep on numerous occasions. Prophet Muhammad once asked his companion ibn Mas'ud to recite chapter 4, The Women, and when he reached verse 41: (How will it be then when we bring from each nation a witness, and we bring you (Prophet Muhammad) as a witness against these people?), Prophet Muhammad began to weep, his eyes overflowing with tears.[3]

Abdullah ibn Shaddad said:

"I heard the sobbing of 'Umar from the last rows when he was reciting the verse 'I only complain of my grief and sorrow to God.'" [4]

Renowned Islamic scholar, Ibn al Qayyim taught his students that there were several types of weeping, including weeping from joy and happiness.[5]

This would describe the uncontrollable tears experienced by many converts to Islam. At times converts describe feeling the same joy and overwhelming emotions when listening to the call to

prayer, or listening to the recitation of Quran.

Some even weep listening to Quran without understanding a single word of Arabic. Somehow God's, by God's Grace, words can be felt rather than heard and understood. In chapter 39: 22 God asks:

What about the one whose heart God has opened in devotion to Him, so that he walks in light from his Lord?

Now consider how God describes these people, He says they have skin that shivers and soft hearts.

God has sent down the most beautiful of all teachings, a Scripture that is consistent and draws comparisons; that causes the skins of those in awe of their Lord to shiver. Then their skins and their hearts soften at the mention of God, such is God's guidance. He guides with it whoever He will; no one can guide those God leaves to stray. (Quran 39:23)

New converts to Islam can surely be described as the ones who walk in God's light. While their emotions surge through them, tears fall from their overflowing eyes and their bodies shiver with the strength of their feelings.

Tears are sign of a soft and supple heart, and soft hearts are open to the beauty of Islam.

In addition to this, the tears of the convert are a blessing from God, a most prized blessing. The companions of Prophet Muhammad knew the preciousness of this gift and would encourage those who did not feel moved enough to cry to pretend, or force themselves to cry, in order to soften their hearts, and gain the rewards and blessings.

Prophet Muhammad's companion Abdullah Ibn Amr said:

Weep, and if you cannot weep then make yourself weep. If only you knew you would pray until your back was broken and weep until you lost your voice. [6]

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GIVE IT A SECOND THOUGHT

Guidelines on How to Approach Seemingly Problematic Hadith

By Mawlana Muntasir Zaman

“The example of the intellect is sight free of defects and illnesses, and the example of the Qur’ān is the sun with rays spread-out. Hence, the seeker of guidance that dispenses with one of them in lieu of the other is most fit to be included in the deluge of fools. The one turning away from the intellect, sufficing with the light of the Qur’ān, his example is one exposed to the light of the sun, while closing the eyelids, so there is no difference between him and the blind. Thus, the intellect with the sharī’ah is light upon light. The onlooker with an eye blind to one of them specifically is drawn in by a deceptive rope.”

– Imām al-Ghazālī
(d. 505 AH) [1]

In numerous places, the Qur’ān calls on man to use his intellect and to contemplate over the perfection of Allah’s creation. Allah says, “We have certainly sent down to you a Book in which is your mention. Then will you not reason?”[2] In other verses, the Qur’ān reprimands those who do not use their reasoning, such as, “But those who disbelieve invent falsehood about Allah,

and most of them do not reason.”[3] Therefore, there exists no incongruity between reason and revelation; rather, reason leads one to appreciate and understand revelation.[4] But it should be ensured that the reasoning is sound and the revelation is authentic.[5]

