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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.

I have a question regarding sufferings.

People in general suffer, some a lot some not at all regardless of their religion. What is the reason behind these sufferings? Is it sins?

In so many books it is said Allah is most merciful most kind and most loving yet we don't see his love and mercy.

My question is what is the reason and how do we make it stop?

Answer.

The first thing to understand is that this world is only the stepping stone to our true abode which is the hereafter. This world is our place for trial and examination. In this world we understand that the higher the qualification, the harder the exam.

Our test in this world is not for qualifications or for degrees. It is for eternal life in gardens of paradise. It is for the supreme success. How can such a test be easy? Study the life of Rasulullah (saws) and you will find that no one went through greater tests and trials than him. Did Allah not have mercy on him?

In the Quran, Allah tells us, "Indeed Allah has purchased your lives and wealth in exchange for Jannah." This means that everything we are and everything we have is at the ready to be sacrificed in the attainment of Jannah.

You may have come across children, whose parents have given them everything, yet their ingratitude is of a level that they say, "My parents have done nothing for me." The child sees only the negative and his eyes have become blind to the many sacrifices and privileges his parents have afforded him.

It is similar when we say that we do not see Allah's mercy. In the Qur'aan, Allah tells us, "If Allah had to punish man in accordance to his sins, then not a creature would be left living on the earth (due to the punishment due)." It is Allah's mercy that he affords the creation grace. It is Allah's mercy that despite our sins, we may eat and drink and breath. The Nabi of Allah (saws) informed us, "The first favour of Allah that we will be questioned about on the Day of Judgement will be, "Have I not given you a sound body and quenched your thirst with cold water?" These are great favours of Allah upon us but how many of the creation are thankful.

There is another aspect that we must consider. Allah has created this world as a place of means, a place of cause and effect and, by and large, Allah allows it to run its own course. A person who wants to do good is able to do good. A person who wants to do evil is able to do evil. The judgement and consequence is not in this world but in the hereafter. When people cause suffering and when greed and hatred cause war, genocide, looting and rape, do we blame Allah?

No, the blame is on the wrongdoers. When governments usurp their countries wealth and leave the population in want and desperation, the blame is on them.

Allah Ta'ala asks us in the Qur'an, "Why would Allah punish you if you are grateful and believing?"

If the Ummah will en masse turn to Allah, then Allah will divinely intervene to change their condition for the better. But if they continue to live as they please then Allah will leave them to their own devices.

Mufti Moosa Salie

Question.

1. A person missed his Asr Salaah and only found the time to perform the Qadhaa of this Asr, when the time of Maghrib was about to expire. In this situation, if he performs the Qadhaa of Asr first, the Maghrib Salaah will become Qadhaa. Which Salaah should he perform in this time, the Maghrib Salaah or the Qadhaa of the Asr Salaah?

2. If a person missed a Salaah and the time of the next Salaah has now set in, which Salaah should he perform first, the Salaah that he missed or the Salaah of the time that set in?

Answer.

1. He should first perform the Maghrib Salaah and thereafter perform the Qadhaa of the Asr Salaah.

2. If a person is a Saahib-e-Tarteef, then he should first perform the Qadhaa Salaah, after which he will perform the Salaah of the time that set in. If he is not a Saahib-e-Tarteef, then it is permissible for him to perform the Salaahs in any sequence. A Saahib-e-Tarteef is that person who has less than six Qadhaa Salaah. For a Saahib-e-Tarteef, it is necessary to perform the Qadhaa Salaah in sequence before performing the Salaah of the time that set in. If a person has six or more Qadhaa Salaah, he will no longer remain a Saahib-e-Tarteef and it will not be nec-

essary for him to perform the Qadhaa Salaah in sequence.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

I am a 15 year old boy and I'm only 5.1 feet tall. I really want to grow taller but i want to turn Allah for help so do you have any Duas to grow taller.

Answer.

We have not come across any Duas narrated in the Ahadith for increasing height. However, the general formula for fulfilment of any of our needs is Salaatul Haajat. This Salaat has been related in the Hadith as follows:

Sayyiduna Abullah ibn Abi Awfa (RA) relates that Rasulullah (saws) said, "Whoever has a need with Allah, or with any human being, then let them perform wudhu properly and then perform two Rakaats of Salaah. After that, praise Allah and send Durood on the Prophet (saws). After this, say,

There is no god but Allah the Clement and Wise. There is no god but Allah the High and Mighty. Glory be to Allah, Lord of the Tremendous Throne. All praise is to Allah, Lord of the worlds. I ask you (O Allah) everything that leads to your mercy, and your tremendous forgiveness, enrichment in all good, and freedom from all sin. Do not leave a sin of mine (O Allah), except that you forgive it, nor any concern except that you create for it an opening, nor any need in which there is your good pleasure except that you fulfill it, O Most Merciful!" (Tirmizi)

In addition to this, I would like to offer the following advice. Teenage years are tough for most teenagers. You may be looking at some of your friends and wishing you were like them. But bear in mind that they also have their challenges and difficulties. They also have their low points and things that they wish they could change in their life. That's the way of this world. No matter who we are or what we have, we will always want

something else. This is true for everyone whether they show it or not. It is better to make peace with yourself and accept yourself for who you are. Be thankful that your physical challenge is only of your height and not of any physical deformity. Being short has never prevented anyone from being successful, from achieving greatness, from getting married and from finding fulfilment and happiness in life. The quicker you accept yourself for who you are, the quicker you will be able to do things for yourself, which will be meaningful and give you satisfaction. Don't dwell on what you can't change and don't keep asking yourself why am I like this? Rather, look to what you can do with your life and improve yourself to be a better Muslim and a better human being.

Mufti Moosa

Question.

After a fardh ghusal, I feel semen or some substance drip from my private part. Do I need to perform ghusal again or should I just wash it and perform wudhu for salaah?

Answer.

If you had taken a fardh ghusal, and after the ghusal, you found that some substance had come out from your private part, then you should repeat the ghusal. However, if before taking ghusal, you had passed urine, walked for forty steps or more or slept for a while and thereafter made ghusal, then in all these cases, if semen had come out after taking ghusal, you will not have to repeat the ghusal.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

Is it permissible for family members of a deceased to post tributes and statuses expressing grief to the one who has passed on? Yes it makes the person feel better as they express how they feel but this sometimes continues for years after the person has passed away reigniting that atmosphere of mourning and grief etc.

Answer.

The time period to offer condolences is up to 3 days after the death of a person, unless a person is out of town. Such a person may offer condolences at a later time. Once a person has offered condolences once, then it should not be repeated. Renewing grief is against Islamic teachings. There is a reason why the mourning period is restricted to three days.

Islam is not a religion of mourning. Mourning is a human requirement for a time but to perpetuate it is to make life gloomy, miserable and depressing. This is against Islamic spirit and teachings.

The practice of continuing to post tributes and statuses expressing grief is against Islamic teachings and should be abandoned. (Hindiyyah Vol. 1 page 167)

Mufti Moosa

Question.

At what stage should the Imaam commence reciting the Takbeer when going into ruku and sajdah? Should he commence as he changes posture or is it permissible for him to recite this Takbeer after going into ruku or sajdah?

Answer.

According to the Hanafi Mazhab, the Imaam should commence the takbeer from the time he starts going down for ruku and sajdah and he should end the takbeer when he reaches the position of ruku and sajdah. This Takbeer is called takbeer-e-intiqaaliyah.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

I have travelled the musaafir distance to a major city with many suburbs within it, and I will be residing in this city for two months. However, from time to time, I will move between the suburbs of this city and spend the night in the different suburbs of this city. Up to now, I do not have the intention to stay 15 days in one particu-

lar suburb. Am I a musaafir or a muqem?

Answer.

If each suburb is separated from the other and there is no ittisaal (continuity) between the suburbs, then you will be a musaafir. However, if there is ittisaal between the suburbs and the town (and the suburbs are linked to the town), then it will be regarded as though you are staying in one place and hence you will not be a musaafir.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

If a boy was sexually abused in his childhood and is now an adult, can he attempt suicide? What does Islam say in this regard?

Answer.

If he was sexually abused in his childhood, then he will not be answerable for the wrong that was done to him. However, the person who committed the major sin with him will be taken to task. There is no reason for him to feel guilty for what had occurred in his childhood as he was oppressed. Suicide is a major sin and severe warnings have been sounded in the Mubaarak Ahaadith for the one who perpetrates this grave sin. He should understand that committing this major sin is not a solution for removing the grief of what was done to him as one wrong cannot justify another wrong. It is reported in the Hadith that if one takes his life through committing suicide, then until Allah Ta'ala does not forgive him, he will be punished in the fire of jahannum by continuously inflicting the same pain upon himself that was experienced at the time of committing suicide.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

Kindly clarify whether it is correct to say that in the previous ummats, only the Nabi was allowed to give dawat. As proof, it is said that Hazrat Haroon (AS) was made a Nabi in order

to accompany Nabi Musa (AS). But is it not the case that the person mentioned in Surah Yaseen also gave dawat to people by asking them to follow the Nabi? Also, people in previous ummats had to act to prevent people from wrongdoing (preventing evil is also considered part of dawat). Does this not show that ummatis of the previous ummats also had to engage in some form of dawat?

Answer.

This is not correct. The ummat of each Nabi was also commanded to give dawat and encourage towards good and forbid from evil. In the Qur'an Majeed, Allah Ta'ala says that the Bani Israeel were cursed upon the tongues of their Am-biya (Hazrat Dawood (AS) and Hazrat Esa (AS)) on account of them associating with the people of evil and not preventing them from wrong and sin. Allah Ta'ala says:

Cursed were those who disbelieved among the Children of Israel on the tongue of (Nabi) Dawood (AS) and the tongue of (Nabi) Esa (AS), the son of (Hazrat) Maryam (Alayhas Salaam). That was because they disobeyed and (habitually) transgressed. They never used to prevent one another from the wrongdoing that they perpetrated. How evil was that which they were doing!

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

Is the eighty durood that is recited after Asr on Friday a practice which is established in Deen? Does it have a source in the Hadith of Rasulallah (saws)?

Answer.

Yes, the practice of reciting eighty durood after Asr on a Friday is established in Deen. This practice is established from the following Hadith of Hazrat Abu Hurairah (RA):

Hazrat Abu Hurairah (RA) reports that Rasulallah (saws) said, "The one who performs Asr Salaah on Friday and thereafter recites eighty

times before standing up from his place,

Allahuma Salli ala Muhammadin-nil-Nabiyil

Ummii wa-ala Aali wa-sallim Tasleema

eighty years of sins are forgiven for him and eighty years of (nafl) ibaadat are written for him”.

It was the practice of many of our Akaabir and Buzrugaaan-e-Deen to recite the eighty Durood after Asr on Friday.

Shaikh Muhammad Awwaamah, a senior ranking Muhaddith of this era, has also approved of this practice and regarded reciting the eighty Durood after Asr on Friday as permissible. From the Muhadditheen of the past, Allaamah Ibnu Bashkuwaal (a Muhaddith of the sixth century), Allaamah Sakhaawi (a Muhaddith of the tenth century) and Allaamah Ibnu Hajar Makki (a Muhaddith of the tenth century) (rahimahumullah) regarded this practice to be established and therefore included it in their kitaabs prepared on the topic of Durood upon Rasulullah (saws).

Reciting Durood upon Rasulullah (saws) is regarded as being among the greatest ibaadat in Deen through which one may acquire the divine love of Allah Ta'ala and the special closeness of His beloved Rasulullah (saws). Rasulullah (saws) said, “Indeed, the people who will be closest to me on the day of Qiyaamah will be those who used to recite the most Durood upon me in the world.”

In his Mubaarak Ahaadith, Rasulullah (saws) has encouraged his Ummah to recite abundant Durood upon him and he has explained that through reciting Durood, they will receive great virtues and blessings from Allah Ta'ala.

It has been the practice of many Akaabir and pious elders to recite the eighty Durood after Asr on Friday. This practice was always understood to have been based upon the Hadith of Hazrat Abu Hurairah (RA) wherein he had reported that Rasulullah (saws) had said, “The one who performs Asr Salaah on Friday and thereafter recites the above mentioned durood eighty times before standing up from his place eighty years

of sins are forgiven for him and eighty years of (nafl) ibaadat are written for him”. However, there has lately been some discussion among the Ulama regarding whether this practice is established and whether this Durood should be recited.

This book provides insight into this issue and expels the doubts that people have regarding this practice being an innovation in Deen.

Mufti Zakaria

Question

I missed reciting the qiraat after Surah Faatihah in one rakaat of my esha salaah and I performed sajdah-e-sahw. Is sajdah-e-sahw sufficient or do I have to repeat the salaah?

Answer.

If you missed reciting the qiraat forgetfully after Surah Faatihah, then the salaah will be valid through performing sajdah-e-sahw at the end of the salaah. However, if you missed the qiraat intentionally after Surah Faatihah, then the salaah will not be valid even though you performed sajdah-e-sahw at the end of the salaah. The salaah will have to be repeated.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

If I miss saying “Aameen” when the Imam finishes Surah Faatihah, will it affect my namaz?

Answer.

For the muqtadi to recite Aameen after the Imaam completes Surah Faatihah is sunnah. It is reported in the Hadith that the one who recites Aameen after the Imaam completes the recitation of Surah Faatihah, and his Aameen coincides with the Aameen of the malaaikeh, his minor sins will be forgiven. However, if one had not recited the Aameen after the Imaam completed Surah Faatihah, his namaaz will be valid.

Mufti Zakaria

*Lesson from
The Qur'an*



*And hold on to the
cord of Allah, all of
you, and be not divid-
ed. And remember the
blessing of Allah upon
you. When you were
enemies to each other,
and He brought
your hearts together,
then you, with His
grace, became brothers.
And you were at the
brink of a pit of Fire,
then, He saved you
from it. This is how
Allah makes His
signs clear to you, so
that you may take the
right path. [3:103]*

Source of Unity

Unity and agreement need a centre of attraction or a common idea. This idea of a centre has been different with different peoples of the world. Somewhere it was race and tribal affinity. For instance, among the tribal complex of Arabia, Quraysh was one nation and Banu Tamim another. There were other places where colour was the criterion, with black people taken as one nation, and the white people as another. There were still other places where the geographical or lingual factor was the centre of unity making Indian one nation and the Arab, another. Then there were areas where people rallied around ancestral customs drawing a line between those who follow these customs and those who do not, for instance, the Arya Samajists in India.

