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RADIANT
REALITY

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brings you
to it,
He will
bring you
through it.

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RADIANT REALITY

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

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Question Answer

Question.

A Muslim brother had left the fold of Islam. After much effort by the fellow brothers he reverted to Islam Alhamdulillah. Now that he has reverted to Islam, is it necessary for him to repeat all his Salaah, fasts, Zakaat and Hajj?

Answer.

It is not necessary for a Muslim who had left the fold of Islam and then became Muslim again to repeat his Salaah, Fasts and Zakaat. However, this person will be required to perform Haj, once he has the means to do so, even if he had performed a previous Haj. This is considered as a new Haj and not a Qadha of a previous Haj. (Fataawa Mahmoodiyyah 1/85)

In other words, such a person will follow the laws of Islam as a new Muslim reverting to Islam for the first time.

Note: Just as it is necessary to renew and rectify one's belief when reverting to Islam, similarly the renewal of Nikah between husband and wife is also necessary for both spouses to live together lawfully in Islam.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Is it prohibited for the Mayyits family to make food for the people attending the Janaazah? Who should make the food? I've been told that it is prohibited for the Mayyits family to make food for the people attending the Janaazah?

Answer.

It is not prohibited for the household of the deceased to prepare food for their household, their guests, or for people attending the funeral.

The understanding that it is prohibited for them to do so is incorrect. (Fataawa Mahmoodiyyah 9/274/278)

However, family relatives, neighbours, and friends are advised to prepare the food as the household of the deceased will be pre-occupied in mourning.

Note: The customary practice of burdening the household of the deceased to feed all the attendees to the funeral is contrary to the Islamic principles and teachings. As far as possible, attendees to the funeral should make their own arrangements for food and not burden the household of the deceased by turning it into a feast.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

I am 18 years old and my brother is 25 years old. My father has given my brother a car but has not given me a car. Is it my father's responsibility Islamically to give me a car also just as he has given my brother a car? Do I not have a right as my brother also?

Answer.

It is the duty of parents that they maintain equality whilst gifting to their children during their lifetime. To give preference to one child over another during one's lifetime due to a valid reason will be permissible. Eg. one child is more in need than the other child. However, to do so without a valid reason will be Makrooh (disliked). (Shaami 4/444)

In the enquired case, it is possible that your father has given preference to your brother as he may be more in need of a car than you. Later on, if you are in need of a car, your father should do

the same for you.

Note: In such circumstances, parents should discuss these types of matters amongst their children to avoid any future disputes.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

After doing a pap smear or a cervical smear test by a gynaecologist, is Ghusl necessary?

Answer.

Undergoing a pap smear/cervical smear test only breaks Wudhu. Ghusl after a pap smear is not necessary.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

If you go for Umrah, does it become compulsory to go for hajj thereafter?

Answer.

By simply performing Umrah, Hajj does not automatically become compulsory on a person. Hajj only becomes compulsory on a person if one has sufficient means to perform Hajj over and above one's needs and requirements to fulfill the needs of one's family.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

If a person forgets to perform two rak'ats after the Tawaaf of Hajj or Umrah, is there a penalty for it?

Answer.

It is Waajib (compulsory) to perform two Rakaats Salaat-ut-Tawaaf after every Tawaaf. Hence, the performance of two Rakaats Salaat-ut-Tawaaf after the Tawaaf of Hajj or Umrah will still remain Waajib (compulsory) on a person in his lifetime and should be performed as soon as one remembers. To unnecessarily delay it and perform it at a place other than the Haram is Makrooh (disliked). However, there is no penalty (Damm) for delaying it. (Muallimul

Hujjaaj 139)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Can a divorced woman change her child's surname who has her ex-husbands surname due to spite or hate for her ex-husband? Can she do it for legal purposes?

Answer.

It is incorrect for an ex-wife to change her child's surname (her ex-husbands surname) to her family surname in order to distance and disassociate her child from the biological father. However, if an ex-wife changes her child's surname to her family surname for travelling or legal purposes and not to distance or disassociate her child from the biological father, then it would be permissible. (Fataawa Darul Uloom Zakariyyah 7/562)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

My husband issued me a divorce in lieu of my Mahr to him. What is the status of such a divorce? Is there an Iddah period for such a divorce?

Answer.

A wife returning the Mahr amount to the husband in exchange of a Talaaq is referred to as Khula'. The Talaaq issued by the husband to the wife subsequently will constitute as an irrevocable divorce (Talaaq-e-Baain). The general laws and principles governing the laws of divorce (revocable/irrevocable) also apply to the Talaaq issued in the case of Khula' i.e. she will observe the Iddah period of three menstrual cycles if she experiences menses or three lunar months if she does not experience menses or till birth if she is pregnant. (Al-Muheetul-Burhaani 3/507)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

If a person has issued his wife three divorces

verbally but he has not paid his wife her mahr nor has he written it on paper officially, will the talaq be valid?

Answer.

It is not a condition for the validity of a Talaq that the husband pays mahr to his wife before issuing the Talaq or to have the verbalised statement of Talaq put down in writing. If the husband issued the Talaq verbally to his wife and the husband did not pay his wife mahr or did not put it down in writing, the Talaq will still remain valid. Yes, it still remains an obligation upon the husband to pay his wife her mahr if he did not do so before issuing the Talaq.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

It has become a norm to conduct Quran Khatams for the deceased via Whatsapp groups. The group administrator distributes Paras to members of the Whatsapp group to recite for the deceased. A lot of times, it becomes difficult for members to choose or accept to recite a Para due to family responsibilities. If a person is not willing to choose or accept a Para, he/she still feels obliged to do so. Is this system correct?

Answer.

By arranging Quran Khatams through whatsapp groups, members of whatsapp groups may feel compelled to respond to the distribution of a Quran Khatam or may accept it just to please other members of the group. This deprives one of carrying out an act of worship with sincerity and securing the reward for the deceased. We therefore advise against implementing such a system.

A better method will be where members of whatsapp groups are advised through whatsapp to recite Quran individually without actually co-ordinating it through whatsapp groups. This will be more beneficial in securing the reward

for the deceased due to it being carried out with complete sincerity.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

What should a person do if they doubt the number of circuits in the Tawaaf-e-Ziyaarah of Hajj or the Tawaaf of Umrah? Should they repeat the entire Tawaaf?

Answer.

If a person doubts the number of circuits performed in the Tawaaf-e-Ziyaarah of Hajj or the Tawaaf of Umrah, they should only repeat the circuit in which there had been a doubt, eg. if a person had a doubt as to whether six or seven circuits were completed, then an additional circuit should be performed to remove any doubt. There is no need to repeat the entire Tawaaf. (Al-Bahrur-Raa'iq 2/356)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

The person who has not memorized nor has even studied the holy Qur'an, but knows Surah Fatiha and 3 Quls and recites them in his Salah. Is there any punishment for that person on the day of Judgment for not studying the Qur'an?

Answer.

A person should recite in salaah whatever portion of the Qur'an he knows. At the same time, an effort should be made in learning and memorizing more of the Qur'an. However there is no punishment for not memorizing more Surahs or the entire Qur'an.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

In which Saff (row) of the Musjid should a child stand for Salaah?

Answer.

Children who are not Baaligh (mature) as yet should stand in the row (saff) behind the

row (saff) of the adults. However, if there is only one child, he may stand in the row (saff) of the adults. (Fataawa Mahmoodiyyah 6/489)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

I would like to know if i got my menstruation while keeping the fast of Aashura do i now have to keep a qadhaa fast.

Answer.

In principle, if a woman experiences Haidh (menses) during a fast, the fast will break and it will be compulsory upon her to make Qadha of it. Hence, the same ruling will apply to a woman who experienced Haidh whilst observing the fast of Aashura, i.e. she will have to make Qadha of that fast. (Badaai-us-Sanaai' 2/94)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

If a woman's Haidh period is ten days and she first spotted blood at 2PM on the first day, then does her Haidh period end on the tenth day at 2PM or at Maghrib time? Does she count ten days by hours or by the Islamic day?

Answer.

A woman in Haidh (menstruation) will count her Haidh from the time she first notices it. She will count her days in 24 hour intervals from the exact time i.e. second, minute, hour that she spotted her Haidh. (Al-Fataawa-As-Sirajiyah 49)

Therefore, in the enquired situation, if her Haidh period is ten days and she first spotted her Haidh on the first day at 2PM, her Haidh period of ten days will end on the tenth day at 2PM and not at Maghrib time.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

A womans husband passed away while she was in the nifaas period after giving birth to his child. Is there iddat for her ?

Answer.

If a woman became widowed after she had given birth and whilst she was experiencing post-natal bleeding (Nifaas), she will observe the Iddah period of death which is four Months and ten days. The same ruling applies to a woman who became widowed whilst she was experiencing Haidh (menstruation) or Isthihaadha (irregular bleeding).

On the other hand, if a woman became widowed whilst being pregnant, she will also observe the Iddah period. However, her Iddah period will terminate at the birth of the child and not at four Months and ten days. This is irrespective if she gave birth a few hours, days or Months after she became widowed. In other words, there is no time limit to her Iddah period apart from the birth of the child. (Tuhfatul Fuqahaa 2/243)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

When we are told to spend on our family on the day of Aashura, does it mean exchanging of gifts or simply buying little extra for the household groceries or a special meal. Please clarify what is meant by it. I have been asked what gifts have I bought for my kids and parents.

Answer.

Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam said: "Whoever is generous to his family on the day of 'Aashura, Allah Ta'ala will expand his sustenance (Barakah) for the rest of that year." (Targheeb)

Spending on one's family on the day of Aashura is not restricted to the giving of gifts. It is general and applies to spending on one's family in terms of food, clothing and gifts as well. Therefore, it would suffice for one to spend on his/her family on the day of Aashura by giving gifts or by making a special meal for the family. (Shaami 6/430)

Note: The above hadith is reliable and suitable for practice.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

If a women's husband passes away and he is burried 2 days later; does the iddat of the women begin the day of the death or the day of the burial?

Answer.

Allah mentions the law of Iddah in the Quran:

“For those men who die amongst you and leave behind wives, they (the wives) must confine themselves (observe Iddah) for four months and ten days.” (Baqarah)

Thus, the Iddah period of a wife begins immediately from the death of her husband and not from the time of his burial. (Shaami 3/506)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

We have a situation wherein it is compulsory for employees to invest a portion of their salaries in a Pension Fund. After retirement, employees have access to one third of the entire fund. Thereafter, the two thirds of the fund will be paid to employees on a monthly basis. If an employee passes away, the remainder of the two thirds of the fund will be given to the beneficiaries of the fund. What portion of the fund forms part of one's estate and what portion of it is Zakaatable?

Answer.

In the enquired situation, Zakaat will be due on the one third 1/3 of the funds accessible after retirement as well as the monthly pay out received from the fund. Zakaat will be calculated from the time these funds become available and not before that.

There is no Zakaat on the two thirds 2/3 of the fund retained after retirement as the investment was not by choice and neither is access available to any portion of it.

In the case of demise after retirement, the remainder two thirds 2/3 of the funds will be-

long to the beneficiaries of the fund. The two thirds 2/3 of the funds will not form part of the deceased estate but will belong to the beneficiaries stipulated by the deceased.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Is it compulsory for the Imaam of a Musjid to inform the congregation to straighten their lines before commencing Salaah?

Answer.

Great emphasis has been placed in hadiths with regards to straightening the rows (sufoof) in Salaah. It has been reported from Sayyiduna Anas Bin Maalik (RA) that Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam said, “Keep your rows straight (during Salaah in congregation), for keeping the rows straight is part of the perfection of Salaah.” (Bukhari)

It is Mustahab (preferable) for the Imaam of the Musjid to remind the congregation to straighten their rows and to close the gaps (by joining the shoulders) before commencing Salaah. (Shaami 1/568)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Is it necessary to make a verbal intention in keeping the Qadha fasts of Ramadaan? What is the time to make an intention of keeping Qadha fasts of Ramadaan?

Answer.

It is necessary to make an intention from one's heart to keep the Qadha fasts of Ramadaan or any other Qadha fasts. A verbal intention is not required to keep Qadha fasts.

The intention to keep Qadha fasts must be made the night prior to fasting i.e. before the termination of Sehri. Hence, the intention to keep Qadha fasts cannot be made after the termination of Sehri. (Al-Lubaab 1/163)

Mufti Ismaeel

Gracious Lord & Ungrateful Man

O man! What has deceived you about your Gracious Lord, [] who created you, then perfected you, then brought you in due proportion? [] He composed you in whichever form He willed. [82:6-8]

The opening of Surah al-Infitar mentions the violent events that will take place at the end of this worldly life, and the current set of verses reminds us of the inceptive stages of our creation. The sum total of the verses purport to say that if man had considered carefully, he would have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and he would not have deviated a hair's breadth from Divine injunctions, but he slumped into heedlessness and forgetfulness. In the present verse, he is reprimanded by a rhetorical question and by means of gentle remonstrance as to what has lured him away from His Gracious Lord, and led him to disobedience, despite he knows his beginning, and he knows his end.

The verse further goes on to remind man of the inceptive stages of his creation. First, it says: (who created you, then perfected you,...82:7). The sense is that not only did Allah create man, but He also perfected his creation and proportioned his body, limbs and organs. Every limb and organ is well placed. The body, height, length and breadth of every limb are kept in harmony, symmetry and balance. Any deviation from the symmetrical construction of the human body, the organs will become dysfunctional. Then the verse says: *fa 'adalak* (...then brought you in due

proportion?...82:7). Man is granted such symmetry, harmony and balance that no other animal in the world is granted to that degree. Along with physical and physiological symmetry and harmony, he has been granted well-balanced disposition, despite the fact that man is made up of opposing humours - blood, phlegm, black bile and yellow bile. Some are hot and others are cold, and yet the perfect wisdom of Allah prepared a well-balanced disposition. Thereafter a third characteristic is mentioned as follows:

(He composed you in whichever form He willed...82:8). This is to indicate that since the basic structure of all human beings is the same, it was expected that the zillions of members of the human society would have shared the same shape, size and features, but the perfect mastery and the wonderful acumen of the Supreme Creator has created them so differently that each one of them has its own unique features that make him clearly distinct from all others, and no one is confused with another.