From the formative period of Islamic history, scholars have written books to address apparently contradictory hadiths, a field known

as Mukhtalif al-Hadīth,[6] and hadiths that seem to images conflict with other evidences or external realities, a field known as Mushkil al-Hadīth.[7] In this regard, Muhammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi’i (d. 204 AH) au-



thored *Ikhtilāf al-Hadīth*,[8] regarded as one of the earliest works on the subject, Ibn Qutaybah al-Dīnawārī (d. 276 AH) authored his pioneering monograph *Ta’wīl Mukhtalif al-Hadīth*, Abū Ja’far al-Tahāwī (d. 321 AH) authored his peerless compendium *Sharh Mushkil al-Āthār*,[9] and Abū Bakr Ibn Fūrak (d. 406 AH) authored

his masterpiece *Mushkil al-Hadīth wa Bayānuhū* (Allah have mercy on them all). Scholars have also dealt with narrations of this nature in their Hadīth commentaries. Abū Bakr Ibn Khuzaymah (d. 311 AH), a leading authority in Hadīth, states, “I am unaware of any two authentic narrations of the Prophet that are contradictory. If anyone comes across such narrations, let him bring it to me so that I can reconcile between them.”[10]

The surge of criticism in recent times towards supposedly problematic hadīths has arisen because critics claim that these reports are absurd, unscientific, impossible, or contradictory. Many of the narrations that have been cast into the spotlight for allegedly problematic content were already discussed in detail by the greatest Islāmic minds. The difference, however, between classical Muslim scholars and modern critics is the perspective with which the two groups view the objection. Traditional scholars were not oblivious to scientific realities nor were they blind to logical fallacies. They were simply more charitable in their readings of scriptural texts whereas modern critics are not willing to do so.[11]

It will be beneficial to keep a few broad guidelines in mind when dealing with narrations of this nature. By no means are these guidelines meant to be exhaustive. But keeping them in mind can help to provide a more charitable reading of hadīths that may appear problematic.

First, when a Muslim believes that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) received information concerning the unseen, how could he reject something authentically attributed to him only because it apparently seems far-fetched? If a hadīth describes how Shaytān interferes with humans, for example, how can a Muslim, who accepts that the Prophet receives information regarding the unseen, reject it under the pretext that it is absurd when it is describing something beyond the limitation of his intellect? To understand this point better, it

should be noted that there are primarily three sources from which people acquire knowledge: the sound senses (*al-hawās al-salimah*), the intellect (*al-‘aql*), and true information (*al-khabr al-sādiq*).[12]

The first source is the five senses i.e. hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, and touching. We use these senses to perceive the world around us; each sense within its scope of limitation. If someone tries to use a particular sense out of its limitation e.g. he tries to smell with his sense of touch, he will be regarded as a fool. The second source is the intellect. We can feel the smoothness of silk with our sense of touch and smell the fragrance of musk with our sense of smell. But none of these senses can help us to determine how they were prepared, simply because this knowledge is beyond the limitation of the five senses. This is where our reason comes in and guides us. Just like the five senses, the intellect also has its limitation. The third source is true information, the most important being divine revelation. Divine revelation goes beyond the scope of the intellect.[13] It would thus be foolish to reject divine revelation merely based on our intellect because divine revelation is beyond the jurisdiction of the intellect. This does not mean that revelation is illogical or that it lacks wisdom. Rather, it shows how we should not weigh revelation solely on a scale as limited and subjective as the intellect.

Second, it is imperative to understand what is authentically reported from the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) in its correct context. ‘Alī ibn Abī Tālib and ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ūd (Allah be pleased with them) said, “If you are told a hadīth from the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), think of it what is most fitting, most pious, and best guided.”[14] The Prophet’s practices are to be contextualized in view of his social context. It would be unfair for a critic to object to a particular practice or statement of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) regarding it as absurd simply be-

cause it is considered such in the critic's social milieu.

Third, at times narrations seem contradictory or seem to conflict with reality, but there exists a plausible explanation by providing a figurative reading. Arabic is a rich language with numerous linguistic tools that need to be kept in mind to understand it fully. To interpret the sayings of the Prophet without considering the tools of rhetoric can be misleading, especially when the use of figurative speech is common in Arabic. We can understand this in light of many verses of the Qur'an, which will not portray the intended meaning if interpreted literally. For instance, Allāh mentions, "They have forgotten Allāh, so He has forgotten them." [15] Obviously, forgetfulness is a deficiency, and Allāh is free from all deficiencies. The meaning of the verse, therefore, is that Allāh will abandon those who have forgotten Him. [16] Similarly, the Prophet said, "Two months of 'Īd never fall short: Ramadān and Dhū al-Hijjah," which apparently means that these two months will never fall short of thirty days, a meaning which contradicts reality. However, it is interpreted figuratively to mean that these two months will never fall short of spiritual value even though the days are twenty-nine. [17]