The Holy Qur'an, bypassing all these, made the Book of Allah basis of unity, that is, the system revealed by Allah Almighty. In a single stroke, it declared that Muslims are a nation attached to 'Hab-lillah', the cord of Allah, and those who disbelieve are another nation, not attached to this strong 'cord' or 'rope'. The statement: (It is He who created you. So, some of you are infidels and some of you are believers) means just this. So, the unifying factors of geography, race, tribe or language do not deserve to be the centre of affinity for man generally has no control over them. One cannot have them by personal effort or choice. Black cannot become white, a Qurayshi cannot become a Tamimi, an Indian cannot become an Arab. Such unities can exist in a very limited frame; they can never claim to have assembled the whole humanity under their umbrella hoping to have the entire world gathered on a united platform. This is why the Holy Qur'an has made the Divinely revealed way of life as the centre of unity, something one can elect to have for himself. Everyone from the East or the West, black or white, speaking Arabic or English or any other language, coming from any family, any tribe, any human group, can freely make this centre of unity his own as the most rational and

correct choice available. Then, humankind can come close together around this centre and become brothers and sisters to one another.

What is needed is a little impartial thinking, a slight rising above custom, prejudice and habit, as a result of which, the seeker shall be striking the best bargain of his life. Hopefully, he will discover for himself the way of life revealed by Allah Almighty, understand it, and follow it holding fast on to this strong medium of communion with Allah. As a result of this, the whole humanity will become beneficially concentric, having the centre of God-given guidance in common. Consequently, every individual member of this great brotherhood will be able to tune his deeds, material and spiritual, to the jointly accepted way of life from Allah.

Here is the principle, wise and correct, of which Muslims can be proud, and confident when inviting others to join in. Unfortunately, conspiracies hatched by the Europeans, for centuries to crush the Muslim unity have succeeded in dividing the ranks of those who claim to be Muslims.

Now they have themselves accepted the differences of race, language and nationalities as the dividing forces, and the link of Muslim unity stands severed by the concept of Arabs and Non-Arabs, Indians and non-Indians etc. The Holy Qur'an proclaims a universal reality, loudly and openly, time and again, that these distinctions are ill-founded and divisive and any unity based on them shall remain irrational and false. Acentericity is not the solution for Muslims who have no choice but to 'hold on to the cord of Allah', all of them, as a way of life. This has given them a place of honour earlier, and if there is yet another success destined for them, this is how it would come again.

Muslims are required to live by the system prescribed for them by Allah Almighty, and hold fast to 'the cord of Allah' all together. This is how the Muslim ummah gained ascendance in the past and there is no reason why, it will not

rise again.

This far the discussion revolved around the positive aspect of unity among Muslims. The text now takes up the negative aspect when it says: (And be not divided). This is another example of the peculiarly wise style of the Holy Qur'an when it would highlight the positive aspect first, then identify the negative, and forbid the later. In another verse, it was said:

Surely, this is the straight path, so, follow it. And do not follow (other) ways which will cause you to become separated from His way. (6:153)

Since disunity is the first and the last reason behind the destruction of a nation, therefore, the Holy Qur'an has repeatedly forbidden it in various ways. It has been said in another verse:

Those who have made divisions in their religion and become sects, you have nothing to do with them. (6:159)

Also narrated in the Holy Qur'an are events concerning communities led by their prophet's (A.S), communities which fell into temporal and eternal disgrace because of their mutual disputes and disunity which turned them away from the honest pursuit of their central purpose of life.

The Holy Prophet (saws) has said that there are three things Allah Almighty has liked for you while there are three others He has disliked. The ones He has liked are as follows:

1. That your worship should be for Allah alone and that you should not attribute partners to His divinity.
2. That you should hold on to the Book of Allah firmly and avoid disunity.
3. That you should have goodwill for those in authority from among you.

The three things which cause Allah's displeasure are:

1. Unnecessary argumentation.
2. Needless asking.
3. Wastage of resources.

*Adapted from: Ma'ariful Qur'an
Mufti Muhammad Shafi (ra)*

Lessons from Sahih Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

Chapter 73 : The prohibition of the wine trade in the mosque.

As already mentioned, it is permissible to teach juristic injunctions in the mosque irrespective of the fact whether the injunctions are of desired or undesired nature. Therefore, it is also permissible to mention or discuss the injunctions related to things like wine, interest etc., in the mosque. Allaama Ayni gives another explanation regarding the title of this chapter, saying that Imam Bukhari here wants to stress on the vice of wine because its prohibition was proclaimed from the pulpit by the Prophet (saws), in a similar fashion as that of interest.

Hadith No. 446 Narrated Aisha

When the verses of Surat "Al-Baqara" about the usury Ribaa were revealed, the Prophet went to the mosque and recited them in front of the people and then banned the trade of alcohol.

Comments

According to Sayyida Aisha when the (following) verses about the ban on interest were revealed to Rasulullah (saws), he went to the mosque and recited the verses on the pulpit.

Those who take ribaa (usury or interest) will not stand but as stands the one whom the demon

has driven crazy by his touch. That is because they have said: "Trading is but like Ribaa." And Allah has permitted trading, and prohibited Ribaa. So, whoever receives an advice from his Lord and stops, he is allowed what has passed, and his matter is upto Allah. And the one's who revert back, those are the people of Fire. There they remain for ever.

Allah destroys Ribaa and nourishes charities. And Allah does not like any sinful disbeliever. Surely those who believe and do good deeds, establish Salaah and Zakaat have their reward with their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve.

O those who believe, fear Allah and give up what still remains of the 'riba' if you are believers. But if you do not, then listen to the declaration of war from Allah and His Messenger. And if you repent, yours is your principal. Neither you wrong, nor be wronged.

And if there be one in misery, then deferment till ease. And that you leave it as alms is far better for you, if you really know. And be fearful of a day when you shall be returned to Allah, then everybody shall be paid, in full, what he has earned. And they shall not be wronged. (2:275-

After reciting these verses, Rasulullah (saws) informed the people about the evilness of wine trade and ban on it.

Chapter 74 : Servants for the mosque.

Ibn Abbas said, The words (of Hanna) 'I have dedicated to You what is in my womb,' (3:35) refer to the service of the mosque."

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Imam Bukhari wants to convey the permissibility of engaging a person for services of the mosque. To prove this point he quotes a verse from the Qur'an which says that Hanna—the mother of Sayyida Maryam (AS), vowed to Allah that she would dedicate her child, which was at that particular time still in her womb, for services of Baitul Maqdis.

Hadith No. 447

Narrated Abu Huraira

"A woman or a man used to take care of the mosque. (He remarked,) "I am pretty sure it was a woman." Then he mentioned the hadith about the Prophet (saws) praying at her grave

Comments

This hadith has been mentioned in earlier chapter which mentions that a lady used to sweep the Prophet's (saws) mosque. To look after and maintain the mosque is highly virtuous in Islam. It is one of the duties of the local residents to take care of their mosque in every possible manner. However, it is also permissible for the residents to engage a full time servant on salary for the purpose.

Chapter 75 : Tying up a captive or debtor in the mosque.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Mosque is a place where people assemble at least five times a day. It is an ideal place to

create public awareness as well as sensitize people about their obligations towards Islam.

A captive or a debtor, not paying back his debt in a just way, if handcuffed and tied down in a mosque will be looked at by the people five times a day which will alert them against committing a crime. If a non-Muslim captive is kept in a mosque, he will be able to witness the etiquettes of Muslims, the beauty of their worship and their mutual brotherhood which can mould his heart towards the religion of Islam.

Hadith No. 448

Narrated Abu Huraira

"The Prophet said, "Last night a big demon (afreet) from the Jinn came to me and wanted to interrupt my prayers (or said something similar) but Allah enabled me to overpower him. I wanted to fasten him to one of the pillars of the mosque so that all of you could see him in the morning but I remembered the statement of my brother Solomon (as stated in Qur'an): My Lord! Forgive me and bestow on me a kingdom such as shall not belong to anybody after me (38:35)." The sub narrator Rauh said, "He (the demon) was dismissed humiliated."

Comments

According to Sayyiduna Abu Huraira, Rasulullah (saws) said that Afreet—a big demon from the Jinn, had turned up and tried to disturb his Salaah. There is a narration in Muslim on the authority of Sayyiduna Abu Dhardha which mentions that Rasulullah (saws) said, "He (Afreet) came with a fire ball and wanted to put it on my face". Rasulullah (saws) then said that Allah gave him enough strength to overpower it (Afreet), and that he wanted to tie him to one of the pillars of the mosque so that people could see him in the morning, but the Prophet (saws) left the idea when the following verse about Prophet Sulayman (AS) struck him:

O my Lord, forgive me, and bless me with a

kingdom that will not be available to anyone after me (38:35)

Chapter 76 : Gusul (washing the whole body) when becoming a Muslim and also tying up prisoners in the mosque.

Shurayh used to order debtors to be bound to a pillar in the mosque.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

It has been widely debated by the scholars of hadith why Imam Bukhari has established such a title for this chapter. This chapter has two parts viz., (i) taking a bath on accepting Islam and (ii) tying up a prisoner in the mosque. The first part is not related to the chapters under discussion which are about the mosque, and the second part is a repetition of the previous chapter. The scholars have given different explanations for this, some say that this chapter was left without a title by Imam Bukhari and it has been added later as is evident by its absence in some of the compilations of Sahih Bukhari. Others say that the hadith quoted in previous chapter was not clearly mentioning the tying of a prisoner as Rasulullah (saws) had only expressed his intention to tie the devil, whereas in the hadith of this chapter it is vividly mentioned, and that is why Imam Bukhari has repeated the chapter. The 1st part i.e., taking a bath on accepting Islam is an offshoot which Imam Bukhari liked to make mention of.

Hadith No. 449

Narrated Abu Huraira

The Prophet sent some horsemen to Najd and they brought a man called Thumama bin Uthal from Bani Haneefa. They fastened him to one of the pillars of the mosque. The Prophet came and ordered them to release him. He went to a (garden of) date-palms near the mosque, took a bath and entered the mosque again and said,

"None has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is His Apostle (i.e. he embraced Islam)."

Comments

In the month of Muharram, 6th Hijra, Rasulullah (saws) sent an expedition of thirty horsemen to Najd under the leadership of Muhammad bin Muslimah. On the way they saw some people heading towards Madinah. They captured their leader namely Thumama bin Uthaal, brought him to Madinah and fastened him to one of the pillars of the Prophet's mosque. When Rasulullah (saws) came he asked Thumama what treatment he expected from them.

"If you kill, you will be killing one who deserves, and if you show generosity, you will be showing it to a thankful person, and if you want money, we will give you what you want".

Rasulullah (saws) left him like that for two days and on the third day he felt Islam had entered his (Thumama) heart. He asked the companions to release him. He went to a nearby date garden belonging to Abu Talha where he took a bath and on returning back embraced Islam. Rasulullah (saws) said,

"Verily the Islam of your brother beautified".

Allaama Ayni has quoted from Taarikh al-Barqi that he was later asked to stay with Sayyiduna Abu Bakr and Sayyiduna Umar to learn Islam.

Status of taking a bath (ritual ablution or gusul) at the time of accepting Islam

As per Imam Ahmad it is obligatory (waajib) to have a gusul on accepting Islam. According to Imam Sha'faee and Imam Maalik it is preferable (mustahab) but will be obligatory if such a person before accepting Islam has done an act which makes gusul mandatory. According to the Hanafite school, if gusul was mandatory upon him before accepting Islam and he had performed it, he need not repeat it after ac-

cepting Islam, as did Thumama.

Chapter 77 : A tent in the mosque for sick people and others.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

In previous chapters Imam Bukhari mentions that a mosque can be used for other purposes benefitting the Ummah. Here he says that even ordinary tents can be erected in the mosque for sick people and others.

Hadith No. 450

Narrated Aisha (RA)

On the day of Al-Khandaq (battle of the Trench) the medial arm vein of Sa'd bin Mu'ad was injured and the Prophet pitched a tent in the mosque to look after him. There was another tent for Banu Shaffar in the mosque and the blood started flowing from Sa'd's tent to the tent of Bani Shaffar. They shouted, "O occupants of the tent! What is coming from you to us?" They found that Sa'd' wound was bleeding profusely and Sa'd died in his tent.

Comments

According to some learned scholars of hadith, it is most probable that this tent was not erected in the Prophet's mosque in Madinah but in some other mosque. It was during the siege of Banu Quraizah after the expedition of Khandaq when Rasulullah (saws) and his companions stayed at Banu Quraizah for about twenty five days. Here he earmarked an open space for Salaah and according to the hadith, it is this place which has been regarded as mosque. At this place a tent was erected for Sayyiduna Sa'd bin Mu'ad who got injured during the expedition of Khandaq.

Some other scholars believe that the tent for Sahhiduna Mu'ad was erected in the Prophets mosque in Madinah. The reason they put forward is that Sayyiduna Sa'd bin Mu'ad had

got injured during the expedition of Khandaq and it is most likely that he stayed back in Madinah when Rasulullah (saws) left for the expedition of Banu Quraizah. This argument is further supported by the fact that the Jews of Banu Quraizah suggested that Sayyiduna Sa'd be nominated as the Qazi (Judge) of the area and he came mounted on a camel when called. It is most likely that he was not present there but was called from Madinah (Allah knows the best)

Sa'd bin Mu'ad Abu Umra was one of the respected Ansaar companions of Rasulullah (saws) who belonged to the Oas tribe and participated in the battle of Badr. He died in the month of Shawal, 5th Hijra, after an arrow hit his forearm during the battle of Khandaq. He was appointed as Qazi (Judge) of Banu Quraizah on the request of Jews who were kept under siege by the Muslims soon after the battle of Khandaq. During this battle, the Makkani infidels with the help of many neighbouring tribes marched with a huge army of ten thousand people and laid siege around Madinah. On the suggestion of Sayyiduna Salman al-Farsi a deep trench or Khandaq was dug around Madinah in order to stop the marching army. The infidels continued the siege for about a month but could not march forward due to this trench and finally left back disappointed and unsuccessful. Rasulullah (saws) along with his companions returned to Madinah and started removing his armour and weapons. At that very moment, the chief angel Jibra'eel came and told Rasulullah (saws) that since they (angels) were still in the battle and why were the Muslims removing their armours. He asked Rasulullah (saws) to go and settle the issue with the Jews of Banu Quraizah first who had broken the treaty with the Muslims. Rasulullah (saws) immediately left along with his companions, laid siege of Banu Quraizah, who finally surrendered and accepted to take Sayyiduna Sa'd bin Mu'ad as Judge and obey whatever judgement he would pass. It was at this time

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Faith Glued *Straight Talk* to Hearts



Believers see the truth of Prophetic predictions from the flashes of their inner eye. When a prediction is proven true, by external means, they are happy, not because the prediction came true, they always knew it was true, but because their trust in the Prophet came true, writes

SYED IQBAL ZAHEER.