Having stated the creative acumen of the Great Creator, the verse states: (O man! What has deceived you about your Gracious Lord,...82:6). Allah has endowed man with such natural faculties and abilities that every limb and every

joint of his body was enough to remind him of His Creator, and to make him obedient. But he is lured away from his gracious Lord, has forgotten Him and disobeyed Him. The question is: How did he forget his Lord, how did he become heedless of Him, and how is he lured away from his Lord? On this occasion, the adjective *karim* (Gracious) used for the 'Lord' points to the answer. The reason for such an ungrateful attitude is that Allah is Gracious and does not punish man immediately after his committing a sin. Rather, his sustenance, welfare and well-being,

and worldly comforts [and pleasures] are not curtailed. He misinterprets Allah's magnanimity, and thus falls into deception. If man were to think rationally, he would adopt a grateful attitude and obedient behaviour, rather than adopting an ungrateful attitude and impudent behaviour. Sayyidna Hasan Al-Basri (ra): Allah have mercy upon him says:

'How many humans are there whose faults are put [by Allah] under cover, (i.e. He did not disgrace them), yet they do not appreciate (and are deluded by His grace.'

Appreciating the Bounties of Allah

A renowned scholar of recent times was Hazrat Maulana Maseehullah Khan Saheb (RA). Hazrat Moulana paid special attention to aspects related to etiquette and good mannerisms.

On an occasion a tailor approached Maulana and requested him for measurements in order that he may sew him a waistcoat. Maulana was seated at the time and experienced difficulty in standing up due to old age and physical ill health. Nevertheless Maulana stood up in order to hand over to the tailor the waistcoat he had on, to serve as a sample. But as he stood up he noticed his handkerchief in his waistcoat pocket. Instead of just throwing or dropping it down from that standing position, he chose to rather sit down again, remove that hankie, put it in its place and thereafter stood up and gave the tailor his waistcoat. He endured all this difficulty in spite of his extreme weakness only out of respect for the handkerchief which, though it may seem insignificant, it is nevertheless also the gift of Allah. (Hayate Maseehul Ummat Rahmatullahi Alayh, pg. 152)

Lesson: Every bounty is from Allah Ta'ala and therefore deserves special appreciation and respect. No matter how insignificant it may seem. To throw the handkerchief onto the floor also appears as if one is "throwing away" the bounty of Allah Ta'ala. Thereafter this is to be totally avoided

Lessons from Sahih Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

Chapter 31 : Facing the Qibla wherever you are.

Abu Huraira said that Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, “Face the qibla and say, ‘Allahu Akbar’ (Allah is the Greatest).”

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Facing the Qibla while offering salaah carries so much importance that it has been decreed compulsory to face it in all circumstances whether one is in front of it, away from it, at home or in a journey. Therefore, even a traveler is required to offer salaah while facing the Qibla, and in case he is unable to locate the exact direction after employing all his endeavours, he can offer salaah as per his perception with regard to the exact direction.

Sayyiduna Abu Huraira narrates Rasulullah saying, “face the Qibla and (offer salaah) say Allahu Akbar (Allah is the Greatest)”. By this statement of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) it is evident how much important it is to locate the direction of Qibla. It is permissible only for a traveller riding an animal (or other means of convenience) to offer salaah on its back in whichever direction it turns if he is unable to climb down due to some sort of weakness, apprehension, excessive rain etc., and this too is with regard to optional (nafl) salaah. As per Imam Abu Haneefa, it is permissible to do

so only during a travel and not otherwise.

Hadith No. 390

Narrated Bara' bin Azib

Allah's Apostle prayed facing Baitul-Maqdis for sixteen or seventeen months but he loved to face the Ka'ba (at Makkah) so Allah revealed: “Verily, We have seen the turning of your face to the heaven!” (2:144) So the Prophet faced the Ka'ba and the fools amongst the people namely “the Jews” said, “What has turned them from their Qibla (Bait-ul-Maqdis) which they formerly observed” (Allah revealed): “Say: ‘To Allah belongs the East and the West. He guides whom He wills to a straight path.’” (2:142) A man prayed with the Prophet (facing the Ka'ba) and went out. He saw some of the Ansar praying the Asr prayer with their faces towards Bait-ul-Maqdis, he said, “I bear witness that I prayed with Allah's Apostle facing the Ka'ba.” So all the people turned their faces towards the Ka'ba.

Comments

When Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) migrated to Madinah along with the Companions, they would offer salaah facing Baitul Maqdis (the grand mosque of Jerusalem) for about sixteen to seventeen months. However, he had a strong desire to offer salaah facing the Ka'ba. Once, when he went to the clan of

Banu Sa'd to attend the funeral prayer of Bashir bin Baraa, the time of Zuhr salaah approached and he set to offer the salaah there. When he had completed two rak'ats, the following verse was revealed to him:

We have been seeing you turning your face to the heavens. So, We will certainly assign to you a Qibla that you would like. Now, turn your face in the direction of the Sacred mosque (Al-Masjid-ul-Harām), and (O Muslims), wherever you are, turn your faces in its direction. Even those who have been given the Book know well that it is the truth from their Lord, and Allah is not unaware of what they do.

(2:144)

In this verse, Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was directed to take Ka'ba as the Qibla, so he along with the Companions turned towards the Ka'ba during the salaah itself and offered the last two rak'ats facing the Ka'ba. A Companion after attending his salaah with Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), came across a Madinite group of people (al-Ansaar) offering Asr salaah facing Baitul Maqdis, he shouted and informed them that henceforth the Ka'ba has been assigned the Qibla. All the people in their turned their faces towards the Ka'ba during the salaah. Same has been reported about the people of Quba who were offering Fajr salaah in Quba mosque when the information regarding the change reached them, they also turned their faces towards the Ka'ba while during the salaah itself.

Lessons from the hadith

1. It is compulsory to locate the exact direction of the Qibla. If a person having taken wrong direction of the Qibla is cautioned by someone about it, he is required to turn towards the right direction immediately.
2. The abrogation (naskh) of any Islamic rule can take place only if it is done by the Shariah itself e.g., the believers were first asked to offer

salaah facing Baitul Maqdis and afterwards this decree was abrogated by the Shariah itself, and they were asked to face the Ka'ba.

Hadith No. 391

Narrated Jaabir

Allah's Apostle used to pray (optional, non-obligatory prayer) while riding on his mount (Rahila) wherever it turned, and whenever he wanted to pray the compulsory prayer he dismounted and prayed facing the Qibla.

Comments

In the earlier hadiths stress was laid on the obligation to face the Qibla while offering Salaah, but according to this hadith, a traveller on his mount can take liberty to offer his salaah on his mount regardless of the direction it turns towards. However, the permissible is valid only in case of optional (nafl) salaah, and for the compulsory (fardh) one he has to climb down his mount, locate the Qibla and then offer his salaah facing it. Only in some exceptional cases is it permissible to offer Salaah riding a mount e.g., fear of a beast, heavy rains, some ailment, fear of dacoits etc. As per Allaama Ayni, it is not required to repeat the salaah offered in any such situation.

According to Ahmad bin Hambal, as quoted by Ibn Butaal and further by Allaama Ayni, it is preferable for a person on a mount to turn it towards the direction of Qibla at least when he starts of his salaah (i.e., Takbeer-i-Tahreemah) if it falls under his control, and in case the mount is not under his control i.e., he is boarding a bus, train etc., then there is no need to do so.

Hadith No. 392

Narrated Abdullah

The Prophet prayed (and the sub-narrator Ibrahim said, "I do not know whether he prayed more or less than usual"), and when he had finished the prayers he was asked, "O Allah's Apos-

tle! Has there been any change in the prayers?" He said, "What is it?" The people said, "You have prayed so much and so much." So the Prophet bent his legs, faced the Qibla and performed two prostrations (of Sahw) and finished his prayers with Salaam (by turning his face to right and left saying: 'As-Salamu'Alaikum-Warahmat-ullah'). When he turned his face to us he said, "If there had been anything changed in the prayer, surely I would have informed you but I am a human being like you and liable to forget like you. So if I forget, remind me and if anyone of you is doubtful about his prayer, he should follow what he thinks to be correct and complete his prayer accordingly and finish it and do two prostrations (of Sahw)."

Comments

Abdullah bin Mas'ood says that one day Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) had unintentional omission (sahw) in salaah. The narrator of the hadith Ibrahim, did not know if something was deleted or added to the salaah. When Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) finished his Salaah, the Companions asked him if there was some amendment in the salaah. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) enquired the reason behind their query? They informed him that he offered unusual number of rak'ats instead of what the routine was. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) turned towards the Qibla, prostrated twice (i.e., did Sajda Sahw) and then finished the salaah with salaam. Later, he made it clear to them that he was a human like them and liable to forget the things the way they do; so whenever he forgets something they should remind him about it.

Can a Prophet forget?

The Prophets are supposed to pass on to the people: one, the message they receive from Allah. This kind of message is divinely protected and there is no question of forgetfulness from the Prophet's end. Allah says in the Qur'an:

(O Prophet,) do not move your tongue (during revelation) for (reciting) it (the Qur'an) to receive it in hurry. It is surely undertaken by Us to store it (in your heart), and to let it be recited (by you after revelation is completed). Therefore, when it is recited by Us (through the angel), follow its recitation (by concentration of your heart). Then, it is undertaken by Us to explain it. (75:16-19)

And Allah says:

We, Ourselves, have sent down the Dhikr (the Qur'an), and We are there to protect it. (15:9)

Two, the executions of deeds demanded by the Shariah i.e., 'Ahkaam-us-Shariah'. Allama Nawawi says:

"According to the majority of the Ulema, there is possibility of forgetfulness from the Prophet's (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) side w.r.t. the deeds of the Shariah".

There is consensus amongst the learned scholars that Prophets may forget some deeds, but in this regard their case is totally different from that of common people, i.e., if a Prophet forgets something he is immediately reminded about it by the divine inspiration. This forgetfulness, which is imposed on a Prophet, is also for the benefit of his nation. In the present case, it was required to educate the Ummah about the issues pertaining to 'Sajda Sahw', and this was not possible to demonstrate practically had not this unintentional omission (sahw) by Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) taken place.

Is the Sahw prostration to be offered before or after the salaam?

As per Imam Abu Haneefa, the Sahw prostration is always to be offered after the salaam, but as per Imam Shaafa'ee, it has to be offered before the salaam. As per Imam Maalik, if there has been some deletion in salaah then Sahw prostration is to be offered before the salaam and in case there is some addition then it

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The Image of

Syed Iqbal Zaheer

A famous prophetic statement says, “Allah created Adam in His image,” where, according to some scholars, the pronoun “His” refers to Allah. A few others have thought that it means, “Allah created Adam in his image,” i.e. in Adam’s own image. They explain that Adam was not created in an image other than the image in which his progeny now happens to be. In other words, Adam’s image was not arrived at through the process of various changing phases until he acquired the final image that his progeny has. In further explanation, a hadith is cited which says that originally Adam was made from dust. That image lay on the ground until Allah blew the spirit into him. He rose up, alive, and fully formed. Neither did he undergo the process of trial and error, nor of gradual development and improvement, until he acquired the final shape and form; but rather he was created at one go, in the present image. This according to some scholars is the meaning implied, when it was said that Adam was created “in his image.”

The Salaf, and many scholars who came after them, seem to have largely not accepted the meaning explained above, but rather, the first meaning. That is, Adam was created on the image of God.

Questions arise about the interpretation and explanation. How is the statement to be understood? Man has physical features, nose, ears,

eyes, etc. Are these features like those of God? The answer is no. In Imam Ghazali’s words,

“Because those who go by the apparent meanings cannot imagine a face other than that they are familiar with, they tend to give God an image, a picture, and create a likeness of Him, which He does not have, and is far above any such idea.”

Such imagining also challenges a Qur’anic statement which says (42: 11), “There is nothing like unto Him.” Therefore, whatever is imagined by the human mind as “the like of Him,” is an incorrect picture. God is unlike it. He is beyond what the human mind can imagine.

None the less, a few scholars have explained the words “in His image” by saying, “The allusion is to Allah placing some of His own Qualities in Adam, though in limited degrees. Living, knowing, seeing, hearing, being rational and self-consciousness, or having free will, for example, are all Qualities of Allah, to an unlimited degree, which He granted Adam but in limited degrees.” This, according to them, is being given the image of God.

Declaring that the human are in God’s image is an error that originates with the Bible. It makes a categorical statement about it, leaving no room for any other meaning but one. It says,

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and fe-

male created he them. – Genesis 1: 27

The difference between the two statements – that of the hadith and of the Bible – should be apparent. The hadith speaks of Adam, while the Biblical statement is about man.

The commoners among the Sufis are also with the majority in taking the hadith statement in the sense of Allah creating Adam in His own image. But in interpretation, they go by the apparent words. They do not find it necessary to explain what that means. To them, it seems the meaning is clear; i.e. the apparent, surface meaning of the words. They could have been influenced by the Biblical statement, as many of them were exposed to the texts of the Bible, before they completed (if ever) their Islamic studies.

On the other hand, serious Sufis do not try to explain the meaning. Like the great majority of Muslim scholars they hold the opinion that the hadith is of the allegorical type, and, therefore, cannot be satisfactorily explained. One of the additional complications is that some versions of the hadith say, “Do not strike at the face of your opponent, for Allah created Adam on His image.” There are a few other versions with other additions that make it all the more complicated to elaborate. Because of the inexplicable texts, many would not wish to interpret them. They declared, “We believe in it as the truth, but, to be sure, the apparent meaning has not been intended.”

The Orientalists (Western non-Muslim scholars of Islam) have generally accepted the hadith in question in the Biblical sense and quote it quite often while discussing Islamic spiritualism – of which they seem to be very fond. It affords them the possibility to impose pantheism on Islamic spiritual science. They ignore many versions of the hadith in question and have popularized the Biblical text as the true Islamic meaning.