Fourth, it is essential to make a distinction between what is impossible (mustahīl) and what is unlikely (mustaghrab). Impossibility is a quality inherent in a thing itself and can never come into existence; a circle can never take the shape of a square. On the other hand, unlikelihood is relative as it is due to the limitations of one's reason. [18] Not so long ago, it was considered unlikely for someone to travel from one country to another in a short span of time and impossible for anyone to reach the moon. However, due to technological advancements, the achievement of such feats is now easily comprehensible. As such, if an authentic hadīth describes something

which according to our understanding seems unlikely, it is incorrect to discard it as an impossibility. And as Khalīl Mullā Khātir aptly pointed out, "It seems that skeptics of Hadīth have confused what is impossible with what is inconceivable or unacceptable to the Western worldview." [19]

These guidelines will help to provide a plausible explanation the next time a person objects to the contents of a hadīth authentically attributed to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). As mentioned earlier, the same hadīths modern critics regard as problematic have already been dealt with by classical Muslim scholars. However, while the classical Muslim scholar was willing to provide a more charitable reading of the hadīth, the modern critic, on the other hand, is not willing to give it a second thought.

[1] *Al-Ghazālī, al-Iqtisād*, p.66

[2] *Sūrat al-Anbiyā'*, verse 10

[3] *Sūrat al-Mā'idah*, verse 103

[4] See *al-Ghazālī, Qānūn al-Ta'wīl*, p.9

[5] See *Fūdah, al-Sharh al-Kabīr*, vol.1, pp.38-40

[6] When vowelized as *Mukhtalif al-Hadīth (active participle)* it refers to the conflicting hadīths, and when vowelized as *Mukhtalif al-Hadīth (infinitive)* it refers to the difference between the apparently contradictory hadīths. See *Khayyāt, Mukhtalif al-Hadīth bayn al-Muhaddithīn wa al-Uṣūliyyīn wa al-Fuqahā'*, pp.25-26

[7] *Abū Shuhbah, al-Wasīt fī 'Ulūm wa Mustalah al-Hadīth*, pp.442-443

[8] On whether *Ikhtilāf al-Hadīth* is an independent work or part of *al-Umm*, see: *al-Sūrah, Manhaj al-Tawfīq wa al-Tarjih*, pp.32-34

[9] On the correct title of Imam *al-Tahāwī's* book, see *al-'Awnī, al-'Unwān al-Sahih li al-Kitāb*, pp.64-65

[10] *Al-Baghdādī, al-Kifāyah*, pp.432-433

[11] See *Brown, The Rules of Matn Criticism*, pp.360, 390-391

[12] *Al-Nasafī, al-'Aqīdah al-Nasafiyah*, p.2

[13] See *'al-Uthmānī, Discourses on Islāmic Way of Life*, p.30

[14] *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, no.19, no.20. For an important clarification, see: *Ibn al-Muflih, al-Adāb al-Shar'iyah*, vol.2, p.309

[15] *Sūrat al-Tawbah*, verse 67

[16] *Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr Qur'an al-'Azīm*, vol.4, p.174

[17] *Al-Tirmidhī, al-Sunan*, vol.2, p.68, no.692; cf. *Brown, Misquoting Muhammad*, pp.79-83, 89-91.

[18] See *al-Sibā'ī, Al-Sunnah wa Makānatuhā fī al-Tashrī' al-Islāmī*, pp.51-52; cf. *Mullā Khātir, al-Isābah fī Sihhat Hadīth al-Dhubābah*, p.101

[19] *Mullā Khātir, al-Isābah fī Sihhat Hadīth al-Dhubābah*, p.102; cf. *Brown, The Rules of Matn Criticism*, p.393-394

Appeal

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