Back in our childhood, we used to be told by our elders of a few predictions of the Prophet (on whom be peace). They stuck to memory. One of them was that a time will come when barefoot, bareheaded Bedouins will construct tall buildings. Such predictions were usually received with conviction that they “could” happen, but perhaps would take some centuries.

As we grew into the Western skeptic age, the predictions of the Prophet were pushed back into infrequently visited areas of the mind. The new age directed us on redefining such predictions as which, if they happened, would happen, in time quite remotely distant, and would manifest their true meaning in forms, perhaps, very different from the surface meanings of the words: “So, be rational,” we were told, “and wait not for the predictions to come true too soon.” As time passed, Western influences grew stronger and the newer generation of Muslims was harder to convince to the extent that it would make any difference to their attitudes to life.

As an aside, it might be pointed out that the skepticism of the West, quite proudly claimed,

and mentioned as an achievement by its thinkers, is all about good things. That is, the skepticism is, in reality, a pessimistic view of life. It expects nothing “real” good to happen to Man. Influenced by Newton’s Second Law of Thermodynamics, the Western mind believes in entropy, worsening of things. They believe things will get worse and worse. This makes them misanthropes, destructive to man, leading them to wars of death and destruction, undertaken with callous attitudes. If there is any optimism, it is not about Man, but about things. With more and more development in science and technology, they believe, more and more things will be produced. Hopefully, it is thought, that will make life better. Or it may not. But that the things will be there, in ever improved versions, that is assured. Will life get any better? Of course, because things would be there. But when asked, “Will men be happy?” The answer is, “Maybe yes, maybe not.” Actually, ideas about Man are doomed. This is what Western skepticism means – at least, considering its one aspect.

At any event, with skepticism of one kind

or another pervading life, thought and actions, predictions of the Prophet could only lie at the back of the mind. They had also to take that secondary position because they were to be hidden from the Western man, Western mind, Western idols. It was also to escape skeptic shake of the heads and dismissal of the idea gestured by the throwing back of shoulders.

However taken, they were predictions of a Prophet and no weird songs of a French wizard. It wasn't a few decades in our lives but we were witness to one of the predictions coming true. It was not a few of them, but a whole generation of Bedouins, living across lands of huge dimensions, that began to work on making the prediction come true. It happened much sooner than we had ever imagined; so sooner, that initially Western skepticism cautioned us to wait and see, and not believe in the first instance.

Today, the barefoot, bareheaded Bedouins of yesterday boast of, with some pride, but more satisfaction, the tallest building in the world. Another is under construction with the ambition to make it taller than the tallest.

The Prophet's prediction stood taller. It strengthened Muslim faith in Islam. This, however, is a point rarely understood by the Islamophobists. Islam has the inner content, power, and the force of conviction, to keep a believer within its fold. And, it is divinely rejuvenated. While most faiths are suffering decline in number of people who believe in their veracity, that of the Muslims increases – much to the global discomfort. Envious, their adversaries declare war on Islam and Muslims without knowing that their enmity, their hatred of Islam and Muslims, their desire to destroy the culture and civilization that the Muslims have produced, has been predicted too. They rename their intentions as security moves, fire rockets as preemptive measures, on hapless populations, but, in response, Muslims tell each other: "Haven't these wars against us been predicted?"

"And when the believers saw the forces (of their

enemies) they said, 'This is what Allah and His Messenger had promised. Allah and His Messenger have proven true.' And nothing increased in them but belief and submission."
(*The Qur'an, 47: 17*)

And now, here comes news that brings another prediction a step closer to its complete fulfillment. It is another of those we used to hear in our childhood, and, as we grew into an age inimical to truths of life, shook our heads in half-belief, half-disbelief. The Prophet said, "The Last Hour will not strike before the lands of the Arabs turn back into what they once were: lush green gardens with rivers (dotting the landscape)."

The statement has two parts: one, the deserts stretching over thousands of miles, were once lush green gardens with rivers dotting the landscape; and two, the lands will once again turn into what they originally were. As we grew up and became witness to discovery of huge deposits of oil, we began to ask: "From whence these oils?" We learnt the answer: oil is not a liquid mineral; its deposits are not found in the earth like iron or nickel, it is not there from the time the earth was created 4.5 billion years ago; but rather, this oil was the result of death and burial of microorganisms, plants and other materials in the sea-beds. It took hundreds of millions of years to turn into oil in degrees because of huge pressure from above accompanied by high temperatures. The substance once turned into oil, began to migrate until it met with a barrier of hard rocks and thus collected as deposits.

The conclusion was simple: the land must once have had thick forests, and so, there must have been rivers, lakes, ponds and springs on the surface to support the greenery; and, previous to that, the lands must have all been under the sea. The sea retreated for geological reasons, rains kept coming for some time, but stopped altogether. Those rains must have created rivers, ponds etc, affording greenery to the land.

The prediction by the Prophet that the Arab lands were once rich in water and hence blooming with flora and fauna is now confirmed by the latest developments in geology. Says a recent report:

“When most of us think of Arabia, we think of rolling sand dunes, scorching sun, and precious little water. But in the quite recent past it was a place of rolling grasslands and shady woods, watered by torrential monsoon rains.” (www.bbc.com/earth/)

Recent findings of a team of scientists suggest that:

“... (there is) evidence of five wet phases, during which the rivers flowed and silt was deposited. The first wet phase happened between 160,000 and 150,000 years ago, and the most recent was around 55,000 years ago.” (www.bbc.com/earth/)

Writes another earth explorer:

“The Arabian Desert, also known as all of Saudi Arabia and part of Egypt, sprawls across almost 1 million square miles and is home to one of the largest contiguous bodies of sand in the world. It is one of the least biologically diverse places on the planet due to its harsh climate and damages from human activity (hunting, industrial pollution, military action). But just a few tens of thousands of years ago, it was home to a large number of shallow lakes that supported a diverse community of animals, including hippos and water buffalo.” (Shea Gunther, <http://www.mnn.com/earth-matters>)

The BBC report also quoted from the original article:

“...the monsoon pushes further into Arabia every 23,000 years, allowing plants and animals to flourish. The findings are published in the journal *Geology*. (www.bbc.com/earth/)

Another researcher, Dr. Andrew Farrant, wrote:

Our findings, published in the journal *Geology* have shown that wet climatic periods in Arabia were not driven by global ice volume changes during interglacial conditions every ~100,000 years.

Instead, the quarries at Al-Ain demonstrate that the vast alluvial fans along the western Hajar and Oman Mountains became active approximately every 23,000 years since at least ~160,000 years ago. These wet periods were triggered by periodic northward shifts in the position and strength of the Indian Ocean Monsoon, driven by subtle changes in the Earth’s orbit every ~23,000 years. During these times, the vast Arabian deserts were transformed into landscapes littered with freshwater lakes and active river systems, providing ample opportunities for humans to disperse across the region en route to the rest of Eurasia. (<http://britgeopeople.blogspot.com/>)

There remains now the coming true of the second half of the Prophet’s prediction: a time will come when the Arab land will once again turn into lush green gardens dotted by rivers. This, too, is now being predicted by none other than geological sciences.

The truth of the truthful is self-evident; and, if the truthful is a Messenger, then, all the more so. But, problematically, and a consequence of the skepticism, when you run through a Prophet’s predictions, you run into a problem. The truth is not visible to the physical eye. It is visible to the inner eye alone. Moreover, like certain members of Allah’s creation in the animal kingdom, the inner eye flashes out light, though a light devoid of photons, in which light you see a lot of truth. If the inner eye has gone blind, the noon light of the sun in the desert does not reveal much.

“Is he then whose heart Allah has opened for Islam, so that he is on a light from his Lord (equal to him who is stumbling in the dark)?”
[39: 22]

Believers see the truth of Prophetic predictions from the flashes of their inner eye. When a prediction is proven true, by external means, they are happy, not because the prediction came true, they always knew it was true, but because their trust in the Prophet came true.

The Miracle

Ahmad Zaki Hammad

Behold! in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day,- there are indeed Signs for men of understanding,- (The Quran. 3: 190)

The human creation is a being of limitations that God has endued with creative consciousness. This union of constraint and ranging imagination makes discovery an interesting part of our very essence. The instruments, techniques, and culture of curiosity we have devised to satisfy this exploration instinct have vastly expanded our awareness of the secrets of the physical world. Unseen structures of matter are continually discerned at previously impregnable levels; forces, energies, and dimensions that shape material existence are continually theorized, tested, and recast; human understanding of the invisible mechanisms and connections that bring the universe into seamless coherence are hypothesized, debunked, and postulated again - such that steadily, inevitably existence yields her enigmatic attributes to our mortal minds.

The scientific sensibility, for the most part, has evolved enough (at least for peer review purposes, if for no higher reason) to restrain researchers who would otherwise rush fecklessly to state the “last word” on the natural world. There are, however scientists who have grown too wise to deny transcendent meaning and purpose in existence, and who have realized

that to allege the opposite, based entirely upon lab or fieldwork, is to overreach the competence of empirical inquiry. One of modern science’s most lauded breakthroughs in these early days of the new millennium, for example, has been the declared completion of the project to map out the human genetic code, or genome. This has enabled us for the first time to decipher in a rather comprehensive manner the relationship connecting sequences of vital molecules in our cells to our physical attributes and conditions. Interestingly, one of the project’s directors heralded this achievement with the words, “Today we celebrate the first glimpse of our instruction book, previously known only to God.” If one listens past the seeming arrogance of these words for a moment, one hears a new tone that has slowly emerged among the scientists of our time; namely, a humbling recognition that the mere proportion of what is unknown about creation far outstrips all human comprehension of it. However reluctant or incidental this concession may be, it pointedly underscores the need for religion (and philosophy within the realm of its competency) to recover the right to contemplate the findings of science and relate them to truths known to man only by way of revelation and informed reflection.

Indeed, human discovery of the natural world deepens the religious experience because it heightens our realization of the existence of

system, complexity, harmony, order, and magnitude in creation on a scale that seriously dents (if not outright dismisses) the theories of an accidental universe. Natural inquiry, unfettered by anthropological agendas, has the capacity to inform and affirm the recognition of divine purpose in creation - recognition found in all human beings. Such an optimistic, congruous, and innate view of existence is perhaps the antidote to a terrible sense of alienation and the myriad personal psychoses and social turmoil that have resulted from this disaffection. What truth or hope can possibly inhabit a view of ourselves as fleeting organic luck adrift in endless space? The God-given impulse to understand our surroundings serves to relocate our spiritual selves and earthly purpose in a colossal universe. This impulse to "know", when guided by revelation, shall conduct us to the eventuality we so crave - coming near to our sole and resplendent Maker.

(an excerpt from a new release, "Mary - The Chosen Woman", from Quranic Literacy Institute)

Powerful Prescription

Sayyidah Ummu Sulaim (radhiyallahu ‘anha) once came to Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) and requested, “O Rasul of Allah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam)! Teach me some words to recite through which I will make du‘aa to Allah Ta‘ala.” Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) answered, “Recite Subhaanallah ten times, Alhamdulillah ten times and Allahu Akbar ten times. Thereafter, ask your needs of Allah Ta‘ala, for He will say, ‘I have done so! I have done so! (I have fulfilled your needs)’”

(Musnad Ahmad #12207)

The prescription given to Sayyidah Ummu Sulaim (radhiyallahu ‘anha) by Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) is one that is both easy to recite and extremely powerful. We all have needs, and every person is totally dependent on Allah alone for the fulfillment of his needs. Hence, before supplicating to Allah and presenting our needs to Him, let us strive to recite the zikr prescribed above. It will take only a few moments, but the effect of the du‘aa that is answered will be long lasting.

The Choice is Yours

Khalid Baig

A recent article in the Detroit News contrasted the lives of two ordinary persons from Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan. Two persons joined by faith and circumstances, yet separated by choices of their lifestyles. One awakens at 4 a.m. every day and walks a mile to the mosque for the Fajr prayers. At that time, the other is often just getting to sleep, capping off another night of drinking and socializing at a bar that caters to tourists and wealthy Palestinians. One keeps abreast of the latest political developments in the Middle East to “ensure our future liberation from Israel.” The other, “like many in his Heineken-drinking clique, is oblivious to the latest showdown between the United States and Iraq and the subsequent peace brokered by the United Nations. But ... knows all the words to the latest music videos.” One wears a beard. The other religiously shaves it before happy hour, “because the real hot girls like soft skin.” One is concerned about moral decadence and the mortal danger it presents to “their country and their afterlife.” The other asks, “Why shouldn’t we enjoy ourselves? Come on, you only live once, right?”

The article titled “Partying versus Praying”, is pleasantly free of the propaganda overtones characteristic of the mainstream media reports

about the Muslim world. In a typical piece, the first person would have been depicted as a “fundamentalist”, a fanatic, a “bad guy” who is danger to himself and to the world. The second person, would, of course, be the “good guy”---the friendly, “civilized” person who needs encouragement and support. In contrast, here is an objective observation about the clash of two currents. Its objectivity compels those it reports about, to reflect on their situation.

In a way, the story captures the current state of the entire Ummah. For today, the Ummah is a big refugee camp: Robbed, wounded, tortured, expelled, dispossessed, and disenfranchised. And just like the refugee camp it has two powerful but exactly opposite currents: One represents awakening, turning to Allah, overcoming the base desires, and preparing for liberation from slavery, both physical and intellectual. The other represents falling asleep, turning away from Allah, and “enjoying” the slavery. This is a clash between piety and profanity, between light and darkness, between the path to Paradise and the way to Hell.

It is born of the freedom of choice that has been given to every human being. Allah has created two possible destinations for all human beings, and there are two opposite paths lead-

ing to them.

*"We have shown him the two paths."
[Al-Salat 90:10]*

"We showed him the Way. Whether he be grateful or ungrateful." [Al-Insan 76:3]

The first path leads to success, the other to failure. "By the Soul and the proportion and order given to it, and its inspiration as to its wrong and its right. Truly he succeeds that purifies it and he fails that corrupts it." [Ash-Shams 91:7-10]

Qur'an is very emphatic that those who choose the disparate paths cannot be alike, either here or in the hereafter:

*"Shall We treat those who believe and do good works as those who spread corruption in the earth; shall We treat the pious as the wicked?"
[saa 38:28]*

"Is he who is a believer like unto him who is an evil-liver? They are not alike." [As-Sajda 32:18]

*"Is then one who does know that that which has been revealed unto you (O Muhammad), from your Lord is the Truth, like one who is blind?"
[Ar-Rad 13:19]*

"The Day when Man shall remember all that he strove for, and Hell-Fire shall be placed in full view for him who sees. Then, for such as had transgressed all bounds, and had preferred the life of this world, the abode will be Hell-Fire; and for such as had entertained the fear of standing before their Lord and had restrained their soul from lower desires, their abode will be the Garden." [An-Naziat 79:35-41]

It is, then, for each one of us to make up our mind regarding our destination and to check whether we are moving in its direction. Of

course, the choice would not be difficult if we were only looking at the destination. No one in his right mind would choose Hell over Heaven or eternal failure over success. But the eternal success requires us to go uphill. It takes effort and patience. The journey to hell, on the other hand, is downhill. One can just slide to it. And so, weak and prone to temptations that we are, we slip. That slip alone would not be that much of a problem, because one can also recover from it through repentance. The real problem occurs when we lose all sense of direction and purpose and start thinking that our fall is our rise.