Not surprising, because this meaning is filled with pitfalls – and pitfalls they love. In

religious truths, they like to take the deviated path, merely to stare at the truth as they pass by, onto their imaginary goal of religious truths. They never deal with it in detail. Truth is not what they are truly looking for. It is in support of their personal opinions that they seek in the Islamic texts.

One of the pitfalls is that having declared that man is in the image of God, they gave God the image of man. With that, He becomes like the humans. There are several advantages. Understanding Him becomes easier; dealing with Him becomes simpler; so that a Jewish prayer on the occasion of Passover was, “God, you know what you have done to us in the past. Yet, if you forgive us, we will forgive you.”

One another of the stated advantages of bringing God down to their level of thought and existence was that it allowed for fellowship with Him. He can walk with them: “God walked with Noah” (Gen. 6: 9), while, “Abraham walked before God” (Gen. 17: 1).

The Jews seem to have two versions of God. One for themselves, as in the Talmud, another for the non-Jews. The one for themselves is so revered that an orthodox Jewish writer will not even spell God in fear that it could be blasphemed. They would rather write G-d for God. But the version of God that is for non-Jews, or may be for unorthodox Jews, is in the image of man.

Man need not bow his head in submission in the face of seeming divine injustice, and humans must never accept the suffering of their fellow men in silence. Man’s highest calling is wrestling with God. We are invited to enter into a real relationship with God, involving give and take, not merely bowing and submission. This idea, found only in Judaism, traces its origin to the name Israel (Yisrael), literally, “he who wrestles with God,” as well to the giants of Jewish history, like Abraham and Moses, who contended with God about punishing sinners. (Judaism for Everyone – Shmuley Boteach).

It should be obvious that giving man the image of God will lead to God being given the image of man; and that He would suffer deficiencies. But it has the advantage of turning Him into a tribal, national, or racial God. To the white races for instance, God is a white man. He understands them, their needs, hopes and ambitions, and is with them in their efforts to dominate other races.

But the God of Islam does not require its adherents to seek His fellowship, or, what is absolutely blasphemous – His partnership: the kind of partnership the Jews believe in, the kind

in which He is the junior partner.

Islam makes the demand on its adherents of God's obedience. It asks them to be aware of Him, be conscious of His presence, and fear Him:

So as not to displease Him at any given moment;

So as not to harm others of His creation;

So as not to fail when brought out for accounting on the Day of Judgment;

So as not to enter Hellfire instead of Paradise – unscathed.

YMD Ap-12

Not Among Us

Abu Hurairah (RA) said: The Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "He who takes up arms against us is none of us; and he who cheats us is none of us." [Muslim].

Another narration of Muslim is: The Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) happened to pass by a heap of corn. He thrust his hand in that (heap) and his fingers felt wetness. He said to the owner of that heap of corn, "What is this?" He replied: "O Messenger of Allah! These have been drenched by rainfall." He remarked, "Why did you not place this (the drenched part of the heap) over the corn so that people might see it? He who deceives is not of us."

Commentary:

1. To take arms here signifies to revolt against the Muslim community (and a Muslim government, for that matter) or draw a sword, gun, etc., to kill a Muslim - a common practice in the present-day terrorism.

2. Forgery and deceit have two different forms; one is implied and other is physical and visible. In the former, falsehood is given a veneer of truth. The latter is concealment of some defect, adulteration of some inferior quality merchandise in a superior one, addition of something to increase weight or volume or a substance by unfair means and other malpractices.

3. "He is none of us" means "He is not following the way of Muslims" or "His conduct is unlike that of Muslims." It is therefore, necessary for every Muslim to abstain from such evils.

The Exercise of Hikmah

Sadullah Khan

Defining Wisdom

- Wisdom has been defined as ...
- » the ability to make correct judgments and decisions.
 - » as foreseeing consequences and acting to maximize beneficial results.
 - » making the best use of available knowledge.
 - » thinking what is best and doing what is best in any given situation

Hikmah (denoting 'wisdom') is a positive term used repeatedly in the Quran as a characteristic of the righteous [Quran 2:251; Quran 4:54; Quran 5:110], as a quality of those who truly understand [Quran 31:12].

- » The Quran is referred to as the Wise Quran [Quran 36:2]; the Book of Wisdom the verses of a Book of Wisdom [Quran 10:2; Quran 13:2]
- » Wisdom is referred to as an integral component of the Message and Guidance provided by Divine Revelation ... taught the Book, the wisdom, the Gospel and the Torah [Quran 5:110]
- » and even the Almighty refers to Himself as The Mighty , The Wise [Quran 2:209].
- » When Prophet Abraham prayed for the fulfillment of the mission of prophets, he prayed for one who would " relate scripture to the people, convey hikmah (wisdom) and

provide a means of purification." [Quran 2:129]

- » Hikmah is the lost property of the Believer; the Prophet Muhammad said and he encouraged us to take wisdom from any source.
- » in the case of debating and argumentation, hikmah should be the primary instrument [Quran 16:125]

Hikmah (Wisdom), 'Aql (Mind)

At times the word hikmah is interchanged with 'aql; as evidenced in the saying of Sayedna 'Ali, the tongue of a wise person is behind the heart and the heart of a fool is behind the tongue.

Hikmah & 'Ilm

Though 'ilm (knowledge) may open the doorways to hikmah, but hikmah is distinct from 'ilm. Knowledge and information provides means for enlightenment ; Remember Allah's Blessings and the (truthful information) sent through the Book and the wisdom it provides by which you may be enlightened. [Quran 2:23]

- » The Prophet said ask the learned, consult with the wise and accompany the poor.
- » There are many who know many things, yet are lacking in wisdom. [Ancient Greek philosopher, Democritus]

- » In our age... people seem more than ever prone to confuse wisdom with knowledge, and knowledge with information, [author and poet, T.S. Eliot]
- » Philosophy is harmonized knowledge making a harmonious life; it is the self-discipline which lifts us to serenity and freedom. Knowledge is power, but only wisdom is liberty. [Philosopher & writer, Will Durant]
- » The saddest aspect of life right now is that science gathers knowledge faster than society gathers wisdom. – [Isaac Asimov's Book of Science and Nature Quotations, 1988]

Though 'book knowledge' enhances the potential for wisdom; wisdom is often attained by learning in other ways; By three methods we may learn wisdom: First, by reflection, which is noblest; Second, by imitation, which is easiest; and Third by experience, which is the bitterest. [Ancient Chinese philosopher, Confucius]

Virtue & Wisdom

Ethics is the branch of philosophy which attempts to understand the nature of morality; to define that which is right from that which is wrong. Ancient Roman orator, Cicero said; "The function of wisdom is to discriminate between good and evil." The Ancient Greek philosopher, Plato, suggested that the four cardinal virtues are wisdom, courage, self-control and justice.

In Islam, wisdom is always linked to virtue. *"You shall not accept any information, unless you verify it for yourself. I have given you the capacity for hearing, sight, and the intellect, and you are responsible for using them effec-*

tively. You shall not walk with arrogance on earth – you cannot bore through the earth, nor can you be as tall as the mountains. All impropriety is condemned by your Lord. This is of the wisdom inspired to you by your Lord. You shall not set up another object of worship beside God, lest you end up in hell; blamed and defeated." [Quran 17:36-39]

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq stated that the cardinal virtues to live by are ... piety, contentment, patience, gratitude, humility, modesty, generosity, courage, enthusiasm, benevolence, truthfulness and trustworthiness.

Effective Wisdom

Wise ones have said that the height of wisdom is to proportion our wants to our possessions, our ambitions to our capacities, our emotions to our conscience and our deeds to our values it is unwise to be too sure of one's own wisdom. It is healthy to be reminded that the strongest might weaken and the wisest might err. [Gandhi]

The best and safest thing is to keep a balance in your life, acknowledge the great powers around us and in us. If you can do that, and live that way, you are really a wise man. [Ancient Greek playwright, Euripides]

Wisdom is a bounteous thing that is invaluable, and Allah reminds us in the Quran:

Whoever is granted wisdom has indeed been granted something tremendously beneficial; but none reflect except people of insight.

[Quran 2:269]

Protecting the Tongue

The tongue is a great bounty of Allah. Many good deeds (tilaawat of the Quraan, zikr, tasbeeh and istighfaar etc.) are performed by the tongue and one should occupy the tongue in these good deeds. Using the tongue for filthy purposes like lies, backbiting, carrying tales, slander and swearing etc. is like placing an impure substance on clean clothing.

Hazrat Mufti Mahmood Hasan Gangohi (ra)

THE SPIRIT OF MARRIAGE

Irshad Husain

The Prophet was once asked, "What is more important than prayer?" He replied, "The spirit of prayer" - the spirit that animates the prayer. He was asked what is more important than fasting - he replied, the spirit of fasting. For each question concerning an Islamic practice the answer was the same - because the spirit brings the action to life and unfolds its potentials. Without this animating spirit, the prayer is only movement, and the fasting only hunger. But when spirit enters, when a pure and concentrated intention enters, the action is transformed - the prayer gains the potential to become a miraj (an elevating spiritual journey), and the one fasting approaches towards the potential to witness laylatul qadr (the night of destiny - a night when blessings from the spiritual world descend to this world).

So what is more important than marriage? It is the spirit of marriage, the intention which underlies it, the treasures which it contains hidden within it but which must be brought out and realized by the married couple themselves.

The Qur'an provides the signposts and way-marks for learning about this potential. It says:

"It is He who created you from a single soul, And made its mate of like nature in order that

you might dwell with her in love...." (7:189)

So the male and female complete each other - together they make a single self and this is how they must strive to make their lives together - as if they are one being, one person, one spirit.

The Qur'an says:

"Your wives are a garment for you, and you are a garment for them." (2:187)

So a husband and wife complete each other - each one takes on a new aspect of their humanity, a new facet and depth to their personality by entering into marriage and this is symbolized in this verse. Garments also conceal the body and protect the wearer so that a husband and wife are each other's protectors and helpers and each of them safeguards their partner's honor shaping the state of marriage into a haven and a sanctuary where each should feel safe and secure, sheltered in one another's care and guardianship.

The Qur'an also says

"And of everything we created a pair, that happily you may remember." (51:49)

The word for spouse, "zawj", (this is the word that is used in the marriage ceremony, the Nikkah ceremony) - the word zawj literally means one part of a pair - and when the pair come together and act in concert with one an-

other, then concealed potentials within them, potentials that were impossible to realize while they were apart make themselves evident. This is true throughout creation. And human marriage in the Qur'an is considered a reflection of a nature and tendency that exists at all levels of creation. When something is created as one part of a pair it is clearly incomplete without the other - as the Qur'an states,

“He himself created the pair, male and female.” (53:45)

The term nikkah which is used for marriage is also used figuratively to describe the coming together of various aspects of creation. For example it says, in the Qur'an, that “the rain married the soil” and then it describes how, from this intimate mingling, something new springs forth - that the earth brings forth flowers and herbage, it opens to new creations, new life, new potentials. So the act of marriage, the mingling through nikah, according to Islam, courses through all things, through all of creation. Each pair of the marriage brings something necessary and something unique to the marriage. The pairs are not identical but complimentary to one another and their unique qualities when they are mingled together produce that which neither one alone could produce.

So each individual of the pair undergoes change and transformation when they come together in marriage because marriage is an intimate mingling of the selves, the souls, the personalities and the beings of two individuals.

In human marriage the change takes place at many levels - from a change in lifestyle, to changes in behavior, to changes in the very soul of the person. And there must be that will-

ingness, on the part of both individuals, to allow this unifying transformation to take place. To accept the self the way it is, is to lock oneself into stagnation and narrowness and to remain an individual - not part of an intimately joined pair. It is to limit and lock up the potential, the beauty and strength that is capable of emerging from the intimate unity made possible through marriage.

Since “God created everything in pairs”, as it states in the Qur'an, and since He “created the male and the female from a single nature, from a single self”, it is God that is the point of reference for the married pair. “He has set up the balance..” of all things, so He is to be looked for to set all things in the right equilibrium. If the two partners of a marriage set themselves in correct relation to God then certainly a perfect balance will be realized within their lives together.

Love is a movement towards unity, towards oneness, and since God is One, “the closer the heart is to Oneness, the stronger the power of love is within it.”

Love is a movement towards unity, towards oneness. “God made their hearts familiar” (Qur'an 8:63) through the light of Oneness that yields spiritual love and familiarity in the heart. For love is the shadow of Oneness, familiarity the shadow of love, and balance the shadow of familiarity.”

Let married couples be helpers and protectors of one another, let them be a refuge and a comfort to one another, let them be beautiful garments for one another, and let them together experience the many treasures and beauties of marriage.

Whenever the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) happened to face any difficulty, he would at once resort to Salaah.

(Abu Dawood)

Supplications & Divine Destiny

Mawlana Hamzah Wald Maqbul

Having taught basic `aqidah courses several times over, through phone, internet, and the time honored medium of person to person contact, I can tell you that one of the trickiest subjects to tackle is always that of qadr, or divine predestination: are we in control of our own lives, or are we living out a hard deterministic cosmic script in which we are bound without any choice of our own?

The brief answer according to orthodox Sunni theology based on the Qur'an and Sunnah is:

(a) Allah knew everything before He created anything, in both gross and minute detail, that which was, that which is, and that which shall for ever be through His perfect and all-encompassing knowledge, which is an essential attribute of His divine essence.

(b) Everything that ever happened only happened, happens, and shall happen through His causing it to happen. He has control over what happens in terms of times, outcomes, measurements, amounts, quanta, etc., to the minutest degree. Nothing happens in creation against His will or according to anything other than His plan. We do not believe like the misguided nations before us, or their heretical conjugate counterparts within our fold, that anything happens against His will, or that he regrets or resents anything that happens. Indeed

the meaning of the divine name al-Samad mentioned in Surat al-Ikhlās is He through whom if something is to happen, it must be done; and He, who if He does not partake in a matter, that matter will never be realized.

(c) Every human being has the ability to chose between good and evil at every turn. Those choices earn a person a place in the hereafter which is commensurate with the quality of said choices made.