To complicate matters further, today big outside forces are also busy at work to smooth our slide and cheer us at our fall. It is a juggernaut of unbelievable proportions and unprecedented wickedness. The television and music videos, present everywhere and all the time, are part of it. The UN Social Action Program and its plans for "development" and "empowerment" are part of it. The various NGOs working for "Human rights", "Women's rights", or whatever rights, are part of it. All those propaganda pieces that praise "moderates" and demonize "fundamentalists" are part of it.

Of course none of that can do any harm to us if we are willing to cut through the haze and see things for what they are. It is Allah's promise that both paths will remain open to us. It is our choice. The young Palestinian man who walks a mile to the mosque three to five times a day has made his choice. So have thousands upon thousands of others like him in the Ummah who have decided to shun evil and follow the path of piety and righteousness. So can the millions of others who are just wandering around.

Let us remember: we cannot get to the high ground by taking the low road. We cannot win our Creator's pleasure by disobeying Him. We cannot enter Paradise by being ambivalent about it. The clash between the two lifestyles here is actually the clash between two afterlives. And the choice is ours.

Wishing for Death

Shaykh Muhammad b. Salih al-Uthaymin

Anas relates that Allah's Messenger said, *"One of you should not wish for death because of a difficulty that has affected him. If he must [say something], then let him say, 'Alla-humma, aheenee maa kaanatil hayaatu khairan lee, wa tawaffanee idhaa kaanatil wafaatu khairan lee.'* (Allah, give me life as long as life is good for me, and cause me to die when death is good for me.)" *Agreed upon.*

In this hadith, the Prophet forbids a person from wishing for death due to a difficulty that has affected him. An individual may be afflicted by a difficulty which proves to be heavy for him and so he becomes tired of it and starts to wish for death, saying: "Lord, cause me to die." It is the same whether he physically utters it or says it in his heart. The Prophet (S) forbade this by saying, "One of you should not wish for death because of a difficulty that has affected him," because there may be good in it for him. Whenever you are afflicted by harm, then you should say: "Allah, cause me to be steadfast during it," so that Allah will help you be patient, and this will be good for you.

However, when you desire death, you are not aware that this would be bad for you as it would not cause you to rest, because not every death will bring with it rest, as a poet once said: One who died is not at rest; because death is only for the life. It may be that a person dies only to face punishment and torment in the grave, we seek Allah's refuge from this; if he had remained alive, he would have become remorseful, repented, and returned to Allah, and this would be a cause of good for him. So when an affliction affects you, do not wish for death.

If the Prophet forbade a person from desiring death, because of an affliction that affected him, then what can be said about the one who commits suicide because of a calamity; this is found among some foolish people, who, when suffering from a prolonged calamity, hang, stab, poison, etc. themselves. These people only move from one affliction to another that is even more severe, because the one commits suicide will be punished in the same manner that he committed suicide in the fire of Hell, where he will remain for eternity, as related by the Prophet. So if he commits suicide by the use of iron—such as

a dagger, a knife, a nail, or anything else—then he will be in the Hell [continuously] stabbing himself with that piece of iron that he used to commit suicide with. If he commits suicide with poison, he will continue consuming it in Hell. If he committed suicide by throwing himself off of high place, then that place will be erected for him in the Hell, and he will throw himself repeatedly from it eternally.

Since the Prophet forbade a person from wishing for death, because of an affliction that he is suffering from, then [the forbiddance] is even more severe for committing suicide, being hasty with Allah's [decree] concerning his soul. We ask Allah for security [from this]. It was the practice of the Messenger (S) that whenever he forbade a thing which had a legal substitute, he would mention [that substitute], which is also the style of the Qur'an. Allah, the Glorious, says,

"Believers, do not say [to the Prophet] raa'in-aa (be careful and listen to us), but say unzurnaa (make us understand)." (2:104)

So when Allah prohibited the use of the word raa'inaa, He directed [the believers] to a legal word by saying, "but say unzurnaa." (2:104) Also, when some good dates were brought to the Messenger (S) he was astonished and asked, "Are all the dates of Khaibar similar to these?" They replied, "Messenger of Allah, no, by Allah. We purchase a sa' of these with two sa's (of another type) and two sa's with three." He said, "Do not do that, instead sell the inferior dates for dirhams and then use the dirhams to buy the superior dates," meaning the good dates. Having forbidden him from one practice, he related to them its legal substitute. Here [in the hadith being discussed] he said, "One of you should not wish for death because of a difficulty that has affected him. If he must [say something], then let him say, 'Allah, give me life as long as life is good for me, and cause me to die when death is good for me,' through which he opened a door for you which is secure. Since wishing for death

is an indication of a person's displeasure and impatience with Allah's decree; however with the supplication, "Allah, give me life as long as life is good for me, and cause me to die when death is good for me," a person entrusts his affair to Allah; since he is unaware of the unseen, so he entrusts his affair to its Knower, the Mighty and Sublime [Allah].

A person wishing for death is hastiness in desiring that Allah ends his life, as that may prevent him from many good things; it may prevent him from seeking repentance and an increase in righteous deeds. That is why it was reported in a hadith,

"There is no one who dies but he shall regret. If he was a doer of good, he shall regret that he did not do more, and if he is doer of evil, he shall regret that he did not stop."

Meaning that he will seek a reprimand for his sins and ask to be reprimanded, i.e., to be excused.

If someone were to ask: How is that one can say, "Allah, give me life as long as life is good for me, and cause me to die when death is good for me?" We answer: This is because [only] Allah, the Glorious, knows what will occur [in the future] of which a person is unaware, as Allah says,

"Say, 'No one in the heavens and the earth knows the unseen except Allah,'" (27:65) and "No person knows what he will earn tomorrow, and no person knows in what land he will die." (31:34)

So you are unaware of whether life or death is better for you. This is why whenever someone supplicates for a person to have a long life he should restrict it by saying, "May Allah grant you a long life in obedience to Him," so that the duration of his life is lived in goodness.

If someone was to say: Maryam, the daughter of 'Imraan, was reported to have wished for death when she said, "Would that I had died

before this, and had been forgotten and out of sight.” (19:23). How is it that she fell into doing that which is prohibited? Then answering that we give [is the following]:

First: We must know that when it comes to the Law of the previous nations, if our Law mentions something that is contrary to theirs, then their law cannot be used as proof because our Law abrogated all that of the former religions.

Second: Maryam did not desire death, but she wished that she had died before this fitnah (trial) [that she was afflicted with] even if she had lived a thousand years. What is important is that she wished to die without any fitnah. An example of this is the statement of Yoosuf,

“(O Allah) You are my protector in the world and the Hereafter, cause me to die as a Muslim, and join me with the righteous.” (12:101)

What is meant here is not that he asked Allah to cause him to die, rather asked Him to cause him die as one who has submitted (Muslim), and there is nothing wrong with this. It is similar to you saying, “Allah, make me die on Islam, faith, tawheed (monotheism), and ikhlaas (sincerity), or cause me to do what You are pleased with me,” and so forth

It is necessary to understand the difference between a person who wishes for death because of difficult circumstances that afflicted him, and a person who wishes to die in a specific state that Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, is pleased with. The first type is prohibited by the Messenger, while the second type is permissible.

The Prophet only prohibited a wish for death borne from an afflicted calamity, because the one who does so is not patient, and it is required that the person be patient with an affliction and to anticipate the reward from Allah, the Mighty and Sublime. The afflicted calamity—whether it is anxiety, grief, illness, or any other calamity—is expiation for your sins; so if you anticipate the reward, then it will be a cause of raising you in

rank.

Whatever affliction, illness, or anything similar affects a person it is never infinite, rather it will end and there is no doubt in this. When it does end, and you have earned a good merit by anticipating the reward from Allah and an expiation of your sins, then it turns into goodness for you. This is affirmed from the Prophet when he said, “The case of the believer is amazing. All his affairs are good, and that is not for anyone but the believer. If something happens to him that makes him happy, he is grateful, so that is good for him. If something happens to him that harms him, then he is patient, so that is good for him.” So in all circumstance there is goodness for the believer, whether in times of calamity or in times of prosperity.

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that Rasulullah (saws) called Sayyiduna Sa'd Bin Mu'ad who was ill because of an injury. When he arrived mounted on a camel, Rasulullah (saws) told his companions: “Stand up for your leader.”

After this incident Sayyiduna Sa'd bin Mu'ad achieved martyrdom due to the same injury that he had suffered during the battle of Khandaq. It is said that when he died, the throne of Allah—Arsh shook and seventy thousand angels descended down to participate in his Janazah Salaah (Umdatul Qaari). May Allah be pleased with him and elevate his rank.

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servants. When we live our lives with this understanding, we are humble in our power and use the gifts we're given from Him to make the world a better place, not to destroy it. As God says about the believers, “And those who keep their trusts and covenants... They will be the inheritors of the highest paradise and will dwell therein forever” (Quran 23:8, 10-11).

[1] *Sahih Muslim, Book 32, Hadith 6239.*

[2] *Sahih Muslim, Book 42, Hadith 7138.*

Source: Dar al-Ifta al-Missriyyah

FACING NATURAL DISASTER WITH FAITH

Earthquakes. Tsunamis. Hurricanes. Tornadoes. Flash flooding. Severe drought. Famines.

Every day we hear more and more news of natural disasters that devastate the communities they touch. Whether this increase is caused by global warming, as the scientific community is more and more certain about, or some other cause, how are we as believers expected to handle these phenomena when they hit unexpectedly? Like everything else in our lives, we must base our understanding of events, and our reaction to them, on our faith. This understanding starts with looking at what the Quran and the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) say about these matters, and how we're to deal with them. This isn't limited to natural disasters, but extends to include everything we face in life, both the good and the bad of it.

God clearly tells us in multiple places in the Quran that this life is a test... all of it. It's not a paradise for a reason. It's not always easy for a reason. Unfortunately, so many of us go in and out of a state of heedlessness and forgetfulness about the world we're living in, and why we're living in it.

God, the Almighty, tells us,

"Every soul will taste death. And We test

you with evil and with good as trial, and to Us you will be returned" (Quran 21:35).

This verse is the lens by which the believer views the world. When something good happens, they understand that this is also a test which deserves an appropriate response as well. As God tells us of Solomon (peace be upon him),

"And when [Solomon] saw it placed before him, he said, "This is from the favor of my Lord to test me whether I will be grateful or ungrateful. And whoever is grateful - his gratitude is only for [the benefit of] himself. And whoever is ungrateful - then indeed, my Lord is free of need, and Generous" (Quran 27:40).

Likewise, when disasters hit, the believer understands that this test, despite being a bitter one, is not one that should cause them to lose faith or despair of God's mercy in this life or the next. In fact, those deeply rooted in faith know that in reality those trials and tribulations only act as a means to bring them closer to God and to have their sins removed.

God says,

"And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger, and a loss of wealth and lives

and yields, but give good tidings to the patient who, when disaster strikes them, say, 'Indeed we belong to God, and indeed to Him we will return.' Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the [rightly] guided" (Quran 2:155-157).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said,

"There is no trouble that comes to a believer except that it removes some of his sins, even if it is the pricking of a thorn." [1]

Patience and strength are essential for dealing with life's challenges, although this doesn't mean we cannot ask God to ease our burden and facilitate matters. God has mentioned the prayer of the believers which we take to heart when facing our challenges,

"Our Lord, do not impose blame upon us if we have forgotten or erred. Our Lord, lay not upon us a burden like that which You laid upon those before us. Our Lord, burden us not with that which we are unable to bear. And pardon us; and forgive us; and have mercy upon us. You are our protector, so give us victory over the disbelieving people" (Quran 2:286).

This guidance from the Quran and Sunnah is clear, yet if we do not allow ourselves to view the world through this lens from the beginning, before disaster strikes, it will be very difficult to tackle these challenges with the patience and strength needed once they occur. The believers must ground their lives in the beautiful teachings of our religion, which will enable them to be successful in this life and the next. As the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said,

"How wonderful is the situation of the believer; there is good for him in everything, and this applies only to a believer. If prosperity reaches him, he expresses gratitude to God, and that is good

for him, yet if adversity befalls him, he endures it patiently and that is good for him." [2]

We see this hadith manifested in the response of people of faith, who react to natural disasters with not only patience, but also understanding that this is an opportunity for work in the service of others, to help feed and clothe them, and help them rebuild their lives. Those who only view life through the lens of materialism, and ignore the spiritual truths about the world around them only see chaos, or even worse, an opportunity to loot and steal, whereas the believer sees an opportunity for service and mercy.

There are other aspects of natural disasters, which we should focus on as believers as well. One of those is: How much did we appreciate our lives and all the blessings that God gave us, before disaster struck? Were we thankful for our health, our families, and the sustenance that God has given us? Did we realize that every moment of life is a gift, and an opportunity to draw closer to God? As God tells us,

"And it is not [possible] for one to die except by permission of God at a decree determined, and whoever desires the reward of this world - We will give him thereof; Yet whoever desires the reward of the Hereafter - We will give him thereof. And we will reward those who are thankful" (Quran 3:145).

One of the side effects of our heedlessness is that we tell ourselves we are so powerful and can do anything. Although it's true humanity have been blessed with great abilities to transform the world, Satan can use this to delude and deceive people into thinking they are not in need of anyone or anything, even God Almighty. Disasters remind us in an instant that this idea is foolish and only leads people down a dark path. No dear reader, we are not all-powerful. We are the creation of The All-Powerful and are His

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from the

Life of Omar (ra)

Shibli Zaman

There are those who love and there are those who hate. Of which were our pious predecessors and of which are you?

When the Muslims surrounded Jerusalem, the inhabitants said they would surrender the city only if the Muslim ruler himself —Omar, the second successor or “Caliph,” of the Prophet Muhammad— came to them. So Omar so-journeyed by camel from Damascus, Syria to Jerusalem in the Holy Land. As Omar approached the city, his servant became weary, so he ordered his servant to ride the steed while he walked it by the reins.

When they entered Jerusalem —records indicate it very well could have been Easter—the people of the city mistook the servant for the Caliph. When corrected, they couldn’t believe that this man in tattered and dirty clothes, leading on foot his servant who rode his steed, was the ruler of this new people who were conquering the Persian and Roman Empires, the greatest empires the world had ever seen, with such speed that had never been seen before. St. Sophronius, Christian Patriarch of Jerusalem, greeted Omar with a set of fresh regal clothes and insisted he wear them instead of the dirty rags he was wearing. According to the Greek chronicler Theophilus of Edessa (695-785CE),

Omar refused saying, “It is not right for a man to take from another what God has not decreed for him, for God has given to each and every one of humanity from His Divine knowledge, and he who desires to receive something from his companion exceeding that, does so against God.”² Yet, the Christians of the city were outraged and Omar sensed that they found it humiliating to concede the city to someone who looked so base and common. So he compromised. Theophilus further records from Omar, “Because you request it of me, and have shown me such great honor, please lend me these clothes and I will wear them while you wash mine. When mine are returned, I will return these clothes to you.” Michael the Syrian, 12th Century Patriarch of the Syriac Orthodox Church, says about Omar, “He was certainly just and removed from greed, to the degree that from all the empire that the Arabs ruled, that is, from all the wealth and treasures of the Romans and Persians, he took nothing for himself. He did not change the simplicity of his habits, not even the piece of hide that was placed under him when he rode by camel and that he used for sitting on the ground or sleeping on.”

As the time approached for the Muslim noon prayer, Sophronius invited Omar to pray

in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the holiest site in all of Christianity that contains the Golgotha, the Hill of Calvary where Christ was to be crucified, as well as the tomb where Christ was to be interred. Omar refused saying that he feared future generations of Muslims might seek to make it a Muslim holy site. So he prayed opposite the southern courtyard of the Church where, sure enough, they eventually built the Mosque of Omar that stands there to this day facing the empty tomb of Jesus Christ.

Patriarch Eutychius of Alexandria of the Greek Orthodox Church (877-940CE) records:

“When the gate of the city was opened, Omar came in with his entourage and sat at the aetirion of the Church of the Resurrection. When the time of prayer approached, Omar said to Patriarch Sophronius: ‘I want to pray.’ And he responded: ‘Commander of the faithful, pray in the place where you are now.’ And Omar said: ‘I do not want to pray here.’ The patriarch and then led him to the Church of Constantine [the Church of the Resurrection] where he spread a mat made of straw on the floor of the church. But Omar said: ‘I do not want to pray here either.’ He went out to the steps, which are at the gate on the eastern side of the Church of St. Constantine, and he prayed alone on the steps. Then he sat down and said to Patriarch Sophronius: ‘Patriarch, do you know why I did not pray inside the church?’ He answered: ‘I do not know, Commander of the Faithful.’ And Omar said to him: ‘If I had prayed inside the Church, you would be losing it and it would have gone from your hands because after my death the Muslims would seize it saying: Omar has prayed here. Give me a piece of pergamene⁴ to write for you a document.”

Eutychius goes on to relate the terms written in that document protecting the Church and the churches surrounding it forbidding Muslims from congregating near its steps for their prayers.

While some Muslims bicker over whether they should bid their Christian fellows “Merry

Christmas” or any other variety of holiday greetings throughout the year, I urge them to drop such vain harangues. Instead, reach into the psyche of Omar, inspired by the Prophet Muhammad whom he served and later succeeded, and how he treated the Christians who found themselves under his rule. Had he wished, he could have done away with the Christian and Jewish populations and history would have no less recorded him as yet another conqueror. When the Christian Crusaders invaded Jerusalem 400 years later, they did slaughter the Muslims, Jews and even those Christians of sects they deemed heretical in a stadium as if it were sport. No man, woman, child or even babe in arms was spared.⁶ The year prior to that, in 1098, the Crusaders had actually cooked and eaten the Muslims of Ma`rrat al-Nu`man in Syria. It is said that babies were skewered on spits, broiled and eaten.⁷

But that is not our way and any who adopt such ways in God’s name profane the very core of Islam. Omar chose the path of love, compassion, and mercy. He gave the Christians freedom and brought the Jews back to the Holy Land from whence they had been driven out just a decade before and successively in the centuries preceding that. The city’s Christians entrusted the keys to the Church of Holy Sepulchre into the hands of the Muslim family of Nusaybah. Today, a millennium and a half later, a member of that Muslim family unlocks the Church in the morning and locks it up at night. The Christians of Jerusalem would have it no other way.⁸

Will the Christians love you when you deal with them thus? Some will. Some won’t. In spite of acknowledging the magnanimity of Omar related above, Theophanes the Confessor (760-818CE) refers to him as a devilish beast and mocks him for entering the city in dirty clothes.⁹ God even tells us in the Qur’an, “The Jews and Christians will never be fully satisfied with you until you follow their respective religions.” It should matter to you naught! Be good and seek no reward. We do not let the pleasure

of people guide our actions. We do not behave well towards goodness nor do we mete ill with evil. Jesus is recorded in Islamic sources as saying:

“Virtuous action does not consist in doing good to someone who has done good to you—that is merely returning a favor. Virtuous action consists in doing good [even] to those who have wronged you.”

Thus, we behave as our beloved Prophet Muhammad, the servant and messenger of God, instructed and exemplified seeking only the pleasure of the very One Whom we —Jew, Christian and Muslim— worship as the One God who rules over all with Love and Mercy. Seek not the pleasure of mankind because they will never truly be pleased with you no matter what you do. Love and brotherhood in humanity are found in behaviors well beyond the realm of mere words. Ponder well. Let your attitude and behavior towards your Christian fellows speak louder than any bidding of “Merry Christmas” ever could.

1. The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam, Emmanouela Grypeou, Mark N. Swanson and David Thomas.

2. Theophilus of Edessa’s Chronicle- And the Circulation of Historical Knowledge in Late Antiquity and Early Islam, Liverpool University Press- Translated Texts for Historians, Robert G. Hoyland.

3. Ibid

4. A type of parchment named after the ancient city of Pergamum in Aeolis

5. The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam, Emmanouela Grypeou, Mark N. Swanson and David Thomas

6. “In this temple 10,000 were killed. Indeed, if you had been there you would have seen our feet colored to our ankles with the blood of the slain. But what more shall I relate? None of them were left alive; neither women nor children were spared.” Gesta Francorum Jerusalem Expugnantium, Fulcher of Chartres

7. “Some people said that, constrained by the lack of food, they boiled pagan adults in cooking-pots, impaled children on spits and devoured them grilled.” Citing Rudolph of Caen, The First Crusade: The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres and Other Source Materials, Edward Peters.

8. The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought, Adrian Hastings, Alistair Mason, Hugh Pyper

9. Theophilus of Edessa’s Chronicle- And the Circulation of Historical Knowledge in Late Antiquity and Early Islam, Liverpool University Press- Translated Texts for Historians, Robert G. Hoyland

10. The Holy Qur’an, Chapter al-Baqara 10. 2:120

11. Walk on Water, The Wisdom of Jesus from Traditional Arabic Sources, Hamza Yusuf. This work cites Ahmad bin Hanbal as the source. Begging the esteemed Hamza Yusuf’s pardon, “[even]” added by the author for clarity and context.

Allah will not speak to three types of people.

Prophet Muhammad (saws) said:

Allah will not speak to three types of people on the day of judgement. He will not even look at them to purify them.

Abu Dharr (RA) said: They are lost and ruined. Who are they O Prophet Muhammad (saws)? He replied:

Someone who lets his clothes down to touch the ground out of pride, someone who boasts about the favours he has done to others and someone who sells his goods by swearing falsely.

(Muslim)

TREES:

A Forgotten Miracle

I was born and raised in an urban setting with very few trees. The trees that were in the city were overshadowed by buildings and skyscrapers.

I write this article in dedication to my wife and children; as we ventured on a major life-changing event we found ourselves surrounded by these beautiful trees, as high as we can see. It reminded me of why trees are important, and how Islam mentions trees in such a positive light. I was also reminded of how Jannah is said to be covered in beautiful nature and unimaginable trees.

Not only are they giants amongst us, Allah has given them special standing in the Quran. In Surah Al-Hajj, Allah says:

"Do you not see that to Allah prostrates whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on the earth and the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the trees, the moving creatures and many of the people?..." [22:18]

He places trees at the same level as other notable creations. We tend to overlook trees -and flora in general- because they don't do anything that we can see and to receive instant gratification.

There is a saying that goes "If you believe

in tomorrow, you plant a tree today." Trees are associated with nature and wildlife. It keeps life on this beautiful planet sustained, through the oxygen cycle. It is like the lungs of Earth. Unfortunately, just as smoking damages our lungs, pollution has damaged these trees. Add logging to the process and our forest is decreasing by the minute.

Protecting the trees and nature is a beautiful concept of Islam. Yet trees are sometimes overlooked. I want to change the perception of one of Allah's creation through this article. In my previous article, we discussed how the Earth is a creation of Allah, and it is our obligation to protect it according to the Quran and teachings of the Prophet (saws).

"And it is He (God) who has made you successors upon the Earth and has raised some of you above others in degrees [of rank] that He may try you through what He has given you. Indeed, your Lord is swift in penalty, but indeed, He is Forgiving and Merciful."
[Surah Al-An'am, 165]

The Quran also talks about the first man created and the very famous story of the forbidden tree. Allah permitted Adam (AS) and his wife to approach and enjoy everything except

one tree. Allah forbade them before they were given abode in Paradise:

"And We said: O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in the Paradise and eat both of you freely with pleasure and delight of things therein as wherever you will, but come not near this tree or you both will be of the wrong-doers." [Surah Al-Baqarah, 35]

The story goes on and they were deceived by Shaytan. Our very first deception with Shaytan has to do with a tree. SubhanAllah, so trees clearly play a role in our Islamic history.

Allah in the Quran also uses the tree as an analogy to describe a good deed. Allah says:

"See you not how Allah sets forth a parable? - A goodly word is as a goodly tree, whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches (reach) to the sky (i.e., very high)." [Surah Ibrahim, 24]

This is beyond the diverse species of trees mentioned in the Quran. From the palm tree to the olive tree.

The Prophet (saws) uses the tree as analogy as well when describing the believers and non-believers.

In a narration by Abu Hurayrah:

"The Messenger of Allah (saws) said: 'The example of the believer is like that of a plant which is continually bent over by the wind, the believer is continually beset with afflictions. The example of a hypocrite is like that of the cedar tree, which does not yield until it is uprooted in one go.'" [Muslim, 5024]

Allah in the Quran also advises us to use the blessing that comes from a tree, In Surah Al-Mu'minun, Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"And a tree (olive) that springs forth from Mount Sinai, that grows oil, and (it is a) relish for the eaters." [Al-Mu'minun, 20]

Prophet Muhammad (saws) elaborates

more as Abu Aseed said:

"The Prophet (saws) said: 'Eat the oil and use it on your hair and skin, for it comes from a blessed tree.'" [Al-Tirmidhi, 1775]

Hence the numerous benefits of a blessing we tend to overlook.

In Islam, trees are associated with all that is good, in this world and the hereafter. Even our clothes in Jannah will come from a tree. The Prophet (saws) said:

"Tooba is a tree in Paradise, one hundred years big. The clothes of the people of Paradise are made from its calyces (outer casing of its flowers)." [Ibn Hibbaan and Saheeh al-Jaami; 3918]

This is something we can relate to as a clothing we wear comes from plants, be it a shirt or something else.

Our Prophet (saws) had a relationship with nature, including trees. Allah mentions in the Quran the tree under which the Prophet (saws) accepted his companions' pledge of allegiance unto death and not to desert him.

This happened during the campaign of Al-Hudaybiyah, when he heard of the betrayal of the mushrikeen. This tree is also mentioned in the Quran (interpretation of the meaning):

"Indeed, Allah was pleased with the believers when they gave the Bay'ah (pledge) to you (O Muhammad) under the tree..." [Al-Fath, 18]

There is also a narration about the tree next to which the Prophet (saws) used to preach. Jaabir ibn 'Abdullaah reported that the Prophet (saws) used to go and stand next to a tree or palm-tree on Fridays. A woman or a man of the Ansaar said: "O Messenger of Allah, should we not make for you a minbar (pulpit)?" He said, "If you wish." So they made a minbar for him, and when the next Friday came, he was shown to the minbar. The tree then cried like a small child, and the Prophet (saw) had to come down

and hug the crying tree until it calmed down. Jaabir said: "It was crying because of the dhikr (remembrance of Allah) that it used to hear." [Al-Bukhari; 3319]

Trees can be our key to entering Jannah. Our Prophet Muhammad (saws) said:

"There is no Muslim who plants a tree or sows a field for a human, bird, or animal that eats from it, but it shall be reckoned as charity from him."
[Bukhari and Muslim]

When the Prophet (saws) tells us to sow, but instead we uproot, what kind of followers does that make us? In a time where so many things are abstract and changing, Prophet Mohammed (saws) gave us clear instructions on how to engage with our surroundings. One of those detailed instructions is: "Do not uproot or burn palms or cut down fruitful trees." [Al-Muwatta]. These are clear guidelines that if followed, would have helped us today in our quickly changing environment.

After entering Jannah, trees are used as a means of reward. It was narrated from Jabir that the Messenger of Allah (saws) said:

"Whoever says Subhan Allah il 'azeem wa bi hamdihi (Glory and praise be to Allah, the Almighty), a palm tree will be planted for him in Paradise."

We don't want to keep our part Jannah flat and plain, do we?

We learn in science of the many immediate benefits trees provide. So make sure you make some time, even if once a year, to plant a tree or volunteer in such activities as a family. Trees are part of many ecosystems and play a vital role in sustainability and maintenance of habitat. Many proverbs use roots of trees to show strength, as trees not only provide shade and food, they also provide stability to the ground. As a parent, I make it a point to appreciate these creations with my family, especially my kids, so they can grow up with the same respect.

Things you can do with your community and family:

- Create or join an event that plants trees in needed urban areas
 - Plant flowers and trees at local parks with your town
 - Create awareness of deforestation
 - Take a hike with your family to enjoy the beauty and miracles of the tree
- Create an environmental program at your masjid to keep the discussion ongoing

Check Before You Speak

Before uttering any statement, remember the nine advises and prohibitions that Allah has given in Surah Hujurat:

1. "Fa Tabayyanu"

Investigate: whenever you receive an information, ensure it is accurate lest you harm people out of ignorance.

2. "Fa Aslihu"

Reconciliation: reconcile between one's fellow Muslim as believers are brothers/sisters to one another.

3. "Wa Aqsitu"

Act justly: whenever there is a dispute and one is attempting reconciliation, act justly among both parties as Allah loves those who are just.

4. "La Yaskhar"

Don't ridicule people, perhaps they may be better than you in the eyes of Allah.

5. "Wa La Talmizu"

Don't insult one another.