Those choices plays out in one of five combination scenarios.

1- Tawfiq: This is when you wish for good, and Allah allows for you to execute that good you wish for. This results in earning a minimum of ten times that good deed's value in reward, up to 700 and beyond, as well as having further doors for good opened.

2- Reward without tawfiq: This is when you wish for good, but Allah does not allow you to execute what you wished for. This results in earning the good deed intended at face value.

3- Null result: This is when someone wishes for something which is morally neutral. For example, buying lavender soap rather than pine. The result is likewise null whether the person gets what they wanted or not.

4- Protection from evil: This is when one wishes to sin and indeed goes through with the attempt, but is thwarted by Allah not wishing

for that sin to be actualized. From Allah's grace, such a person is not punished for such a matter.

5- Khudhlan: This is when a person wishes to sin, and Allah allows them to carry out such a self-destructing act so that they can be indisputably deserving of the punishment that they earn by their own hands on the day of Judgment. Such an act is punished at face value.

Now when taken in isolation, each (a), (b), and (c), seem very straightforward and even intuitive. The problem lies in reconciling how they can all be true at the same time.

The Messenger of Allah (SAWS) informed us that the reconciliation would not be graspable by the mind which is trapped in the cage of time and space, so we should save our time and bandwidth from being sunk in this question. There is great wisdom in his prescription: it allows one, by accepting their inability to grasp the common thread that binds three such basic and intuitive concepts, to come to terms with the greater and more important realization that Allah has the prerogative to choose what He chooses without having to answer to others: "[None have such right that] He be asked about what He does, but [He has the right that] they be asked." (Surat al-Anbiya).

Far from being a crippling blow to the intellect, the acceptance of (a), (b), and (c) being true at the same time is as much a sign of suspending one's intellect as using a cell phone while not being able to explain how it works in complete detail. To conceive of the idea that some parts of the mechanics of creation might be beyond the grasp of most, if not all, of the creation is a given when considering that in physical scale, the laws that govern the seven firmaments, heaven, hell, multiple dimensions (which are talked about in the hadith literature), are not far-fetched. The laws of predestination apply to all of them universally, and are therefore functioning at a fundamental level that to which we have not been, and, in this life, are not to be exposed.

This is in line with a saying attributed to

Sayyiduna al-Hasan bin Ali bin Abi Talib by Shaykh Ali Hajwiri in his *Kashf al-Mahjub*: "I saw the position of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah *sallallahu`alayhi wa sallam* with regards to predestination was to believe in their hearts that Allah was in total control of all affairs, while practically conducting themselves as if they were in complete control of their affairs."

The Messenger of Allah (SAWS) said, "Each is facilitated to [behave in the manner for] which he was created." This is with regards to the idea that in Allah's predestination, each soul was divinely preordained to either be from the people of felicity or people of wretchedness. With regards to the issue of fate, I have found that there are two reactions in people, each being indicative of one of the two aforementioned states. Those with propensity towards wretchedness will respond by saying that if they are going to hell anyways, then there is no point in even trying anymore. Those who have a propensity towards felicity will understand that the only One who has the power to switch their fate one way or the other is Allah, and so this realization will increase them in their humility toward Him, by highlighting the knowledge that He is the only one who can help them out in this matter.

To question whether such a system is fair, or why it is in place, is to run afoul of the Qur'anic maxim of Surat al-Anbiya mentioned earlier: the Muslim theological definition of justice is that to which Allah commands. The fact that that command is one in which there is great mercy and benefit for us is not an essential quality of Justice, but an incidental one which Allah chose through His generosity. We do not, like the neo-Platonic *Mu`tazilah* or the Christians, hold Allah to an external and synthetic standard of justice. If He was beholden to anything, it, rather than He would be the supreme power in the universe and more worthy of worship and veneration, which, as a concept is alien to the prophetic tradition and will lead an utterly ludicrous and paradoxical trap regarding the nature

of divinity.

Finally coming to the question indicated in the title, can supplication or du`a change one's fate, the authentic hadith literature would seem to indicate so, as Hakim narrates a hadith which Dhahabi accepts as sahih: "On the authority of Thawban, [may Allah be pleased with him], the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) said, 'Nothing can repel fate, except du`a, and nothing can increase one's lifespan, except piety. Verily a man will be deprived of his apportioned lot in this world due to sins he commits.'"

Does this mean that du`a is a wildcard in the system? Hardly. Rather the meaning is there to reaffirm (c), which is the idea that the choices that you and I make are very intimately tied to the outcomes that we experience in this world and the hereafter, by stating the benefits and power of an act of piety such as du`a or the harms of an impiety like sin. Does this necessarily negate (a) or (b)? Not at all. Allah knows that the person making du`a will make du`a and He allows it to happen. The fate that is repelled when such a person makes du`a is that evil fate

that they would have experienced had (a), (b), and (c) not lined up in such a way to save him from it by means of du`a.

Perhaps this is what is meant in the hadith of Bukhari narrated by Sayyiduna Anas, may Allah be pleased with him: "The Messenger of Allah (SAWS) said, 'Indeed the slave, when placed in his grave, and his companions turn around and leave him and he hears the footfalls of their sandals, at that time two angels will come to him, sit him up, and ask him, 'What did you used to say about this man, Muhammad, sallallahu`alahy-hi wa sallam?' As for the believer, he will say, 'I testify that he is the slave of Allah and His messenger.' It will be said to him, 'Look at your seat in the fire. Indeed Allah has exchanged for it a place in jannah.' He will be able to see both of them at the same time...' One possible fate was replaced by another through piety, all the while with Allah's primordial knowledge of one taking precedence over the other, and His allowing and facilitating one to overtake the other.

And Allah knows best.

Deception

Abu Hurairah (RA) said: The Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "He who deceives another's wife or his slave is none of us." [Abu Dawud].

Commentary: To incite or provoke someone's wife or slave against her husband or his master or to create hatred between the two is a great crime, because a Muslim is required to create peace and accord amongst people. It is against his conduct to foment dissension and discord between them.

Strength During Times of Hardship

Imam Ibn ul Qayyim al-Jawzi (ra)
Translated by: Najwa Jaffer

The believer's faith is demonstrated during hardships. He fervently supplicates to His Lord, and does not see any signs of Him answering his pleas, yet his hopes and anticipation do not change, and even if the reasons for disappointment become stronger, he knows that for sure, the True One is more knowledgeable of the wisdom behind every happenstance (in his life).

It may be that what Allah wants from the believer is a display of patience or faith, for indeed He does not send upon him these hardships except that He wants from his heart submission to His will, so that He may see how the patience of His slave is, or He wants from His slave lots and lots of pleading and supplication.

As for those who want their supplications to be answered quickly, and start complaining if there is a delay, then this points towards a weakness in faith. Such a person feels that he has a right to have his supplications answered, and it is as if he is demanding a payment for his acts [of obedience].

This brings to the mind the story of Yaqûb (AS), whose trial lasted for eighty years, yet his hope [in Allah's Mercy and eminent aid] did not falter and even when he was faced with the added loss of his son Benjamin (Bin Yâmîn), after having suffered the loss of Joseph (Yûsuf AS)). Still, his hopefulness remained firm, as we see from his words: 'It may be that Allah will return

to me all of them!'[Yusuf:83]

This meaning is also made apparent through the following words of Allah:

Or do you think that you will enter Paradise while such [trial] has not yet come to you as came to those who passed on before you? They were touched by poverty and hardship and were shaken until [even their] messenger and those who believed with him said, "When is the help of Allah [going to come]?" Unquestionably, the help of Allah is near. [Baqarah:214]

It should also be known here that even this [cry of desperation] does not come forth from the prophets and believers until and unless their trial has become so protracted that they start feeling nearer to hopelessness than to relief.

And of this category are the words of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS):

Goodness remains with the slave as long as he does not become impatient.' He was asked: 'Impatient about what?' He replied: 'He says: 'I prayed, but my prayers were not answered.'[Ahmad]

Hence, I beseech you, do not lose faith when a hardship appears to linger longer than you expect it to be. Do not tire of making supplication after supplication. For indeed the one who is tested with hardships worships Allah through

patience and prayers. So do not despair of the Mercy of Allah, even if when a scourge appears to be endless.

Sources of Error

I CONSIDERED THE [affairs of] creation, and saw that men were in a very strange state, which was almost destroying their minds [or intellects].

A human being, for instance, listens to admonitions, and when he is reminded of the hereafter, he knows that the speaker is speaking the truth, hence he cries and regrets his negligence and heedlessness and resolves to make amends, but then his actions falter and weaken and fails to make good on his resolutions.

Then, when it is said to him: 'Do you doubt what you have been promised?' He replies, 'No, by Allah!' Then it is said to him: 'Then do [what Allah has required of you],' and he resolves to do them, but then stops doing them [later on].'

And it may be that he becomes inclined to knowingly partake of that which is forbidden.

In this category, belong the three Companions[3], who remained behind without any valid excuse [for not setting forth with the Prophet to fight the Romans]. In fact, all of the sinners and transgressors come under this category.

Then I considered the reason why sometimes a believer fails to act although he possessed sound belief, and realized that this is caused by three things.

The first is when a person keeps his eyes on fleeting desires, as focusing on such desires keeps one from thinking about their consequences.

The second is to put off repentance, for if the mind were present and aware, it would most surely warn against the evils of procrastination—such as death, which may come upon the person even before he gets a chance to repent.

It is strange how a person could have his soul snatched away in a second and yet does not take life seriously. Indeed, vain desires make a

person feel like he has a lot of time. The Prophet (SAWS) said: Offer salah as if it is the last one. [Ahmad] This, indeed, is the ultimate cure for the disease of procrastination in religious duties. For if one thinks that he may not remain until his next prayer, he will take it seriously and make an effort [to perfect it].

The third is [negative] hope in [Allah's] mercy. Thus the sinner is seen to be saying: 'My Lord is Merciful,' whilst he forgets that He is also stern in His Punishment.

If only such a person knew that His Mercy is not lax (a sign of weakness)! For if it were, neither would He [allow] the slaughter of a bird, nor would He ever (allow) a child to be hurt, for He has prescribed cutting off the hands, for stealing even a mere amount of five dirhams. [Bukhari, Muslim]

Cont'd from page 11

has to be offered after the salaam. Imam Ahmad says that the particular situation where Rasullullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has offered the Sahw prostration before the salaam, it has to be offered before the salaam, and where he has offered it after salaam, it has to be offered like that. The learned scholars have, however, considered it only a matter of preference.

If one faces a doubt in salaah?

What should a person do if he faces a doubt regarding the number of rak'ats he has offered?

As per the Hanafite school of thought, if the doubt occurs for the first time, he should repeat his Salaah; and if he confronts this doubt frequently, he should ignore it and act as per his dominant opinion, and offer Sahw prostration in the end.

As per Imam Shaafa'ee and Imam Ahmad, one should always believe the lower side of his opinion i.e., if he has doubt whether he completed three or four rak'ats, he should take only three into consideration and add the fourth one to it. (Nasrul Baari)

Balancing the Matters

Umm Hibathain

Allah has sent us to this world (the Dunya) for a purpose, and the purpose is nothing but to worship Him and do righteous deeds to seek His pleasure. And the religion He wants us to follow is one of total submission and obedience - and a complete way of life.

Allah says:

“He Who created death and life to test which of you is best in action. He is the Almighty, the Ever-Forgiving.” [67:2]

And Allah says:

“Oh mankind! Worship your Lord (Allah), Who created you and those who were before you so that you may acquire Taqwa.” [2:21]

Islam should be inculcated into every action and deed in our everyday routine, be it at our work, in our business transactions, our family life (with our spouse and kids), our parents, our social life among our friends, community and everything that surrounds us and to matters of our heart. And insha'Allah with this in our mind, all of us will be able to balance our time between the matters of Dunya and matters of the Hereafter. For a believer, all matters of the Dunya are also matters of the Hereafter. He does not keep them separate. He indulges in matters of the Dunya in such a way that will him benefit for him and not bring harm or evil to him in

The Hereafter.

Allah says in the Quran:

“The life of this world is nothing but a play and amusement. The hereafter is better for those who guard against evil. So will you not use your intellect?” [6:32]

A true believer will always, therefore, remember his final destination. He does not forget the Hereafter, even for a second. He will live in this life as though he is a traveler, and he has to earn and prepare for his eternal abode, a luxurious, successful life.

Ibn 'Umar narrated that Prophet (Salallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: “Be in this life as if you were a stranger or a traveler on a path.” [Sahih Al Bukhari]

Imagine a man is travelling by road from a point 'A' to his destination 'B' and he has a prescribed time to reach 'B'. He has his GPS with him to guide him to the right place. He needs to have food on his way. What do you think? Should he stop at a point 'C', which is on the way to 'B', or should he take a completely different out-of-the-way direction and go to a restaurant at point 'D' that might be more fancier and more expensive? Should he compromise on his time at this point, and trade his time just to enjoy more fancy food? And then, he sees something else

that he feels he has to check out, and he stops there also, all the while moving farther and farther away from his destination. (And hence, 'D' leads him to 'E' and 'F' and so on to greater mistakes and farther from point B) But the Mercy of Allah is this, if by mistake, he does take to point 'C' or even 'D', he can re-calculate and re-route himself to 'B' again through his GPS. And similar is the believer's true repentance.

This is a parable of our life in this world. Our final destination is The Akhirah, and we have time to accumulate Ibadah (worship Allah) and do good deeds only till we die. And we don't even have a known prescribed time for this, unlike the example above! It can be anytime, anywhere. If we are consistent in the remembrance of Allah, we will be prepared when Malak-ul-Mawt approaches, and it is time for us to leave. (May Allah bless us to die in a high state of Iman, Ameen) We should use our provisions that Allah has blessed us with, in a way that will please Him, all the while staying on the right path, without going farther from our road to our final abode, Jannah.