6. "Wa La Tanabazu"

Don't call each other with offensive nicknames.

7. "Ijtanibu Kathiiran minaz zan"

Avoid negative assumptions, indeed some of the assumptions are sins.

8. "Wa La Tajassasu"

Don't spy on each other.

9. "Wa La Yaghtab"

Don't backbite about each other. It is a sin equivalent to eating your dead brother's flesh.

The Opiate of the Bourgeoisie

Mohammad Ghilan

In his book *The Experience of God: Being, Consciousness, Bliss*, the American Christian theologian and philosopher David Bentley Hart provides an account for what traditional theology has put forth on what the term God means and what it entails. It is interesting to note that this work can arguably be considered to be more directed at believers than it is at disbelievers. The modern world and its intellectual presuppositions have impacted the minds of everyone to think in terms set forth by the dominant paradigm – naturalism. In doing so, even believers who wish to argue that God exists have inadvertently picked up a language and a belief system in which even though the term God is used, its essence is not the same as that when traditional theologians of the past have used it. Hart contends that modern believers today are relying on a notion of God that is irreconcilable with traditional theology and more in line with paganism. Put another way, believers today are arguing for a different version of the same atheistic worldview that atheists argue for. The only difference between the two camps is how each articulates their perspective.

A fascinating insight Hart offers towards the end of the book is with regards to the modern rise of atheism. According to the Pew Re-

search Center, the number of Americans who are leaving religion behind is growing, and 78% percent of religious “nones” report they grew up in a household where a particular religion was taught before they discarded that part of their identity as they entered into adulthood. Furthermore, an increasing number of the religiously unaffiliated and atheists are in the younger demographics. In popular culture, public intellectuals and scientists are associated with atheism, thus giving credence to the notion that as one becomes more intelligent the more likely they will be an atheist. This has put believers in a defensive position as they offer a rational case for upholding religion as Revelation from God who is the Creator. Today, there is a plethora of books, lectures, and debates on the subject of God and the relationship between science and religion. Interestingly, however, the social and economic elements driving the rise of atheism hardly receive the level of attention that philosophical and scientific factors do, at the popular level at least. Hart touches on this element driving atheism in the following passage:

Now that the most violent storms of recent history have largely abated, the more chronic, pervasive, and ordinary expression of our technological mastery of nature turns out to be sim-

ply the interminable spectacle of production and consumption, the dialectic of ubiquitous banality by which the insatiable economic culture of the late modern West is shaped and sustained. And this, I think, is how one must finally understand the popular atheist vogue that has opened so lucrative a niche market in recent years: it is an expression of what a Marxist might call the “ideological superstructure” of consumerism. Rather than something daring, provocative, and revolutionary, it is really the rather insipid residue of the long history of capitalist modernity, and its chief impulse – as well as its chief moral deficiency – is bourgeois respectability.

The problem Hart highlights here is about the belief in unhindered growth that can only be achieved with an unchecked level of material acquisition, which is sustained by the constant creation of new desires and voids to be fulfilled, something that religion stands in the way of:

Late modern society is principally concerned with purchasing things, in ever greater abundance and variety, and so has to strive to fabricate an ever greater number of desires to gratify, and to abolish as many limits and prohibitions upon desire as it can. Such a society is already implicitly atheist and so must slowly but relentlessly apply itself to the dissolution of transcendent values. It cannot allow ultimate goods to distract us for proximate goods. Our sacred writ is advertising, our piety is shopping, our highest devotion is private choice. God and the soul too often hinder the purely acquisitive longings upon which the market depends, and confront us with values that stand in stark rivalry to the one truly substantial value at the center of our social universe: the price tag. So it really was only a matter of time before atheism slipped out of the enclosed gardens of academe and down from the vertiginous eyries of high cosmopolitan fashion and began expressing itself in crassly vulgar form. It was equally inevitable that, rather than boldly challenging the orthodoxies of its age, it would prove to be just

one more anodyne item on sale in the shops, and would be enthusiastically feted by a vapid media culture not especially averse to the idea that there are no ultimate values, but only final prices. In a sense, the triviality of the movement is its chief virtue. It is a diverting alternative to thinking deeply. It is a narcotic. In our time, to strike a lapidary phrase, irreligion is the opiate of the bourgeoisie, the sigh of the oppressed ego, the heart of a world filled with tentatizing toys.

Religion in a culture in which self-worth is judged by how much material one acquires, where quality is exchanged for quantity, and possession of random bits of information is treated as having knowledge will struggle to survive. Seen in this light, it is not all that surprising to see why atheism finds currency today and sheds a new light on the Hadith of the Beloved where he is reported to have said,

“The Hour will not begin until no one on Earth will say: la ilaha illa Allah (there's no god but God)”.

Istigfaar

Rasulullah (saws) said:

“Glad tiding for the person who (on the day of judgement) finds an abundance of Istighfaar in their book of deeds.” (Ibn Majah)

In another hadith:

“Whoever is constant in making Istighfaar (seeking forgiveness), Allah will grant him relief from every worry, a way out from every difficulty and provision from unimagined sources.” (Abu Dawud)

When an Illiterate Man Was Asked to Read

S Omer

When Prophet Muhammad (saws) received his first revelation, he did not know how to read or write. 23 years later, having fulfilled his prophethood mission, he died without knowing how to read or write. To make things more intriguing, his greatest miracle was a book, the Holy Qur'an, which challenged the whole of humankind to produce at any point of time and in any geographical context a single surah (chapter) the like thereof, if they were in doubt about the authenticity of the Qur'an; he made knowledge seeking incumbent upon every Muslim, male and female, and produced a reading community that always prided itself on the intellectual and cultural legacies it created; he sowed the seeds of a civilization that changed the course of human history forever, the hallmarks of which were always knowledge, science and wisdom.

When Prophet Muhammad (saws) received his first revelation in the Cave of Hira' through the angel Jibril (Gabriel), he was asked to read (iqra'). However, since he was an ordinary person, who could not judge things and events except by conventional earthly standards, he was astounded, replying both with fear and astonishment: "I am not literate (I cannot read)". He was asked two more times to read, but after each time he answered that he was not literate and so,

couldn't read. After that, the angel conveyed the intended first revelation:

"Read in the name of your Lord Who created; created man from a clinging substance. Read, and your Lord is the most Generous Who taught by the pen; taught man that which he knew not" (al-'Alaq, 1-5).

In the above incident, there was an encounter between -- or a convergence of -- two types of reading. The first type was a conventional one that stood for a process of decoding symbols so as to construct or derive meaning, which was represented by Muhammad (saws) who was yet to be appointed the prophet.

The second type of reading was put forth, and was represented, by the angel Jibril. It was a new heavenly reading paradigm, which was hitherto unknown. It was a divine gift from the Creator to His creation.

On account of this, it is understandable why both the Prophet (saws) and Jibril persisted in their respective ways. To the Prophet (saws), it was strange to be asked to read, for he was unread. Thus, he could not say anything except that he was illiterate.

But to Jibril, such by no means was a bizarre act, for he was laying down a ground-breaking vision of reading that transcended everything

man had previously known. That Jibril asked the Prophet (saws) three times to read, before giving him the first revelation, every time seizing the Prophet (saws) and pressing him so hard that he could hardly bear it, could connote waking him completely up from the worldliness of his being, thought and experience, and preparing him fully for the import and weight of the words that were to follow – and of the prophethood mission in general.

The new reading paradigm was summed up in the given revelation.

The Prophet (saws) was asked first and foremost to read and recite the Qur'an which was revealed directly upon his heart (al-Shu'ara', 194). He thus always felt as though the Qur'an had been engraved on his heart. His reading and reciting of the Qur'an was coming from the heart and was targeting people's hearts as well before anything else. Such was happening effortlessly and naturally. No even slightest reading mistakes, hesitation, stuttering, messing up, or failing to remember was ever recorded about the Prophet (saws), irrespective of the oscillating general circumstances and the psychological as well as physical conditions of the Prophet (saws).

The Qur'an is a book of signs (aayaat), guidance, clear proofs and criterion, the ultimate objective of which is to be applied in everyday life. However, life with its multitiered realities is also made replete with signs (aayaat), guidance and clear proofs, which are as manifest in the slightest and most modest as in the grandest and most sophisticated.

Hence, implementing and living the Qur'an signify an amalgamation of its aayaat, guidance and clear proofs with the same, entailed in the life phenomena, in order that the purpose and objective of existence are achieved. Reading the Qur'an, it follows, means also reading and exploring life as a locus of the implementation of the former. It likewise denotes reading life's in-

finite portents and signs (aayaat), serving as an indispensable supplement to the proper reading, comprehending and applying of the signs (aayaat) and messages of the Qur'an.

No reading of the Qur'an is complete without reading life, and no reading of life is appropriate without reading the Qur'an, because the Qur'an is meant for life, and life, in turn, is steered and sustained by the Qur'an. The only solution for man, therefore, is the combination of two readings. The solution is about quality, rather than quantity. It is about devising most effective methods and most productive outcomes for real life and its gripping challenges, rather than excessive rhetoric, idealism and abstract theorizing. It is perhaps no coincidence that iqra' as an imperative is derived from the verb qara', which means not only to read, but also to combine, integrate and bring things together. This spirit is implied in Almighty Allah's words that reading should be done only in the name of "your Lord Who created; created man from a clinging substance". This means that reading should be done solely for the divine -- not personal or any other -- goals, and for the realization of a higher order of things and their meanings, for such is the implication of the concepts of lordship (rububiyyah) and servitude ('ubudiyyah) that stand at the core of the Islamic message.

Similarly, it means that Allah's creation is to be read as much and as fervently as His revelation, as both are His and have originated from Him. Their objectives are identical: to reveal and disseminate the truth at all planes of the life phenomenon. Thus, the "read" injunction and Allah's attribute as the Creator are communicated together.

This is further accentuated by the subsequent words that Allah is "the most Generous Who taught by the pen; taught man that which he knew not". Granting man the Qur'an as a revealed book, as well as an ontological "Qur'an" or the "book" of creation (al-qur'an al-takwini) is a sign of Almighty Allah being most Kind

and Generous to man in his capacity as Allah's vicegerent on earth. Allah further granted man every means and opportunity to succeed in his projected task. Failure is not an option and can never be justified.

The new reading paradigm brought by the angel Jibril in the cave Hira' was about the reading of revelation (the Qur'an), life with all its dimensions, and the self. It was as comprehensive and holistic as the Prophet's mission itself. The new reading was at once physical, cerebral and spiritual, corresponding to the character of its aim: man and life, as well as the heavens and the earth. A person, it goes without saying, may be illiterate, but a good, insightful and knowledgeable reader. In the same vein, a person may be educated and literate, but ignorant and unwise. True knowledge is identified with light and guidance. It is a guarantee of success and happiness in both worlds. Hence, though illiterate, the Prophet (saws) was the most knowledgeable, most enlightened and wisest man that ever lived.

Towards Reviving the Iqra' Concept

No wonder this awareness led to the creation of a powerful Islamic civilization whose most conspicuous characteristics revolved around the notions of knowledge, education, wisdom and science. It was a civilization of learning (reading), which was caused and sustained by learning and learned (reading) generations. Such was an engine of Muslim civilizational growth and cultural enrichment through centuries. It was only when such a spirit was lost that Islamic civilization started declining, and the Muslim community started losing ground to other nations and their less adequate patterns of civilizational progress.

Today in the age of globalization, as Muslims grow more and more desperate in their quest to restore their cultural and civilizational identity and respect from others, they should know that the only way forward is the revivifica-

tion of the universal concept of iqra' (read!), as revealed to Prophet Muhammad (saws) in the Hira' Cave, and everything such concept entails. That endeavour would bring an end to many alien, inept and outright useless alternatives Muslims have adopted in recent times in order to fill the void left by their gradual abandoning of the original iqra' scheme.

If revived, the authentic iqra' process would minimize memorization – unfortunately often associated with little or no understanding whatsoever – replacing it with a combination of better comprehension and practical application of knowledge. In passing, memorization in the past, when there was no technology and books were either rare or extremely expensive, was something, and memorization today, in the era of technology and when books are both easily available and affordable, is something else. Today almost every Muslim has downloaded on his smartphone – a gadget without which, in actual fact, life is unimaginable -- the Qur'an with its translations and numerous commentaries, anthologies of the Prophet's sunnah, encyclopaedic works on fiqh, sirah, Muslim history, etc. Every aspect of Islamic knowledge is constantly with a person and is available at his fingertips. Everyone is a walking encyclopaedia, so to speak, in the sense that practically everyone has limitless access to limitless knowledge at all times.

Accordingly, talking about memorization today should not be in the sense of preservation and safeguarding – as it was in the past; hence the word *hifz*, which means safeguarding, and which is used for memorization -- in that everything is already painstakingly preserved and safeguarded. This is in no way a call for abolishing memorization in Islamic scholarship. However, it is a call to seriously reconsider it and revisit its scope.

Nor should just reading a book – or books – and teaching notes from PowerPoint be the way. As a lecturer myself, I often wonder what my

role in teaching Islamic studies today should exactly be. To keep saying – and repeating -- things every single student has on his smartphone, or can easily find on a website and in numerous library books, certainly is not the way either. That way, coming to a class is tantamount to wasting time. Reading alone in a hostel room, or productively spending the same time in a library, is a better option by all accounts.

Indeed, teaching and learning in classes ought to be more challenging, more provoking, more productive, more eye-and-mind opening and more real-world an experience. Sometimes I tell my students in certain Islamic studies courses that if they at the end start asking questions they never asked before, or they start looking at some absorbing life issues and challenges from perspectives they never did before -- that will be regarded as a great success. Or if they realize that they do not know and genuinely need to know, or that they can identify voids in their personal lives and, at the same time, know where exactly to go to pursue solutions -- that, too, will be seen as a great leap forward.

I keep encouraging them to “read” and investigate themselves and their lives honestly, pragmatically and ingeniously. It is better to have genuine questions than faulty or sub-standard answers. It is better to be life-oriented than good marks-obsessed, or driven. The former stimulates and galvanises, whereas the latter deludes and debilitates. It is in this context that I am starting to feel more and more inclined towards the modern theory of outcome-based education, according to which no single specified style of teaching or assessment is adopted, and where the role of a lecturer adapts into teacher, trainer, instructor, facilitator, and/or mentor based on the specified and adopted outcomes.

Moreover, conducting Islamic studies programs need also be thoroughly re-evaluated. Such programs during most turbulent periods of Muslim history have been divested of their true meaning, dynamism and purpose. Instead

of being man and life-oriented, promoting and facilitating the creation of righteous cultures and civilization – as implied by the iqra’ (read!) imperative – they became synonymous with mediocrity, regress, apathy and narrow-mindedness.

One wonders, therefore, about the benefits of meticulously studying today, for example, some minor long-extinct religious sects, some endless -- at times utterly meaningless -- debates in the fields of philosophy, ‘ilm al-kalam (Islamic scholastic theology), mysticism and others. It is unfathomable, for example, that while Muslims are today on the brink of total and all-consuming sectarian conflicts, many Islamic educational programs actively participate in exacerbating the predicament by the ways they teach certain sensitive historical episodes, theological doctrines and jurisprudential questions. As is inexplicable, in equal measure, that numerous irrelevant and outmoded topics are dealt with lengthily – with countless books and theses being filled with them -- while a great many pressing issues that aim to afflict the Muslim youth, Muslim politics, economics, education and human relations are either ignored or tackled only sporadically and superficially.

Furthermore, if the spirit of iqra’ is revived, there will be no separation between religion and any aspect, or dimension, of life. This is so because Islam is life, and life, in turn, is Islam, in that it represents the same truth. The truth of the Qur’an is the truth of the multidimensional life phenomenon. Islam, it goes without saying, is to be lived, rather than practiced. It is to be experienced, rather than just talked about.

That said, as the most ideal and somewhat farfetched implication of iqra’, having separate Islamic studies educational departments and programs, should be reduced to a minimum, or be done away with altogether – except in cases with very specialized character, objectives and scope. However, this is just concerning departments and programs, not Islamic studies as

such. The latter should be integrated in all other educational programs that normally stand for different aspects of everyday life. The process of integration should be so seamless and harmonious that the students of a program, while learning about the chosen academic field of theirs, learn about Islam as well, without developing a feeling that the same has been unwittingly imposed upon them.

Thus, when the students learn about the worldview(s) that underpins any branch, or field, of knowledge, they will learn at length about the Islamic worldview, belief system and values, and how that branch, or field, of knowledge is to be turned into a beneficial civilizational component for Muslims and humankind at large. When they talk about professional codes of ethics, Islamic ethics and its application will be learned and discussed extensively. The implications of the same for the whole community

will also be dwelled on. The legal aspects of various knowledge fields will bring the students face to face with Islamic shari'ah and fiqh. Moreover, the subjects of history will focus chiefly on the history of Islam, Muslim peoples and Islamic culture and civilization. That will create a framework from which every other aspect of human history and civilization will be studied.

Finally, every program will aim to make of a student an excellent, holistic and righteous man (and woman) ready to make a positive contribution in every context he (she) might find himself (herself) in, including the context of his (her) professional life. In this way, the students will become both better professionals and better Muslims.

Indeed, it is high time that Muslims stop embracing and practicing virtual illiteracy in the name of education and cultural development.

A Match Made in Heaven!

'Imraan bin Hattaan was a person who was extremely short and unattractive. On the contrary, his wife was very beautiful and attractive. Once 'Imraan went home and found that his wife had adorned herself, increasing her beauty. Due to her beauty, his eyes were 'glued' to her and he couldn't tear his gaze away from her. When she noticed the unusual manner in which he was staring at her, she asked him what the matter was. He exclaimed, "By Allah! You are beautiful!" His wife replied, "Glad tidings! We will both enter Jannah."

'Imraan was confused and asked her, "How do you know this?" She explained, "Allah gave you a beautiful woman as a wife and you express shukr (gratitude and thankfulness) for this. Allah Ta'ala has tested me with an extremely unattractive husband and I exercise sabr (patience) over this. The one who expresses shukr and the one who exercises sabr will both enter Jannah!" (Akhbaarul Azkiyaa pg. 192)

The Abiding Relevance of Prophetic Medicine



R. A. Sultan

The biography (sirah) of Prophet Muhammad (saws) has been studied through the lens of various traditional and contemporary scientific fields. Some of these fields include political science, psychology, education, biology, nutrition and medicine. Among the diverse fields in which the Prophet (saws) directly contributed to, is that of traditional or Prophetic medicine (al-tibb al-Nabawi), which is recorded in the various sayings (ahadith) of the Prophet (saws) and collected by early Scholars such as Imam Bukhari. The Prophet (saws) prescribed remedies for the preservation and restoration of one's health through herbal teachings, dietary practices and personal hygiene.

Prophetic medicine possesses two unique features. On one hand Prophetic medicine provides numerous remedies as prescribed by the Prophet (saws), and on the other hand, it serves as a system which coalesces one's inner (spiritual) and outer (physical) well-being when treating an illness. Accordingly, the scope of Prophetic medicine is significantly broadened when considered beyond the remedies prescribed, and instead, appreciated in its entirety as a thorough system which provides a "holistic approach" to medicine, addressing the complete person physically, spiritually and socially in the management and prevention of an ailment.

Recently in the contemporary world of medicine, there has been a demand to focus on the on the person "holistically" rather than only treating the illness[1]. Such an approach has proven to result in a superior level of wellness.

The focus of this topic involves discussing Prophetic medicine in broad terms, and analyzing it from a viewpoint as a comprehensive system which implements a holistic approach, a concept which has had implications on the development of modern medicine

Defining Prophetic Medicine

Prophetic medicine includes actions or words of the Prophet (saws) which addresses one's physical and spiritual health in the treatment of specific illnesses. In his renowned book "The Prophetic Medicine", Ibn Qayyim describes Prophetic medicine as having "a divine element to it" (Abd El-Qader, 2003, p 15), whereby the Prophet (saws) would provide remedies which concurrently address one's physical and spiritual well being.

The core message of Prophetic medicine is the integration of spiritual with physical for the well-being of a person wholly. As Ibn Al Qayyim eloquently explains, "Whenever the soul and the heart become stronger [spiritually], they will cooperate to defeat the illness" (Abd El-Qader,

2003, p 17).

Although “Prophetic medicine” and “Islamic medicine” are terms which are used interchangeably in various texts, they are considerably different. Ibn Qayyim states that “Prophetic medicine deals with the overall principles, while scientific [and Islamic] medicine fills in the details”.

Islamic Medicine should be understood as a category of scientific medical knowledge practiced by early Muslim physicians whereby such knowledge was developed through hypothesis, observation and experimentation and subsequently codified into an Islamic medical system.

Selected examples

Details on the subject of Prophetic remedies are largely found in various texts, including one of the most authentic collections of ahadith, known as Sahih Bukhari, which was compiled by Muhammad Ibn Ismail Bukhari (born 194AH). A chapter titled “The Book of Medicine” (Kitaab al tibb) in Sahih Bukhari lists numerous remedies including the following (Deuraseh, 2006):

Black cumin seed (*nigella sativa*) – Black seed is said to help with digestion, and also contains antihistamine, anti-inflammatory, anti-oxidant and analgesic properties. In a hadith narrated by Abu Huraira, “I heard Allah’s Apostle saying, ‘There is healing in black cumin for all diseases except death.’” (Bukhari, Volume 7, Number 5688).

Honey – The healing qualities of honey is frequently described in the Qur’an (Al-Nahl, 16:69) and is also referred to as one of the provisions of Paradise (Qur’an, Muhammad, 47:15). The Prophet (saws) repeatedly mentions honey as being the best forms of healing. In a hadith narrated by Ibn Abbas, “The Prophet said, ‘healing is in three things: cupping, a gulp of honey or cauterisation (branding with fire), but I forbid my followers to use cauterisation.’” (Bukhari, Volume 7, Number 5680).

Dates – In a hadith narrated by Saud, “I heard Allah’s Apostle saying, ‘If somebody takes

seven dates in the morning, neither magic nor poison will hurt him that day.’” (Bukhari, Volume 7, Number 5678).

Cupping (Hijamah)- The Prophet (saws) highly recommended the use of cupping for the treatment of certain disorders, as narrated by Jabir bin Abdullah, when visiting Al-Muqanna who was ill, “I will not leave until he gets cupped, for I heard Allah’s Apostle saying, ‘there is healing in cupping.’” (Bukhari, Volume 7, Number 5697).

Scope of Prophetic medicine

One should not interpret the Prophet’s medical teachings as a complete textbook of medicine for all times, since these teachings were not a comprehensive medical system. Whilst the Prophet (saws) possessed knowledge of remedies for certain ailments, he did not claim to be physician himself. Therefore, one should broaden the scope of Prophetic medicine by focusing on the approach adopted by the Prophet (saws) to treat an illness, and not only the prescription. An exclusive focus on the remedies prescribed will in actuality limit the scope of Prophetic medicine.

Prophetic remedies should be considered for illnesses which they specifically dealt with during the Prophet’s (saws) time. In fact, the Prophet (saws) promoted the idea of exploring and receiving medical treatment by conveying the principle that for every disease there is a cure (Bukhari, Volume 7, Number 5678). This serves as an incentive to explore remedies since traditional medicine does not stop at the teachings Prophet (saws), but rather, advances beyond by encouraging mankind to discover new treatments.

Further, on the importance of seeking medical treatment, Ibn Qayyim refers to a story whereby Prophet Abraham once asked, “Oh My Lord! Where does the disease come from?” He said, “From me”. Abraham said, “Where does the cure come from?” He said, “From me”. Abraham said, “What is the role of the doctor then?” He

said, "A man in whose hands I send and cause the cure".

Classification of Prophetic medicine

Prophetic Medicine has been described as advice by the Prophet (saws) to His followers with an objective to maintain health and well-being for their body and soul equally. The Prophet (saws) possessed a profound understanding of the connection between the human faculties, the body and soul, and the connection of those faculties with their Creator, Allah. Hence, the Prophet (saws) embraced a wide definition of medicine, namely being therapy for one's body and soul, and not merely prescriptions which address one's illness alone.

Al-Suyuti (born 849AH) divides Prophetic medicine into three classes:

Preventative Prophetic medicine – The Prophet's (saws) teachings on moderation in food, exercise, toilet hygiene, personal hygiene, marriage and sexual relations, etiquette of drinking, quarantine for contagious diseases, specific herbal remedies to maintain explicit aspects of one's health (e.g. better hair) etc. All these teachings act as preventative measures with an overall objective of preserving one's wellbeing.

Traditional Prophetic medicine– These include remedies which were prescribed by the Prophet (saws) with an objective to treat one's illness such as honey, olive oil, the black seed, milk etc... as well as surgical treatments such as cupping and cauterization. Such remedies were prescribed for fever, bowel movements, headache, skin rashes, tonsillitis, heart disease, food poisoning, conjunctivitis, tumours, leprosy, fracture, dog bite etc...

Spiritual Prophetic medicine– The teachings of the Prophet (saws) demonstrate that in conjunction with the treatment and recovery from an illness, the spiritual aspect of one's well-being must also be considered, as confirmed in the following verse,

"We send down in the Qur'an that which

is a healing and a mercy to those who believe".
(*Qur'an, Al Israa, 17:82*).

Whether one cultivates their spirituality through prayer, supplication, recitation of the Qur'an or remembrance of Allah, one's progression or regression of illness can essentially be affected by one's inner state.

The holistic approach which the Prophet (saws) established is a system which is applicable for all times. Prior to the advent of Islam, spiritual aspects of curing an illness were left to religious figures such as Priests, and physical aspects of an illness were referred to physicians and surgeons. However, the Prophet (saws) amalgamated two critical values in medicine; one's physical and spiritual well-being, a notion proving to have implications on contemporary scientific medicine.

A holistic approach to medicine

It is essential to yet again highlight that whilst Prophetic medicine was used to treat limited illnesses, attention should be drawn to the overall approach which the Prophet (saws) adopted and not merely the remedy prescribed in its individual capacity.

It is this holistic approach to medicine which has served as a precedent for contemporary medicine. Prophetic medicine as a system, establishes the importance of combining one's inner and outer elements when addressing an ailment, thus focusing on one's overall health, rather than solely treating the illness. Ibn Qayyim mentions, "It is a fact that curing the ills of the body without curing the ills of the heart does not work or benefit anyone (Abd El-Qader, 2003, p33).

This holistic approach to medicine has gained significant recognition in contemporary medical fields. In recent times, and particularly within the West, considerable research has been undertaken regarding the importance of adopting a holistic approach in medicine. For instance, several journal articles[2] dedicated to this topic

have been published in *The Western Journal of Medicine*.

In an article published by Dr Richard Svihus in 1979, "holistic" is defined as "a state of integration of a person, as a body and a soul, with the spiritual self, making him or her whole" (Svihus, 1979, p 478). Referring to a statement made by Sir William Osler, a former Professor of Medicine at John Hopkins University, Svihus writes, "The greatest aid in the prevention of disease is to preserve the due proportion of mind and body, for there is no proportion or disproportion more productive of health and disease, and of virtue and vice, than that between soul and body" (p 479).

Svihus later criticises the standard approach adopted by the majority of physicians during modern times, in that "physicians separate the soul from the body" (p 480). He concludes the article by proposing that the medical world revisit the concept of adopting a holistic approach when treating a patient and makes a noteworthy statement, "Man does not exist apart from his Creator, and the spiritual side of man should be involved in the healing process" (p 480).

Despite the fact that the article overlooks any contribution made by the Prophet (saws) or the Islamic world towards the field of medicine, as many articles tend to do, one can nonetheless identify a common impetus between the approach adopted by the Prophet (saws), and that during modern times. This is namely one which involves embracing a holistic approach when dealing with the treatment of a patient, and acknowledging the importance of generating harmony between one's physical and spiritual self during the healing process.

Evidently, contemporary physicians are acknowledging the benefits of implementing holistic medicine. Dr Michelle Wright (Wright, 2010), a medical practitioner in England writes, "A holistic approach is good practice and has been strongly advocated by the Royal College of General Practitioners for many years" ([\[www.patient.co.uk/doctor/holistic-medicine\]\(http://www.patient.co.uk/doctor/holistic-medicine\)\). She concludes by writing, "All healthcare practitioners should aspire to holistic medicine and try to practice it. Recognising the 'whole' person in the prevention and treatment of disease may hold the key to some diagnoses for doctors" \(<http://www.patient.co.uk/doctor/holistic-medicine>\).](http://www.</p></div><div data-bbox=)

On a larger scale, health organisations have deemed it essential to provide holistic healthcare and have made this effective by drafting specific clauses in their charters or strategic planning in order to ensure the implementation of the system[3].

Conclusion

Therefore, it is evident that the Prophet (saws) has contributed to the field of traditional medicine, which is also referred to as Prophetic medicine. Specific remedies and prescriptions recommended by the Prophet (saws) have been recorded in authentic sources, providing procedures on how to preserve and restore one's health.

Whilst Prophetic medicine offers limited remedies for specific illnesses, it nevertheless embraces a unique system in that it combines one's spiritual and physical well-being, thereby promoting a holistic approach to medicine. Accordingly, the scope of Prophetic medicine is largely broadened when considered as a comprehensive system rather than purely perceived as a catalog for remedies.