Allah says in the Quran:

"Verily! It is Allah Who causes the seed grain and the fruit stone to split and sprout. He brings forth the living from the dead, and it is He Who brings forth the dead from the living. Such is Allah, then how are you deluded away from the truth." [6:95]

The Quran is like The GPS and more, that keeps guiding us, and we should pay serious heed to it, with strong faith in the instructions and guidelines it provides endlessly. The Quran is perfect in all senses and flawless, and if we stick to it, we will never be led astray with The Mercy and Blessings of Allah.

Allah says:

"That is the Book in which there is no doubt, guidance for the Muttaqin." [2:2]

If a matter of Dunya that will not benefit us, attracts us from a distance away from the straight path we are on, we should not think that

maybe for once, we can move towards it, and then run back to the path we are supposed to be on, as we never know what is in store for us at that point. Maybe we could end up moving further away because of other worldly mirages, and ultimately leave us in darkness and lead to Hell-fire. Shaytan has a way of making our evil thoughts and actions look like "harmless fun" and nothing more.

Allah says:

"Those are the people who trade the hereafter for the world. The punishment will not be lightened for them nor shall they be helped."

[2:86]

Insha'Allah, let's be cautious of ourselves so that we will not be included in this type of people, may Allah save us all. Allah says:

"Leave alone those who take their religion to be mere play and amusement, and are deceived by the life of this world." [6:70]

This does not mean that one cannot have fun in this world. Have fun, but within the boundaries of Islam. And keep it balanced. And now to the question: how do we balance it? I have heard people talking about the comparatively few people who try to live their life as much "Muslim" as they can: Come on, he is too orthodox. One is supposed to balance the Dunya and The Akhirah.

Answer: For one, like mentioned above, a true believer tries to make his whole life an Ibadah. And his life can be an Ibadah only if he is obeying His Lord at all times. For example, at his work place, he follows the etiquettes and laws of Islam by being nice to his colleagues, trying to give Dawah when he gets a chance (needn't be through speech, his actions speak too), abstaining from intermingling (talking unnecessarily, coming in contact like shaking hands, patting each other etc.), being sincere to his work not just for worldly gains but out of fear of Allah and most of all, having a Halal job. In his business transactions, he will be fair, stay away from interest and any other kind of deal-

ings that are against the Shari'ah of Islam. Even when he relaxes and has fun, he keeps thanking Allah.

Secondly, let's weigh the time we spend to make our life here better and the time we spend to make our Akhirah better, by keeping in mind that the Akhirah is eternal and this world is for such a short span of life. Surely, we spend quite an amount of unavoidable time for the Dunya. How can we then, be satisfied with ourselves for the amount of time we spent only to worship Allah and the little or no time we spend in learning His Deen? (Indeed, He is The Most Merciful that insha'Allah, we will enter Paradise, for the little we do here for our own Akhirah's sake as gratitude for this life he has Blessed us with!)

Allah says:

"Oh mankind! Have Taqwa of your Lord, and fear a Day when no father can avail aught for his son, nor a son avail aught for his father. Verily, the promise of Allah is true, let not then this present life deceive you, nor let the chief deceiver deceive you about Allah." [31:33]

Thirdly, let's always stop ourselves and think twice when we feel tempted to think/say, "We have no time", when it comes to doing a good deed or an act or worship. Allah has given each and everyone of us 24 hours a day and 7 days in a week. All men are equal. If the companions of The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and the rightly guided scholars of the Islamic Era were able to run homes (sometimes more than one) with many kids, run businesses or do some work in order to earn their bread, govern the nation/state, do Dawah and teach Islam to their people, recite the Quran and contemplate on it on a daily basis, participate in battles, travel to seek knowledge of Deen, pray Tahajjud and other extra prayers etc, why cannot we find time then?

"O Lord! Give unto us in the world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good and guard us from that doom of the Fire"

Fable

A Miser and His Lump of Gold...

A miser sold all that he had and bought a lump of gold, which he buried in a hole in the ground by the side of an old wall and went to look at daily. One of his workmen observed his frequent visits to the spot and decided to watch his movements. He soon discovered the secret of the hidden treasure, and digging down, came to the lump of gold, and stole it. The Miser, on his next visit, found the hole empty and began to tear his hair and to make loud lamentations. A neighbor, seeing him overcome with grief and learning the cause, said, "Pray do not grieve so; but go and take a stone, and place it in the hole, and fancy that the gold is still lying there. It will do you quite the same service; for when the gold was there, you had it not, as you did not make the slightest use of it."

Celebrations & Festivities

Human beings by nature wish to express their joy and happiness. They seek occasions to celebrate and enjoy themselves. As a natural religion, Islam has catered for this need by declaring the days of Eid as days of celebration. In fact Islam has made it compulsory to celebrate. This is clearly understood from the fact that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has even prohibited fasting on these days. One is encouraged to wear one's best clothes and to feast within moderate limits.

While the days of Eid are days of celebration, a Mu'min's celebration is one which takes him closer to Allah. The night of Eid is a night of ibaadah. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is reported to have said: "The one who will keep alive the nights of the two Eids (by remaining awake to engage in extra ibaadah), his heart will not die on the day (of Judgement) when other hearts will die" (Targheeb). Daily the servant of Allah performs the five Salaah. On the day of their celebration they proceed for an extra Salaah — the Eid Salaah. En-route to the Eid Salaah they are engrossed in the recitation of takbeer. It is also a day of engaging in excessive dua. Thus while a Muslim also celebrates, his celebration is a means of getting closer to Allah at every moment.

"SILLY"

On the contrary, during the celebrations of those who are devoid of Imaan many peo-

ple even take leave of their intelligence. Hence that time of the year is called the "silly season." Crime rockets, drinking and getting drunk is almost the norm, etc. Such "celebrations" are worlds apart from the celebrations of Muslims.

While Muslims have no control over what others do, the crucial question is how do Muslims respond to the celebrations of people of other creeds? Do they join them? Can they merely "watch" what is going on? This should be considered in the light of the directives of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

INCLINATION

In this regard Allah declares: "And do not incline towards those who have oppressed themselves (by means of committing shirk (idolatry) or else you will be afflicted by the fire" (Surah Hud). "Inclination" pertains to all aspects — beliefs, customs, worship, celebrations and generally in their way of life.

Furthermore, Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is reported to have said: "The one who adds to the numbers of a people is counted as being among them (i.e. he is one of them)" (Kanzul Ummaal).

Having considered the abovementioned Aayat and Hadith, let us consider the reality of some of the celebrations of the kuffaar. The World Book Dictionary defines Christmas in the following manner: "1. The yearly celebration of the birth of Christ; December 25. Christmas

is marked by special Church services, giving of gifts and sending of greetings. 2. The religious and festive season before and after Christmas day.”

“GOD OF GATES?”

As for New Year’s Day, the World Book Encyclopaedia describes it in the following words: “The Roman ruler Julius Caesar established January 1 as New Year’s Day in 46 B.C. The Romans dedicated this day to Janus, the god of gates, doors and beginnings. January was named after Janus, who had two faces - one looking forward and the other looking backward. The early Romans gave each other New Year’s gifts of branches from sacred trees. In later times, they gave coins, imprinted with pictures of Janus, or gold covered nuts.”

Likewise, Easter is described as: “The yearly celebration of the day on which Christ rose from the grave.”

The abovementioned definitions make it abundantly clear that these are “religious” celebrations — religions which are baatil (false) and are steeped in kufr and shirk. It could therefore be said that these are celebrations of kufr and shirk. Participation in such celebrations is certainly “inclination” towards such people. It also clearly adds to the numbers of such people. Therefore this is extremely dangerous for one’s Imaan. Muslims should therefore entirely shun participating in such celebrations.

NO INJUSTICE

Shunning participation in such celebrations should not be confused with being unjust to any person or treating him wrongly. Rather there is great emphasis in Islam on the treating every human being with kindness. Even pris-

oners were treated by the Sahaaba (R.A.) as if they were guests. Indeed, while kindness will be shown to every human, there will be no participation or inclination to his beliefs, customs and way of life.

Sometimes, many people, due to not having reflected on the implications, unwittingly become involved in supporting celebrations of kufr and shirk. The following are some of the ways in which such “passive” participation or support takes:

* Advertising “Christmas,” “New Year” or “Easter” sales (or any other religious celebrations). There is no harm in having a sale or advertising “specials” at any time of the year. Why must it be a “sale” in the name of a celebration of shirk.

* Giving “Christmas” gifts to customers, staff, etc. This is tantamount to celebrating Christmas. Instead, without making it customary, give a gift at the time of Eid. Eid is our celebration. Bring alive the message of Eid.

* Selling items which are specific to kuffaar celebrations. Allah has prohibited us from assisting in acts of sin and transgression. Therefore one must refrain from selling items such as Christmas trees or decorations, Easter eggs and “hot-cross-buns” at the time of Easter, fireworks during Diwali, etc.

* Remaining awake till midnight on 31 December “to see in the new year.” A Mu’min’s new year is on the first of Muharram. The first of January is the new year of those who believe in the “God of Gates” — Allah is pure from such shirk. One should not observe such customs which are steeped in idolatry. May Allah keep us all steadfast on Deen and protect us from following the ways of His enemies. Aameen.

Courtesy: al-Haadi

People count, complacently, how many times they have recited the name of Allah using prayer beads, but they keep no beads for reckoning how many idle words they speak.

Sayyidna Umar ibn Khattab (RA)

The Mark of a Muslim

Sheikhul Islam Ibn Taymiyah (ra)

In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy. Indeed Allah - to whom belongs all praise - has bestowed upon me immense grace, great favors and generous blessings which necessitates immense gratitude, being firm upon obedience to Him, and becoming accustomed to having beautiful patience in that which He ordered. Indeed, a servant is ordered to have Sabr (patience) in times of ease more so than in times of hardship. Allah - the Most High - said:

“But if we let man taste the good favors after poverty and harm has touched him, he is sure to boastfully say: Harm has departed from me. Indeed he is exultant, boastful and ungrateful to Allah. Except those who show patience and do deeds of righteousness and obedience to Allah, for them will be forgiveness and a great reward.” [11:10-11]

And you all know that Allah - the Most Perfect - has blessed this affair [2] with such blessings which contain the means to aid His Religion, raise high His Word, aid His Army, and grant honor to His Awliya (pious and righteous servants). It is also the cause for strengthening Ahlus-Sunnah Wal-Jama'ah and causing humiliation to the people of innovations and sectarianism. Likewise, it is also the cause for affirming that which has been affirmed by your-

selves from the Sunnah (regarding the truth of this matter), and a cause for increasing this by opening up the avenues of guidance, victory and proofs: such that the truth becomes known to the people, who none but Allah can enumerate. It is also a cause for the masses to begin to accept the way of the Sunnah and the Jama'ah; as well as countless other favors. All of this must therefore be accompanied by immense gratitude to Allah, as well as having patience - even if this patience is in times of ease.

And you all know that from the great principles which sum up the Religion is: Uniting the hearts, unifying the word, and reconciliation between each other, as Allah - the Most High - said:

“So fear and obey Allah, and reconcile the matters of differences between yourselves.”
[8:10]

“And hold fast altogether to the rope of Allah and do not split-up.” [Noble Quran 3:103]

“And do not be like those who split-up and differed after the clear proofs came to them. For those there will be a severe punishment.”
[3:105]

And other examples like this from the texts (of Revelation), which order us with the Jama'ah (unity upon the way of the Companions) and coming together, and prohibit splitting and

differing. And the people who most exemplify this principle are Ahlul-Jama'ah (the people of the Jama'ah); just as the people who most exemplify leaving it are the people of sectarianism.

And that which sums up the Sunnah is: Obedience to the Messenger. This is why the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:

“Indeed Allah is pleased with three things: That you worship Allah alone without associating any partner along with Him; that you hold-fast all together to the Rope of Allah and not to become split-up; and that you give sincere advice to whomsoever Allah put in charge of your affairs.”

And in the Sunan collections from the Hadith of Zayd ibn Thabit and Ibn Mas'ud - who were both great Fuqaha (Scholars of deep understanding) - who relate that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:

“May Allah enliven whosoever hears my words, memorizes them and then conveys them to others. Many a carrier of knowledge does not understand it, and many a carrier of knowledge conveys it to one who has better understanding. There are three things which the heart of a Believer has no malice about: Sincerity for Allah in one's action; sincere advice to those in authority and clinging to the Jama'ah.”

And his saying: “has no malice” means not having any contempt for them. So the heart of a Muslim does not hate these characteristics. On the contrary, it loves them and is pleased with them.

So the first thing which I shall begin with regarding this principle is what is connected to myself. So you all know - may Allah be pleased with you all - that I do not desire any harm at all - inwardly or outwardly - for anyone from the general masses of the Muslims, let alone our colleagues and companions. Nor do I harbor any ill-feeling towards anyone of them, nor do I blame them for anything at all. Rather, to me

they are deserving of nobility, love, honor and respect, over and over - each in accordance with their level. And a person cannot be except (one of three types): Someone who sincerely strives to ascertain the truth; and is correct, or one who sincerely strives to ascertain the truth; but errs, or a sinful person. As for the first, then he is rewarded and thanked. The second is rewarded for his Ijtihad (striving to ascertain the truth), and is forgiven and excused for his error. As for the third, then may Allah forgive us, and him, and all the Believers.

So we should not try to dwell upon the words of those who opposed this fundamental; by saying that so and so is deficient, or so and so did not act, or so and so was the cause of harm to the Sheikh, or was the reason why all this occurred, or so and so used to speak about the plots of so and so; and other such similar statements which contain criticism of some of our colleagues and brothers. For indeed do not allow them to harm the brothers and colleagues in this manner, and there is no might, nor any power except with Allah.

Rather, the likes of this criticism actually returns to the one who said it in the first place, unless he has good deeds by which Allah will forgive him - if He wills - and indeed Allah does forgive that which has preceded. And you also all know about the harsh treatment that was given to some of the brothers in Damascus, and that which occurs even now in Egypt. This - in reality - is not due to a deficiency or shortcoming in the brothers, nor has it occurred because we have changed our views and hate them. Rather, such people, after receiving such harsh treatment increase in the status, love and respect that we have for them. For indeed the likes of these trials are beneficial to the Believers, because Allah corrects and improves them due to it. Since the Believer to another Believer is like each of a pair of hands, each washes the other. However, it sometimes happens that dirt cannot be removed except with a certain amount of

roughness, but that brings about cleanliness and softness, for which that roughness is praised...

You (also) all know that much of what has occurred in this matter were lies, false accusations, false suspicions, and the following of false desires, the likes of which cannot be described. So all those lies and false accusations that were directed against me, are actually a source of goodness and blessing for me. Allah - the Most High - said:

“Indeed those who brought forward the lie are a small group amongst you. However, do not think that it is an evil for you. Rather, it is good for you. And every person amongst them will be paid the sin of what they earned. And as for the one who took on the leading role in this, his will be a severe punishment.” [24:11]

So through such trials, Allah manifests the light of truth and its clear proofs, which repel the falsehood and lies. So I do not desire to take revenge upon any of those who lied against me, or oppressed me, or showed enmity and hatred towards me. For indeed I forgive every Muslim, and I love only the good for them, and I desire for every Muslim the good that I desire for myself. As for those who lied and did wrong, then I have excused and forgiven them. However, whatever is connected to violating the Rights of Allah in this affair, then they should seek Tawbah (repentance). So if they turn to Allah in repentance, then Allah will turn to them in forgiveness, otherwise the Judgment of Allah will apply to them. So if a person were to be thanked for his evil actions, then I thank all those who were the cause for this (trial) to happen to me - for it entails all the good of this world and the Hereafter. However, Allah is thanked for His good blessings and favors by which no affair happens to a Believer, except that there is good for him in it. And the people of good intentions are thanked for their intentions, and the people of good actions are thanked for their actions. And as for those who did evil - then we ask Allah that He turns to them in forgiveness. And

you all know that this is from my nature and character.

Likewise, you all know that Abu Bakr as-Siddiq concerning the matter of Al-Ifk (the Lie against ‘A’ishah, his daughter, and wife of the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him), about which Allah revealed some Verses of the Quran, so he swore that he would not give any more charity to Mistah ibn Athathah; because Mistah was one of those who participated in the Lie. So Allah revealed:

“And let not those amongst you who have been blessed with grace and wealth swear not to give any help or support to their relatives, or to the poor and needy, or to those who migrated in the path of Allah. Rather, let them pardon and be forgiving. Do you not love that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” [24:22]

So when this Verse was revealed, Abu Bakr said: “Rather, by Allah! I love that Allah should forgive me.” So he continued to give to Mistah the aid and charity that he used to give before.⁶ So with forgiveness and kind treatment towards one another, and doing Jihad (fighting and striving) in Allah’s Path, then it is a must that:

“Allah will bring a people whom He will love, and they will love Him; soft, humble and gentle with the Believers, stern towards the unbelievers, fighting in the path of Allah, and never afraid of the blame of the blamers. That is the Grace of Allah which He bestows upon whosoever He Wills. And Allah suffices for the needs of His creation, the All-Knower. Indeed your Wali (protector and guardian) is Allah, His Messenger, and the Believers; those who offer the Prayer correctly, and give Zakah, and who bow down in obedience to Allah. And whosoever takes Allah, and His Messenger, and the Believers as protectors and guardians, then it is the party of Allah who will be victorious.”

[5:53-55].

To My Muslim Sister

My Dear Sister,

Know, my dear Muslim sister, that you are man's sister and half of humanity. You are a mother, wife, daughter, sister, aunt, grand daughter or grand mother. The Prophet said, what translated means:

Women are, indeed, men's partners. [Abu Dawud]

You are a member of the great nation of Islam, the best nation ever produced for mankind. No other nation on earth has more great men, leaders and conquerors than this nation. It is the nation of guidance and the straight religion, and it leads humanity to righteousness and truth. It transforms people from worshippers of slaves to worshippers of the Lord of slaves, from life's pressures to the pleasures of the Life after, and from the injustice of other religions to the justice of Islam.

Your ancestors, great women of Islam, were one of the main reasons for this great nation to take this great place among all nations. Allah, Who granted Islam to this nation, made a high place for Muslim women, and decreed that they share in the responsibilities of enjoining truth, forbidding evil and raising the flag of Islam. He said, what translated means,

"The believers, men and women, are loyalists of one another, they enjoin righteousness and forbid evil, they offer their prayers perfectly and give the Zakat, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah will leave His Mercy on them. Surely Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise." [9:71]

Allah has given Muslim women what they

can bare of orders and duties. He is the God Who knows His creation,

"Should He not know what He created? And He is the Most Kind, All-Aware (of everything)." [67:14]

My dear sister, you are called upon today to truly become an active member of the Muslim nation, strive to establish victory for Allah's Word, implement the Quran and help build the generation of Iman.

What Do Your Enemies Want From You?

There are those who want to distract you from doing your duty. They want to distract you from meeting your noble obligation, that is, to defend the religion of Allah and raise His Word high. Those enemies use many methods:

First: They distract you from what Allah created you to perform of worship, belief and Da'wah (propagating Islam). They use this worldly life as their bate: Jewelry stores, fashions that originate in non-Muslim countries, new models all the time, desires raised, hunger that can never be satisfied, pleasures and competition for them and endless ways for joy. Allah did not create us for this. Indulging in these matters is usually accompanied by wasting time and money and igniting enmity and competition between the rich and the poor.

Second: They ignite enmity between you and man. To those sinners, you are a daughter that is put down, a humiliated mother, an abused wife and an oppressed sister! Men are always unjust, hypocrites, dictators, freedom- preventers and sup-

pressers, according to them. There is a fabricated war that those evil ones are starting for no reason other than to direct you to rebel against your father, be arrogant with your brother and disobedient to your husband. They do not call for justice, mercy and unity. They call for hatred, arrogance and destruction.

Third: They do not stop at their call for rebellion against parents, brothers and husbands, rather, they plot against Islam. They call upon you to rebel against the obligations of Islam and the decrees of the All-Knowing King. Islam, to them, is unjust and Islamic laws are imperfect and restrictive. They call upon you, day and night, to rebel and insist on the disobedience of this religion. They try to rid you of your religion. They try to rid you of comfort and safety under generous parenthood, happy marriage and good brotherly relations.

Those devils portray piety and honor as chains on freedom. To them, Hijab does not cover the head, but also covers the mind; prayer, fasting and Zakat are a waste of time and effort; and obedience to husbands is slavery and a return to the stone age. They distorted all facts and changed all truths, all to serve their evil goals.

My Dear Sister,

The goals that your enemies and the enemies of your religion are seeking to achieve are well known. They want you to be available for them to fulfill their evil desires whenever they wish. They want you to be a mistress that has no honor. They want you to be found everywhere, on roads and in places of sin, without honor, religion or manners. They seek for you only what they want you to do.

The Western world has gone through this all. Women of the West are the part of society that is facing injustice and dishonor. They strive to please men who keep changing partners and seek pleasures but with no responsibility and no consideration of the evil consequences of their sinful actions.

O Muslim sister, read and know about those women who discarded shyness and honor and followed their desires, what was the result of their deeds? Was their end honorable and desirable, or

was it a shameful and hated end?

Advice For My Sister In Islam

Be proud of your religion and the religion of your ancestors. Be a good example for your sons and daughters and sincere in your belonging to this mighty nation.

Know that honor is an honor to all wise people, and that adultery is dishonorable to all nations, even if some called it freedom. Know that adultery is also done with the eyes by seeing, with the ears by listening, and with the mouth by kissing, as was mentioned in a Hadith related by Imam Muslim.

Your happiness is in being an obedient and believing daughter, a loyal and generous wife and a pious and merciful mother.

Know that prayer is the cornerstone of Islam. Fasting one day, for the sake of Allah, takes your face seventy years away from Hellfire, as the Hadith, related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim, states.

Charity is a major cause for gaining forgiveness and for repentance to be accepted.

Those women who are showing parts of their bodies to men, will not enter Paradise or smell its fragrance and are cursed, as in the Hadith related by Imam Muslim.

Hijab is an honor and protection for you. Hijab must be modest in color and not exotic, wide and thick and not revealing, different from the dress of non-Muslim women and men.

My Dear Sister,

These are words from the heart. These are words of good and sincere advice.

Beware of the loyalists of Satan who want to lead you astray.

Be a slave of Allah, righteous and descendant of righteous women and know your role in building this great nation.

Perform your duty and do not be a cause for destruction. Be a maker of righteous generation that will lead mankind, again, to what is right and proper, to the great religion of Islam.

Courtesy "Muslim Creed"

From Hate to Love

Abdul Wahid Hamid

In the ninth year of the Hijrah, an Arab king made the first positive moves to Islam after years of feeling hatred for it. He drew closer to faith (iman) after opposing arid combating it. And he finally pledged allegiance to the Prophet, peace be on him, after his adamant refusal to do so.

He was Adiy, son of the famous Hatim at-Ta'iy who was known far and wide for his chivalry and fabulous generosity. Adiy inherited the domain of his father and was confirmed in the position by the Ta'iy people. Part of his strength lay in the fact that a quarter of any amount they obtained as booty from raiding expeditions had to be given to him.

When the Prophet announced openly his call to guidance and truth and Arabs from one region after another accepted his teachings, Adiy saw in his mission a threat to his position and leadership. Although he did not know the Prophet personally, and had never seen him, he developed strong feelings of enmity towards him. He remained antagonistic to Islam for several years until at last God opened his heart to the religion of truth and guidance.

The way in which Adiy became a Muslim is a remarkable story and he is perhaps the best person to relate it. He said: "There was no man among the Arabs who detested God's Messenger, may God bless him and grant him peace, more than I, when I heard about him. I was then a man of status and nobility. I was a Christian. From my

people I took a fourth of their booty as was the practice of other Arab kings.

When I heard of the Messenger of God, peace be on him, I hated him. When his mission grew in strength and when his power increased and his armies and expeditionary forces dominated east and west of the land of Arabs, I said to a servant of mine who looked after my camels: 'Get ready a fat camel for me which is easy to ride and tether it close to me. If you hear of an army or an expeditionary force of Muhammad coming towards this land, let me know.'

One evening, my servant came to me and said: 'Ya Mawlayal! What you intended to do on the approach of Muhammad's cavalry to your land, do it now.'

'Why? May your mother lose you!' 'I have seen scouts searching close to the habitations. I asked about them and was told that they belonged to the army of Muhammad,' he said. 'Bring the camel which I had ordered you to get ready.' I said to him. I got up then and there, summoned my household (including) my children and ordered them to evacuate the land we loved. We headed in the direction of Syria to join people of our own faith among the Christians and settle among them.

We left in too much haste for me to gather together our entire household. When I took stock of our situation, I discovered that part of my family was missing. I had left my own sister in our Najd homelands together with the rest of the

Ta'iy people. I did not have any means to return to her. So I went on with those who were with me until I reached Syria and took up residence there among people of my own religion. As for my sister, what I feared for her happened.

News reached me while I was in Syria that the forces of Muhammad entered our habitations and took my sister together with a number of other captives to Yathrib. There she was placed with other captives in a compound near the door of the Masjid.

The Prophet, peace be upon him, passed by her. She stood up before him and said: 'Ya Rasulallah! My father is dead and my guardian is not here. Be gracious to me and God will be gracious to you.'

'And who is your guardian?' asked the Prophet.

Adiy ibn Hatim, she said.

'The one who fled from God and His Prophet?' he asked. He then left her and walked on.

On the following day, the same thing happened. She spoke to him just as she did the day before and he replied in the same manner. The next day, the same thing happened and she despaired of getting any concession from him for he did not say anything. Then a man from behind him indicated that she should stand up and talk to him. She therefore stood up and said: 'O Messenger of God! My father is dead and my guardian is absent. Be gracious to me and God will be gracious to you.'

'I have agreed,' he said. Turning to those about him, he instructed: 'Let her go for her father loved noble ways, and God loves them.'

'I want to join my family in Syria,' she said.

'But don't leave in a hurry,' said the Prophet, 'until you find someone you can trust from your people who could accompany you to Syria. If you find a trustworthy person, let me know.'

When the Prophet left, she asked about the man who had suggested that she speak to

the Prophet and was told that he was 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, may God be pleased with him. She stayed in Yathrib until a group arrived among whom was someone she could trust. So she went to the Prophet and said: 'O Messenger of God! A group of my people have come to me and among them is one I can trust who could take me to my family.'

The Prophet, peace be on him, gave her fine clothes and an adequate sum of money. He also gave her a camel and she left with the group.

Thereafter we followed her progress gradually and waited for her return. We could hardly believe what we heard about Muhammad's generosity towards her in spite of my attitude to him. By God, I am a leader of my people. When I beheld a woman in her hawdaj coming towards us, I said: 'The daughter of Hatim! It's she! It's she!'

When she stood before us, she snapped sharply at me and said: 'The one who severs the tie of kinship is a wrongdoer.'

You took your family and your children and left the rest of your relations and those whom you ought to have protected.'

'Yes, my sister, I said, 'don't say anything but good.' I tried to pacify her until she was satisfied. She told me what had happened to her and it was as I had heard. Then I asked her, for she was an intelligent and judicious person:

'What do you think of the mission of this man (meaning Muhammad, peace be on him)?'

'I think, by God, that you should join him quickly she said. 'If he is a Prophet, the one who hastens towards him would enjoy his grace. And if he is a king, you would not be disgraced in his sight while you are as you are.'

I immediately prepared myself for travel and set off to meet the Prophet in Madinah without any security and without any letter. I had heard that he had said:- 'I certainly wish that God will place the hand of Adiy in my hand.'

I went up to him. He was in the Masjid. I greeted him and he said: 'Who is this man?'

Adiy ibn Hatim,' I said. He stood up for me, took me by the hand and set off towards his

home.

By God, as he was walking with me towards his house, a weak old woman met him. With her was a young child. She stopped him and began talking to him about a problem. I was standing (all the while). I said to myself: 'By God, this is no king.'

He then took me by the hand and went with me until we reached his home. There he got a leather cushion filled with palm fiber, gave it to me and said: 'Sit on this!'