Contemporary physicians and organisations in the medical field are gradually acknowledging and adopting this holistic approach since there is a demand for the need to focus on the complete person in order to attain a superior level of wellness.

Therefore, one may conclude by validly stating that this holistic approach in medicine, a system essentially established over fourteen hundred years ago by the Prophet (saws), has indisputably had implications on modern day medicine.

Prophet Yusuf (AS)

The story of Yusuf AS is a unique one among the stories of prophets in the Qur'an. Yusuf AS is the son of Yaakub AS, grandson of Ishaq AS and the great-grandson of Ibrahim AS. The uniqueness of his story is that it is the only story of a prophet that is told in entirety in a single surah in the Qur'an, Surah Yusuf, Chapter 12.

This is the most detailed and fascinating story in the Quran, involving both human weaknesses such as jealousy, hatred, pride, passion, deception, intrigue, cruelty, and terror as well as noble qualities such as patience, loyalty, bravery, nobility, and compassion. We learn about Yusuf's AS joys, troubles and sorrows, and move with him through the years of his life as he arms himself with piety and patience, and in the end emerges victorious.

Yusuf AS is revered for his noble character and outstanding beauty. As stated by Prophet Muhammad SAW, "Yusuf and his mother were given half of all the beauty in the world." (Tabari)

Narrated in Sahih Bukhari, when asked who is the most honourable in Allah's sight, Prophet Muhammad SAW said, "...Yusuf, Allah's Prophet, the son of Allah's Prophet, the son of Allah's Prophet, the son of Allah's Khalil (i.e. Ibrahim)."

Yusuf AS was young boy, handsome, happy and very much loved by his father. He lived in the house with his younger brother Binyamin and 10 older half-brothers. Qur'anic accounts make it clear that Yusuf AS excelled his brothers as the sun outshines the stars, as might indeed be expected since he had been chosen by Allah for

prophethood. It was his very excellence that gave his half-brothers cause for envy and enmity.

It was clear to his brothers that he was dearer to their father than themselves. As a prophet, Yaakub AS naturally recognised the excellence of Yusuf's AS character and his spiritual gifts and hence he cherished him like a treasure among his other sons.

YUSUF'S AS VISION

Allah describes the story of Yusuf AS as "the best of stories" (Qur'an 12:3). The story of Yusuf AS begins with a dream, and ends with the dream's interpretation.

Yusuf AS relates his dream to his father.

"O my father, indeed I have seen [in a dream] eleven stars and the sun and the moon, I saw them prostrating to me." (Qur'an 12:4)

Yaakub AS listened attentively to his beloved son and his face shone with joy, for Yusuf AS related a dream that spoke of the fulfilment of a prophecy. Yaakub AS immediately grasped the meaning of his son's vision – that Yusuf AS would be the one to carry the 'Light of Allah's house'. However as quickly as the joy had sprung into Yaakub's AS face, it vanished, and he cautioned the innocent lad to keep what he had seen to himself. He said,

"O my son, do not relate your vision to your brothers or they will contrive against you a plan. Indeed Satan, to man, is a manifest enemy. (Qur'an 12:5)

These words suggested that Yaakub AS had had sufficient evidence of his sons' enmity towards the young Yusuf AS to make him concerned that they might scheme against him. The ten older brothers were already jealous of their younger brother. They recognised their father's particular affection for him. Yaakub AS was a prophet, a man dedicated to submission to One True God and he treated his family and his community with fairness, respect and equitable love; however his heart was drawn to the gentle qualities evident in his son Yusuf AS. Yusuf's AS younger brother Binyamin, at this stage of the story, was too young to be involved in any of the trickery and deception brewing.

Yaakub AS informed Yusuf AS the meaning of what he had seen, clearly an auspicious future that was in store for his beloved son.

And thus will your Lord choose you and teach you the interpretation of narratives and complete His favour upon you and upon the family of Yaakub, as He completed it upon your fathers before, Abraham and Isaac. Indeed, your Lord is Knowing and Wise." (Qur'an 12:6)

These words would serve as a reminder to Yusuf AS that no matter what difficulties he might face, all things are in the hands of the All-Knowing, All-Wise Lord, who is indeed the Best of Planners. Yusuf's AS story inspires us with a feeling for the depth of Allah's power and supremacy and the execution of His rulings despite the challenge of human intervention.

Yusuf AS heeded his father's warning. He did not tell his brothers what he had seen. It is well known that they hated him so much that it was difficult for him to feel secure telling them what was in his heart and in his dreams.

YUSUF AS AND HIS BROTHERS

The brothers of Yusuf AS did not like that he should become the only centre of their paternal love. The jealousy the brothers felt toward Yusuf AS blinded their hearts, disoriented their think-

ing and made small things seem insurmountable, large things seeming insignificant. They decided to get rid of him. One of them suggested that he should be put to death but the others did not agree with him because it was a terrible thing. Then another brother proposed to throw him into a pit. All of them unanimously voted in favour of this scheme.

"Kill Yusuf or cast him out to [another] land; the countenance of your father will [then] be only for you, and you will be after that a righteous people." (Qur'an 12:1)

But one among the ten brothers was of a better nature. He suggested,

"Do not kill Yusuf but throw him into the bottom of the well; some travellers will pick him up - if you would do [something]." (Qur'an 12:10)

The other nine brothers agreed to this plan and laid the plot. They believed, in their blindness, that the absence of Yusuf AS would remove him from their father's thoughts.

They approached Yaakub AS with a plan to take Yusuf AS into the desert with them, on the pretext of letting him play and enjoy himself. Fear leapt into Yaakub's AS heart. He suspected treachery and expressed his fear that a wolf would take Yusuf AS. Yaakub AS attempted to protect the son whom he loved so dearly.

He said, "Indeed, it saddens me that you should take him, and I fear that a wolf would eat him while you are of him unaware." (Qur'an 12:13)

The brothers protested falsely,

"If a wolf should eat him while we are a [strong] clan, indeed, we would then be losers." (Qur'an 12:14)

Yaakub AS was powerless to protect his beloved son indefinitely from his brothers' evil – or indeed from anything else with which his Lord might see fit to test him.

At the same time, Yusuf's AS vision had made it clear that a very special future lay ahead of him. Because of this Yaakub AS possessed the assurance that no matter what troubles might befall Yusuf AS during his life, he would reach the exalted rank that had been promised through his vision. The final outcome, arranged by his Lord, would be for the best. Even though separation and sorrow would now come upon him and his beloved Yusuf, nothing could destroy Yaakub's AS certainty and trust in Allah's wisdom and mercy. And he surrendered himself inwardly to whatever the All-Wise Lord might decree.

Shaytan works in subtle and deceitful ways, and with his words, Yaakub AS unwittingly supplied his sons with the perfect reason for Yusuf's AS disappearance. The brothers immediately knew they would blame Yusuf's AS disappearance on a wolf, and this became part of their dastardly plan. Eventually Yaakub AS agreed and the treacherous brothers took the unsuspecting Yusuf on their journey into the desert.

As soon as they departed and went to a distance, they started swearing and abusing him. They humiliated him and threatened him. Then they agreed to throw him into the depth of a well. The brothers felt secure in their plan that a traveler would find Yusuf AS and sell him into slavery.

As Yusuf AS called out in terror, the brothers took a small goat or sheep from their flock, slaughtered it and wiped the blood over one of Yusuf's AS garments. Completely consumed by their jealousy, the brothers took an oath to keep their foul deed secret and walked away pleased with themselves.

CRYING IS NOT EVIDENCE OF THE TRUTH

And they came to their father at night, weeping false tears. It was dark, and Yaakub AS was sitting in his house anxiously awaiting the return of Yusuf AS. The sound of ten men crying confirmed his deepest fear. The darkness of the night was matched only by the darkness in their hearts. The lies rolled easily from their tongues

and Yaakub's AS heart constricted in fear.

"O father, they cried, "indeed, we went racing and left Yusuf with our things, and a wolf devoured him." Then observing Yaakub's AS disbelief, they added: "But you would not believe us even if we were truthfull!" And to convince that they were not lying, they produced his shirt with false blood upon it. (Qur'an 12:16-18)

We can only imagine Yaakub's AS feelings at that point: his terrible anxiety over Yusuf's AS unknown fate – had his brothers then killed him, so that this blood was really his? – and at the same time, his horror at the naked evil that he saw so clearly within his sons. And although he was their father and a prophet, he had no power to deal with them. There were ten of them, acting as a body in their wickedness, entirely out of his control, impelled by the worst of all ill feelings, envy.

Yaakub AS had already understood and accepted that some calamity would befall his beloved son. He knew his sons were lying. It is said that they forgot to tear the clothes, and it is said that the forgetfulness never lets a lie prosper. The signs of suspicion arose and so they could not convince their father about their claim, but what were his options? At the same time, there was Yusuf's AS vision like a bright beacon of hope, assuring him that his dearest son would live to see a distinguished future.

Yaakub's AS trust in Allah did not waver. "Rather, your souls have enticed you to something," the noble prophet said to his sons, surrendering his will and purpose to his Lord, "so patience is most fitting And Allah is the one sought for help against that which you describe." (Qur'an 12:18)

Acknowledgement: Most of the information for this work has been obtained from:

"A History of the Prophets of Islam", Volume I, by Suzanne Haneef

"Stories of the Prophets", by Ibn Kathir (Translation by Rashad Ahmad Azami)

Significant Events that defined Hijrah

Dhun Nurayn al-Shabazz

And the first to embrace Islam of the Muhajiroon (those who migrated from Makkah to Al-Madinah) and the Ansar (the citizens of Al-Madinah who helped and gave aid to the Muhajiroon) and also those who followed them exactly (in Faith). Allah is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him. He has prepared for them Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise), to dwell therein forever. That is the supreme success.—Qur'an 9[At-Taubah]:100

The history of Islam is incomplete without the Hijrah migration of the noble messenger Muhammad (saws). This singular event heralded hope that led to the spread of Islam after prolonged persecution. The pagan arabs rejected faith and belied the messenger (saws). They tortured the Muslims with a grand plot to kill her prophet (saws). The Muslims patiently persevered until Allah instructed His messenger (saws) to leave Mecca for Yathrib. This migration in the year 622 AD was what later established significant landmarks in the history of Islam.

Construction of the prophet's (saws) mosque: On arrival in Yathrib, the first act embarked upon by the prophet (saws) was the building of the mosque. He led his companions in laying the fortress. The mosque of Yathrib was ultimate in simplicity and design. It's material was unbaked bricks and mortar for the walls.

While the roof was of date fronds supported by trunks of palm trees. The alcove of the mosque pointed toward Jerusalem in the north. Each of the other three sides were pierced by a gate. The floor of the mosque had no covering but mud, not even a coarse matting.

Revelation of Adhan and injunction to Salat: It had become mandatory for the Muslims to pray five times daily in Yathrib. But there was no means to call for the prayers. Several suggestions were made to the prophet,(saws) but only one was adopted. Abdullah bin Ziyad Al Ansari narrated to the prophet (saws) that while he was half-awake or half-asleep, a man appeared before him and told him that the human voice ought to be used to call the faithful to prayer. He also taught him the Adhan (call to prayer) and manner of saying it. This idea appealed to the Prophet (saws) and he adopted it forthwith. He then summoned Bilal ibn Rabah and taught him how to call the adhan. This led to his honorable appointment as the first Muazzin (caller to prayer) of Islam.

Yathrib metamorphosed: In due course, the city name "Yathrib" soon became obsolete. People began to call it "Madina-tun-Nabi,"—the City of the Prophet. It's frequent usage caused a contraction of this name to be simply adopted as "Madinah"—"the City". Till date, that's the name the city of the Prophet (saws) has remained. The transformation went beyond nomenclature. It

soon became an abode of peace and socio-economical activities. There was room for learning and the growth of Islam became spontaneous.

The charter of Madinah: The people of Madinah recognized Muhammad (saws) as their leader and in turn, he gave them a citizen's charter. Yathrib was previously known for turbulent wars among its tribes. Hence, this document served as a charter of peace containing forty-seven articles. One of the most striking clause of this charter is as follows: "The Jews who attach themselves to our commonwealth shall have an equal right with our own people to our assistance and good offices. The Jews of the various branches domiciled in Yathrib shall form with the Moslems one composite nation. They shall practice their religion as freely as the Moslems. The clients and allies of the Jews shall enjoy the same security and freedom". (The Messenger, the Life of Mohammed, New York, 1946)

Brotherhood of the Muhajiroon and Ansar: One of the beauties the Hijrah birthed was the brotherhood between the Muslims. The Muhajiroon were the migrants who left Mecca in search of refuge in Madinah. While the Ansar are the inhabitants of Yathrib that warmly welcomed the prophet and his companions. The impeccable scenario is as described in the following hadith: Narrated Anas: When 'Abdur-Rahman bin 'Auf came to us, Allah's Apostle made a bond of fraternity between him and Sad bin Ar-Rabi' who was a rich man, Sad said, "The Ansar know that I am the richest of all of them, so I will divide my property into two parts between me and you, and I have two wives; see which of the two you like so that I may divorce her and you can marry her after she becomes lawful to you by her passing the prescribed period (i.e. 'Idda) of divorce. 'Abdur Rahman said, "May Allah bless you your family (i.e. wives) for you." (But 'Abdur-Rahman went to the market) and did not return on that day except with some gain of dried yogurt and butter. He went

on trading just a few days till he came to Allah's Apostle bearing the traces of yellow scent over his clothes. Allah's Apostle asked him, "What is this scent?" He replied, "I have married a woman from the Ansar." Allah's Apostle asked, "How much Mahr have you given?" He said, "A date-stone weight of gold or a golden date-stone." The Prophet said, "Arrange a marriage banquet even with a sheep." (Bukhari)

Redirecting the Qiblah: In the early days, the Muslims faced the direction of Jerusalem while praying. Until Allah revealed the verses in Qur'an 2[Baqarah]:144. Hitherto, the qiblah has remained the direction of the ka'bah in Mecca. The qiblah is not the direction of sunrise or satellite dish as misunderstood by many.

The Islamic Calendar: And one of the reasons we are discussing the hijrah is because yesterday (09.21.2017) marked the beginning of a new Islamic year—hijrah 1439. This means it's been one thousand four hundred and thirty-nine years since the aforementioned events occurred. As Muslims, we do not celebrate a new year like the Gregorians. However, the significance of the hijrah is to measure the passage of time in line with acts of worship like fasting and hajj. So that historic migration of the noble messenger (saws) air-marked the counting of the Islamic calendar.

Sayyiduna Amr bin Al-Aas (RA) reports:
**Rasulullah (saws) was not vulgar
and rude, nor was he harsh or
indecent.**
He used to say, "From the best
of you are those with most ex-
cellent manners".

(Muslim)

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