I felt embarrassed before him and said: 'Rather, you sit on it.'

'No, you,' he said.

I deferred and sat on it. The Prophet, peace be on him, sat on the floor because there was no other cushion. I said to myself: 'By God, this is not the manner of a king!'

He then turned to me and said: 'Yes, Adiy ibn Hatim! Haven't you been a "Rukusi professing a religion between Christianity and Sabeanism?'

'Yes,' I replied.

'Did you not operate among your people on the principle of exacting from them a fourth, taking from them what your religion does not allow you?'

'Yes,' I said, and I knew from that that he was a Prophet sent (by God). Then he said to me:

'Perhaps, O 'Adiy, the only thing that prevents you from entering this religion is what you see of the destitution of the Muslims and their poverty. By God, the time is near when wealth would flow among them until no one could be found to take it.

'Perhaps, O 'Adiy, the only thing that prevents you from entering this religion is what you see of the small number of Muslims and their numerous foe. By God, the time is near when you would hear of the woman setting out from Qadisiyah on her camel until she reaches this house, not fearing anyone except Allah.

'Perhaps what prevents you from entering this religion is that you only see that sovereign-

ty and power rest in the hands of those who are not Muslims. By God, you will soon hear of the white palaces of the land of Babylon opening up for them and the treasures of Chosroes, the son of Hormuz, fall to their lot.'

'The treasures of Chosroes, the son of Hormuz?' I asked (incredulously).

'Yes, the treasures of Chosroes, the son of Hormuz,' he said.

Thereupon, I professed the testimony of truth, and declared my acceptance of Islam."

One report says that when Adiy saw the simplicity of the Prophet's life-style, he said to him: "I testify that you do not seek high office in this world nor corruption," and he announced his acceptance of Islam. Some people observed the Prophet's treatment of Adiy and said to him: "O Prophet of God! We have seen you do something which you have not done to any other."

"Yes," replied the Prophet. "This is a man of stature among his people. If such a person should come to you, treat him honorably."

Adiy ibn Hatim, may God be pleased with him, lived for a long time. He later said: "Two of the things (which the Prophet spoke of) came to pass and there remained a third. By God, it would certainly come to pass.

"I have seen the woman leaving Qadisiyah on her camel fearing nothing until she arrived at this house (of the Prophet in Madinah).

"I myself was in the vanguard of the cavalry which descended on the treasures of Chosroes and took them. And I swear by God that the third event will be realized."

Through the will of God, the third statement of the Prophet, on him be choicest blessings and peace, came to pass during the time of the devout and ascetic Khalifah, 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz. Wealth flowed among the Muslims so much so that when the town-criers called on people throughout the Muslim domain to come and collect Zakat, no one was found in need to respond.

Excerpted from Companions of the Prophet by Abdul Wahid Hamid.

Negligence?

Imam ad-Dhahabi (ra)

Allah most High says:

Then there succeeded them a generation which neglected prayers and followed lusts. They will meet with destruction (Ghayy), excepting the one who repents and believes and acts righteously.

(19:59-60)

Ibn abbas (RA) explained that it does not mean that they completely abandoned prayers, but that they delayed them to the end of their prescribed times. Sa'id bin Musayyab, a great Imam following the generation of the Companions, elaborated on this, saying: "A person neglects if he delays the noon prayer up to the afternoon prayer time, afternoon prayer up to almost sunset prayer time, sunset prayer up to evening prayer time, and evening prayer up to morning prayer time, while delaying morning prayer until just before sunrise. If anyone dies without repentance while continuing in this manner, Allah has promised Ghayy for him, and that is a valley in Hell which is very deep and has foul food."

Allah Most High says:

Woe to the worshippers who are unmindful of their prayer. (107:4-5)

Saad bin Abi Waqqas said: "I asked Allah's Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) about the meaning of 'unmindful,' and he replied: 'It is delaying it (the prayer) up to the end of its prescribed time.'" (Bazar)

While Allah calls such people, they are lazy and perform the prayer very late. He has promised them (Wayl), which signifies a great punishment.

Some say, "Wayl is a valley in Hell, exceed-

ingly hot, and that is the place for those who delay or miss the prayer, excepting the ones who repent and correct their habits."

Allah Most High says:

O you who believe, let neither your wealth nor your children distract you from the remembrance of Allah. And those who do so, they will be the losers (63:9)

The commentators say: "The 'remembrance of Allah' in this verse means the five daily prayers. If anyone is so busy in buying and selling, or with his daily work of earning a livelihood, or with his children, that he cannot perform prayers on time, he will be among the losers."

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said in this regard: "The first thing which will be judged among a person's deeds on the Day of Resurrection is the prayer. If that is in good order, he will pass the test and prosper, and if that is defective, he will fail the test and be a loser." (Tirmidhi)

Informing us about the inhabitants of Hell, Allah Most High says:

(The people in Hell will be asked): "What caused you to enter Hell-fire?" They will say: "We were not among those who prayed, nor did we feed the needy. We used to engage in vain discourse with the vain-talkers, and we used to deny the Day of Judgment, until there came to us that which is certain (i.e.. Allah's judgment)." Then no intercession by an intercessors will benefit them. (74:42-48)

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)

said: "The covenant between us and them (that is, believers) is prayer, so if anyone abandons it he has become an infidel." (Ahmad, Ibn Majah, Abu Dawood, Nisai, Tirmidhi). He also said: "What lies between a man and infidelity is the abandonment of prayer." (Muslim)

Allah's Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is reported to have said: "If anyone abandons the afternoon prayer, his deeds are of no avail." (Bukhari).

And he said: "If anyone abandons prayer deliberately he has no claim upon Allah" (Sunan).

Abdullah bin amr bin al-As (RA) said that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) mentioned prayer one day saying, "If anyone keeps to it, it will be light, evidence, and salvation for him on the day of Resurrection; but if anyone does not keep to it, it will not be for him light, evidence, or salvation; and on the Day of Resurrection, he will be associated with Qaran, Pharoah, Haman, and Ubayy bin Khalaf (a great enemy of Islam from among the Quraish)." (Ahmad, Darimi and Baihaqi)

Some scholars have explained that the person who abandons prayer will be raised with such a foursome because his neglect of prayer may be due to his involvement with his property, his country, his administrative work, or his trade. Therefore, if he was involved with his property, he will be resurrected with Qarun; if with his country, then with Pharoah; if with his administrative work, then with Haman; and if with his trade, then with Ubayy bin Khalaf, the trader among the unbelievers of Mecca.

Mu'adh bin Jabal (RA) reported Allah's Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) as saying: "If anyone abandons prayer intentionally he has no claim to Allah Most High." (Ahmad)

Umar ibn al-Khattab (RA) reported that a man asked the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam): "Messenger of Allah, what action is dearest to Allah Most High?" The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) replied: "Prayer at its proper time. The one who does not pray has no religion. Prayer is

the main pillar of the religion (of Islam)." (Baihaqi)

After Umar had been stabbed, it was said to him, "As-salat, ya amir ul-mumineen!" (The prayer, Leader of the Believers!) He said, "Yes, truly! If anyone misses the prayer, he has no share in Islam," and thereupon he prayed while his wounds were bleeding.

Abdullah bin Shaqiq (RA) said that the Companions of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) did not consider the abandonment of any good deeds to be unbelief excepting the abandonment of prayer.

When Ali (RA) was asked about a woman who did not pray, he replied: "The one who does not pray is an unbeliever." Ibn Masood said that the one who does not pray has no religion, and Ibn Abbas said: "The one who leaves off a single prayer deliberately will find, when he meets Allah Most High, that He is angry with him."

Allah's Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "When a person meets Allah after neglecting his prayer, he will meet him as if he had not worshipped him at all, nor done any good deeds." And Ibn Hazm said: "There is no greater sin after polytheism than missing a prayer [That is to say, if one deliberately delays a prayer until its time has passed, although he was able to pray it on time, without any valid reason which permits delaying it before its time.] and killing a believer without just cause."

Ibrahim Nakahi said: "The one who has left off the prayer has become a disbeliever." Awn bin Abdullah said: "When a person is buried, the first question which will be asked him will be concerning the prayer. If that is accepted from him, his other deeds will be looked at, but if that is not accepted from him, no other deeds will be looked at."

Abdullah bin al-As reported Allah's Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) as saying: "A person who combines two prayers without excuse, enters a gate among the major sins."

We seek Allah's guidance and help, for indeed. He is the Generous, the Magnanimous, and the Most Merciful of all merciful ones!

The Greatest Individual

Below is a fascinating narrative taken from Saiyid Sulaiman Nadwi's book, "Muhammad, The Ideal Prophet: A Historic, Practical, Perfect Model for Humanity" (translated by Mohiuddin Ahmad). This book is a compilation of a series of lectures given in India in 1925 and it goes a long way in accentuating the fact that Prophet Muhammad (Sallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam) alone is the symbol of perfection and a paradigm of virtuous and wholesome behavior.

In the chapter headed 'Comprehensiveness' Saiyid Suleman Nadwi writes:

Many years ago my friend Hassan 'Ali used to bring out a magazine named Nur-e-Islam from Patna (India). Once he had published in his journal views of a Hindu friend about Prophet Muhammad (Sallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam). In answer to the question why he held the Prophet of Islam (Sallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam) to be the greatest and the most perfect of men ever born in the world and what opinion he held about Jesus (Prophet 'Issa 'alayhis Salaam), this learned Hindu friend of Hassan 'Ali replied that Jesus, in comparison to Muhammad (Sallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam), appeared to be an innocent child, articulating sweet words before a man of wisdom. Asked to elucidate the reason for considering Muhammad (Sallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam) to be the greatest man, he replied:

"I find in his character such diverse and

manifold qualities as it would be impossible to find in any other man whose biography has been preserved by history. He is a king having a whole country under his control but never claiming mastery over even his own self; ever taking pride in his being the slave of God.

He is the master of camel-loads of treasure getting into his capital from far and near, yet he is ever so poor that for months no fire would be lit in his own house, and he goes without a full meal for days together.

Like a veteran campaigner he can defeat his enemies, fully armed and exceeding his none too well armed battlers, still he is so peace-loving that he has no hesitation in signing a treaty when thousands of his followers are ready to fight till death. He is a man so dauntless that he can set whole of the Quraish at defiance, but he is so kindhearted that he never sheds a drop of blood. He is solicitous about the welfare of his own family, of the weak and orphan, and of every wayward soul in Arabia; he is always concerned about the salvation of every human being; but he is also indifferent to everything save the pleasure of his Lord. He never curses those who deride him, nor does he retaliate against those who persecute him; rather, he invokes divine blessings on those who bear malice against him; nevertheless, he never forgives the enemies of God whom he always threatens with grievous

punishment in the hereafter.

When we begin to see him as a militant battler, he appears before us as an ascetic in vigil and prayers and when we find him making his debut as a brilliant conqueror, we are astonished to see in him the innocent divine messenger. Just when we call him the king of Arabia, we find him leaning on a leather pillow filled with date leaves. The day we see the booty of war piled up in the backyard of his Mosque, we find his own family with absolutely nothing to satisfy the pangs of hunger. When we see him distributing the prisoners of war as slaves to the inhabitants of Madina, we also see his daughter Fatima (RA) complaining of blisters on her hands and shoulders caused by driving the handmill and carrying water.

After half of Arabia submits to his authority, ‘Umar (radhi-Allāhu anhu) finds him lying on a rough mattress whose weavings have left marks on his body. His house then contains nothing except a handful of oats and a leather jar. His fugal living makes ‘Umar (RA) burst into tears and he says: “O Apostle of God (Sallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam), is it not distressing to see the Kaisars and the Kisras rejoicing in the luxuries of the world while the Messenger of God (Sallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam) has to live with these restricted means?” But he gets the reply: “Umar, would you not like that the Qaisar and the Kisra should choose this world and I the next?” (Or words to that effect)

On the day Mecca falls to the arms of the Prophet (Sallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam), Abu Sufyan, the Chief of Mecca and the then-greatest enemy of Islam, stood watching the stepping-in Muslim troops, waves after waves, with their tribal colours flying over their heads. Abu Sufyan got overawed and said to ‘Abbas (RA) standing beside him: “Abbas, your nephew has risen to be a great King!” “No”, replied ‘Abbas (RA), “not a king but a Prophet.”

‘Adiyy at-Ta’ee, the son of Ha’tim at-Ta’ee, the famous chief of the tribe of Ta’ee, well-known for his chivalry and fabulous generosity, was still a Christian when he called upon the Prophet (Sallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam) in Madina for the second time. He saw, on one hand, the reverence paid to the Prophet by his devoted companions and, on the other hand, the preparations being made for the holy war. Unable to decide whether Muhammad (Sallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam) was a Prophet or a king, he was still in two minds when he saw a slave girl coming to seek the Prophet’s advice in private. “Come on”, he heard the Prophet replying, “I’ll go wherever you want.” ‘Adiyy at once saw that no king could be so modest and unassuming. He threw away the crosses hanging from the neck and embraced Islam.

Notable Quotes

“Of all that Allah bestows on His servant, there is no better garment than reason; nor a more beautiful necklace than knowledge; nor a better decoration than forbearance, and the epitome of that is piety (taqwa).”

(Thu-n-Noon Misri)

“Abu Sufyan was asked, “How did you reach this status?” “I never quarreled with a man without leaving room for reconciliation”, he replied.

“People are of two kinds, one, the believer, so don’t torment him, the other, the ignorant, so don’t compete with him in ignorance.”

(Rabi’ ibn Khaytham)

“If you remain quiet, and I remain quiet, how will the laymen know the right from the wrong?”

(Ibn Hanbal)

Building Consciousness

Sohaib Baig

In a society which trains its citizens in the art and philosophy of achieving instant self-gratification, of becoming thoroughly submerged in one's own bubble of pleasure, it becomes dangerously difficult for one to develop a world consciousness and concern for others. The intensity of this struggle is signified by the fact that one has to cultivate his concern for society without the help of society, and consequently, many will often be left aside to froth around in the artificial sands of their own world. Yet, for the most part, that world too is not even their own, and is rather the mass amalgamation of what the rest of the world (as they know it) is – from idolizing celebrities that they wished they were, to chasing after the will-o'-the-wisp of appearing important and popular in the eyes of other people (assisted through mediums such as Facebook), to engaging in intense debates on the most frivolous of issues that have no actual connection to their own life (including sports), their mind and efforts become wholly tied in a struggle and existence that is not theirs.

Although there are profound exceptions to the portrait painted in the first paragraph, it can be said that instant self-gratification is certainly one of the loudest messages sent out by American culture. Indeed, the lingua franca of popular American culture is actually the enter-

tainment industry with all its various manifestations. The stars who dominate the scene are envied in almost all aspects of their lives, and Americans will feel proud to buy their expensive memorabilia. This is not to say that all Americans have souls made of plastic, as indeed the world does poke holes in their bubbles of life and pleasure – but still, the ubiquity of the concept of (superficial) fun, as manifested in almost all aspects of society, from social networking to buying cars to even finding love, (as promoted by the equally superficial medium of television and visual imagery, which depends more on arousing our base instincts than appealing to rationality) significantly indicates the level of importance Americans attach to the concept of fun, as well as how vulnerable they themselves are to such stimuli.

Tragically, the Muslim community is not immune to such inhibiting cultural influences. The first wave of immigrants, indeed, mostly came to fulfill this very quest, to find the material success that was glamorized for so long in their own home countries. Yet there were a few who actually were passionate for the Ummah (Muslim community), and from their herculean efforts, Islam managed to strengthen as their children were born. Now, as they themselves begin to recede back into old age and return slow-

ly to their Creator, it is their children who are starting to assume responsibility and control the affairs of their communities. Though the older generation still retains a key grip, it should not be long before that too subsides, and leaves the world to their children. Yet for the Ummah to progress forward, these children will also have to move past the thinking that has plagued most of the elder generation, as well as overcome the new challenges presented by American popular culture.

Muslims, in their zeal to “integrate” often become afflicted with the same disorders as other Americans do. Our attitudes towards love are a clear example of our succumbing to the power of fun. Why does love have to be fun? Tying love with fun actually severely handicaps the power of love, as exemplified by our difficulty in loving someone for the sake of Allah. This often extends dangerously towards our level of love towards Allah and His messenger SAWS – how many times do we lose concentration because we are “bored” in prayer? This attitude also extends to our love of the Ummah: one can gauge the seriousness of the issue by simply looking at how deeply Islamic charities nowadays depend on holding concerts for raising funds for humanitarian causes, and how they sadly have big name Muslim celebrities entertain the Muslim crowds, in order to squeeze out money from the pockets of Muslims. This phenomenon, which has several variations (including basketball tournaments for charity), is extremely telling of the “Ummah consciousness” of a people, and their sheer addiction to fun and self-gratification, where they have to indulge themselves first before coming to the aid of the needy in their own Ummah. It does not seem to carry the same spirit of generosity and urgency when the Prophet (SAWS) said, “Guard from the Fire, even by giving half of a date fruit in charity.”

Social networking sites including Facebook and Twitter serve as another example of this phenomenon. The ideas of fun, frivolity,

redundancy, and sheer narcissism promoted by these sites completely redefine our attitudes towards our lives. Before Facebook, one could feel perfectly content to have a sum total of dozen or more friends—but now, 12 looks like a terrifyingly tiny number, and can become a cause for losing self-esteem. Yet if a person has a thousand friends, they will feel like an accomplished person of great importance and relevance, even if they are doing nothing on the grander scale of contributing to humanity or serving God. The “like” feature also ties into the same concept, serving as nothing more than fuel for narcissists on their personal pages. What is the purpose and ultimate consequence in liking the fact a friend went shopping that day? Equally disturbing is the practice of frequently updating profile pictures, of showcasing the same person in different poses and settings – a practice completely unnecessary for facilitating communication, yet needed for the purposes of communicating self-obsession and glory. (Ironically, many scoff at dictators for plastering their nations with pictures of themselves, without realizing that they themselves are guilty of the same practice online.) Also, prior to Facebook, individuals with a less than normal social aptitude would be inevitably forced to learn the dynamics of building personalities and interacting with people at some stage in their life. With Facebook, the person will perhaps never learn, having finally found a venue to voice the sounds of their soul without hesitation. Some also have experienced that using Twitter extensively damages one’s ability to expound upon reflections and thoughts – one will simply send out 140 character messages and feel the urge is gone. In essence, Muslims need to be aware of the inherent orientations of the tools they use, and realize that technology, just like “culture,” is not as neutral as it may sometimes seem to be – and to embrace everything in the zeal to “integrate” may not be in the best interests of the Ummah.

Many will be inclined to think the pre-

vious narrative as slightly exaggerated, perhaps more applicable to the youth than the adults. But even the most fundamental concept of American culture, the American Dream, – which concerns all Americans – reeks of such individuality. From their early years, Americans are taught that this Dream lies chiefly in attaining affluence and pleasure (with their different manifestations), which in turn mostly hinge on education and assimilation. Thus, the entire effort of their lives, from education to love to business to travel, becomes a part and parcel of living that sacred Dream. Those who do not possess the prerequisites of this Dream are left alone to find refuge in drugs and gangs – but for those who do, the world is clear and straightforward. Sadly, this does not leave much room for building altruistic goals, of nurturing a true “Ummah consciousness” – although one can certainly develop a caring or generous character whilst living the Dream, one cannot experience altruism at its most powerful level, because the Dream inevitably revolves around oneself, and does not make much room for the dreams of others.

It is indeed incredibly unfortunate to see Muslims in America, who arguably possess the highest potential for bringing the most change in the world due to their unique position of both understanding the worldviews of the East and West as well as living in the country with the most power and influence over the world, become muted as their energies drain into the endless spirals of the American Dream. This perhaps can be attributed to both internal and external factors: on the one hand, the ceaseless bombardment from society does its damage, but on the other hand, inside forces including parents and friends also do admirably well in keeping the next generation focused on achieving their American Dream. After having finally broken away from the strong currents of society (and that being an accomplishment on its own), many greatly talented Muslim youth will find

their will and zeal to devote their life to the Ummah flatly rebuffed by parents who care more for filling the lives of their children and families with luxury than responding to the dire pleadings of the Ummah worldwide.

If one truly believes in Islam as a whole, one must believe that the needs of the Ummah supersede his or her own needs. Our enormous energies and talents deserve not to be wasted away in corporate offices, but rather in the service of the greater good of humanity. Becoming doctors, engineers, or accountants is certainly not inherently wrong- but we must realize that building the character of a nation, that curing them of spiritual diseases, is much harder and requires ten times more resources than building the infrastructure of a nation. Obviously, as long as the bulk of all individual energies are being used to secure personal careers, American Muslims on a whole will never tap into their potential to bring reform and prosperity. Often, being an Islamic activist is only tolerated as a hobby – but if it is accorded its proper station as one’s true calling in life, it will be feared greatly, almost as if it surely portends poverty and ruin. Islam, though, is not meant to be taken up as a hobby, but as a life calling – and until we forgo our individualistic dreams and build grander dreams for the Ummah, one cannot have high expectations for the future. This is the fundamental mistake made by Muslims today, and in reality, it is this mistake which threatens ruin and destruction on the Muslim community.

If one believes the state of affairs of the Ummah to be pathetic today, we must believe ourselves individually to be pathetic as well. We have become desensitized to the plight of the world – how else can one describe our historically unprecedented ability to hear tragedy after tragedy, yet go back to spend hours watching T.V shows and games? Television claims to serve our powers of seeing and hearing, but in reality, it has taken control of our faculties of thinking, by controlling what we see and how we see.

Ironically, we often accuse our brethren living in Muslim majority countries of being too sensitive, of being too combustible and manipulated by those who seek to give Islam a bad name. Yet few realize that we too, awash in our luxuries and numbed into silence and inaction by them, are also being manipulated by those same forces. There is not much to fear from a Muslim who views his own life as more important than the Ummah – but an “Ummah conscious” Muslim will always be a threat to their corrupt interests. We must find a way to collectively fight back against these sterilizing forces, of creating new forces and institutions that are free from these dangers, and learn to orient our lives and ambitions toward the service of Allah and all of His creation – and if we can accomplish that, undoubtedly our future descendants will surely come upon a time, God-Willing, where decent men and women all over the world from Haiti to China will smile freely, and feel relieved at having found out that the forces of good have not been vanquished, that goodness and altruism still shine throughout Allah’s earth, like the morning glow rejuvenates us after the lethargy of the night.

Excellent Method of Reformation

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

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

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

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

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

The Erasure of Islam

Ziauddin Sardar

What Enlightenment? It may have been good for Europe, but for the rest of the world in general, and Islam in particular, the Enlightenment was a disaster. Despite their stand for freedom and liberty, reason and liberal thought, Enlightenment thinkers saw the non-West as irrational and inferior, morally decadent and fit only for colonisation. This legacy is not only with us but is positively thriving in the guise of neo-conservative thought, dogmatic secularism and scientism.

For key Enlightenment thinkers, such as Voltaire, de Montesquieu, Volney and Pascal, Europe occupied a special place: it was to be the destiny of humanity, construed as Western man. They worked hard to provide a rational justification for colonisation. They rationalised the medieval images, anxieties and fear of Islam and its Prophet – so evident in the sections devoted to Muhammad in Pascal's *Pensees* – and presented it as evidence for the innate inferiority of Islam. They deliberately suppressed the Muslim contribution to science and learning and severed all intellectual links between Islam and Europe. Their Eurocentricism thus further locked Islam into an exclusive confrontation with the West, which continues to this day.

For thirteenth and fourteenth century thinkers of Christendom, such as Roger Bacon and John Wycliff, Islam was simply a pagan, en-

emy Empire. To their credit, the Enlightenment thinkers saw Islam as a civilisation. But it was a civilisation grounded in a backward society and inferior political institutions and religious beliefs at its core. In *Mohammad and Fanaticism*, Voltaire denounced Islam in harsh and hostile terms. Later, in the *Essai sur les moeurs*, he was a little more restrained, but the judgement did not change. He still saw Islam as an embodiment of fanaticism, antihumanism, irrationalism and the violent will to power. But despite this, Muslims did have a few positive aspects. They could move towards greater tolerance thanks largely to Islam's loose sexual standards, which made it akin to a natural religion. While Jesus was good, Christians had become intolerant. But Muslims were tolerant despite their evil Prophet. Positive development in one case, negative in another. This is how Voltaire reconciled his deep seated prejudices of Islam and Muslims with reason.

For all their sabre rattling against religion, Enlightenment thinkers saw Christianity as the standard of civilised behaviour and norm of all religion. In effect, they further naturalised the natural law theory of medieval Christianity which had always been both vague in the sense of never precisely defined yet highly specific in being a universalising of Christian norms as the standard for human behaviour. Islam remained the antithesis to Christianity. Thus, in *Les Ru-*

ines, Volney announced that ‘Mohammad succeeded in building a political and theological empire at the expense of those of Moses and Jesus’ vicars’. Or, in the scene where he has an imam speaking about ‘the law of Mohammad’, ‘God has established Mohammad as his minister on earth; he has handed over the world to him to subdue with the sabre those who refuse to believe in his law’. Volney described Muhammad as the ‘apostle of a merciful God who preaches nothing but murder and carnage’, the spirit of intolerance and exclusiveness that ‘shocks every notion of justice’. While Christianity might be irrational, Volney declared that it was gentle and compassionate but Islam had a contempt for science – a truly bizarre claim since Volney himself, and all his fellow Enlightenment thinkers, learnt most their science and philosophy from such names as al-Frabi, Ibn Sina and ibn Rushd.

While the Enlightenment may have been concerned with reason, its champions were not too worried about truth when it came to Islam. They not only shamelessly plagiarised philosophy, science and learning from Islam, but the very hallmark of Enlightenment, liberal humanism, has its origins in Islam. It is based on the adab movement of classical Islam, which was concerned with the etiquette of being human. Islam developed a sophisticated system of teaching law and humanism that involved not just institutions such as the university, with its faculties of law, theology, medicine and natural philosophy, but also an elaborate method of instruction including work-study courses, a curriculum that included grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history, medicine, and moral philosophy, and mechanisms for the formation of a humanist culture such as academic associations, literary circles, clubs and other coteries that sustain intellectuals and the literati. The adab literature and institutions were, in fact, what enlightenment was all about in Islam. One cannot have a revolt on behalf of reason in Islam because

reason is central to its worldview: reason is the other side of revelation and the Qur’an presents both as ‘signs of God’. A Muslim society cannot function without either. While Muslims can hardly be exonerated for the decline of reason and learning in Muslim civilisation, it was colonialism that as deliberate policy destroyed adab culture in Muslim societies.

But Enlightenment Europe swallowed the adab system, including text books, en masse. However, since it was a product of an inferior culture and civilisation its origins had to be shrouded. Thus, classical Arabic had to be replaced with another classical language, Latin. This was followed by a systematic expunging of all traces of the influence of Islamic thought on Europe. From the days of Voltaire right up to 1980, thanks largely to the efforts of Enlightenment scholars, it was a general western axiom that Islam had produced nothing of worth in philosophy, science and learning.

The Enlightenment legacy that Islam and Europe have nothing in common, that Islam is only a darker shadow of the West, that liberal secularism is the destiny of all human cultures, is much in evidence in our newspapers and television, literature and scholarship, as well as in our politics and foreign policies. It is the bedrock of Francis Fukuyama’s ‘End of History’ hypothesis, Samuel Huntington’s ‘Clash of Civilisation’ thesis, and the neo-conservative ‘Project for the New American Century’. Voltaire’s Bastards, to use the title of John Ralston Saul brilliant 1992 book, are busy rationalizing torture, military interventions, western supremacy and demonising Islam and Muslims. The Enlightenment may have been big on reason but it was, as Saul shows so convincingly, bereft of both meaning and morality.

Forgive me if I don’t stand up and salute the Enlightenment.

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Appeal

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