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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.**

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**Question.**

Our ancestors had built a Masjid on village common land some eighty years ago. Later on a new Masjid was constructed some fifty fifty years ago over a different piece of land which later on came to be renovated and extended. Some of the material retrieved from the old Masjid was used in construction of second Masjid and the first Masjid was left unattended of which now only the plinth exists. We are presently offering prayers in the second renovated Masjid. The land appurtenant to the first Masjid has been converted into a graveyard. We now want to preserve by fencing or bringing into use the remains of the first Masjid by converting the same into a place where Qur'an may be taught to children. Can we do that? Or tell us the best way to prevent the remains of the old Masjid from being dishonoured. We do not want to remain negligent any further.

**Answer**

Any place once a mosque shall continue to remain a mosque until the last day. Therefore, it is suggested that the dilapidated mosque be constructed anew in a mosque shape and you may use it for Qur'an teaching (darsgah etc) and sometimes also offer salah in it. Further, you can also train students in various religious activities which includes salah. The logic in giving the remains the shape of a mosque is to avoid any confusion which otherwise the future generation

might confront with regard to the structure.

*Mufti Umar*

**Question.**

Someone has very badly broken his nail... so they used a gel to fix it up, similar to glue. However no water will go through but it was for fixing up, wudhu and salah valid?

**Answer.**

In the enquired case, if your broken nail is attached to your finger/toe with glue and it is difficult to remove it, your broken nail will now be considered part of your body. In such a state, Wudhu and Salaah performed will be valid. (Fataawa Haqqaniyyah 2/522)

*Mufti Ismaeel*

**Question.**

I would like to know if eggs that contain tiny blood clots in them when cracked open are haraam for consumption?

**Answer.**

It is unlawful (Haraam) to consume blood/blood clots found in eggs. However, if the blood/blood clots are removed and there is no contamination of the same in the other parts of the egg, it will be lawful (Halaal) to consume it.

*Mufti Ismaeel*

**Question.**

A few months ago someone deposited R1000 into my bank account. I have tried to track down the person as I feel it may have been a mistake. However, it was not possible to find the person as the deposit was done with cash in the bank. I have even called the respected branch to see if they could help me track the person but unfortunately not.

- 1) What should I do with this money?
- 2) Am I allowed to pay my study debt with this monies?

**Answer.**

In the enquired case, if the money deposited into your account does not belong to you or the source of it is unknown, it will be necessary for you to verify its source and ownership.

If after exhausting all efforts to do so, you fail to verify its source and ownership, the money must be distributed in charity. In this case, if you are eligible to receive Zakaat i.e. you do not possess the Zakaat Nisaab or your debt exceeds your wealth, then it will be permissible for you to make use of it.

Note: If after distributing it in charity, the source and ownership is verified, the distributed money will have to be returned from one's own wealth to the original owner.

*Mufti Ismaeel*

**Question.**

I made Masah on a plaster on my hand. After I performed Salaah, I changed the plaster. Does my Wudhu remain valid?

**Answer.**

Masah over a plaster/cast will remain valid until the wound etc. completely heals. If the plaster/cast is changed, it will not be necessary to repeat the Masah over the plaster/cast and the Wudhu will remain valid.

Upon the wound completely healing, Masah over the plaster/cast will now not suffice and it will be necessary to wash the healed area.

(Jadeed Fiqhi Masaail 1/62)

Note: Masah over a plaster/cast will only be valid in the case of a valid Shari' reason e.g. if the wound will not heal completely if the plaster/cast is removed.

*Mufti Ismaeel*

**Question.**

Does shaving break wudhu? I use an electric shaver to shave my moustache and usually am ready for work before Fajr so after getting dressed I shave my moustache then read Fajr. Does my wudhu break by shaving?

**Answer.**

Shaving ones moustache does not break ones Wudhu. If however, there is a flow of blood, then only ones Wudhu will break.

It is safer for one to shave ones moustache before performing Wudhu or taking a Ghusal/bath in the event of ones Wudhu breaking in the process.

*Mufti Ismaeel*

**Question.**

Kindly advise as to whether a fee can be charged upon a cancellation of lay-by by a customer.

**Answer.**

In the enquired case, if the cancellation of the lay-by involved actual work/labour, such as transporting the item back to the warehouse etc., then actual costs incurred may be charged. If there are no costs incurred to the seller, it will not be permissible for him to charge a fee.

*Mufti Taahir*

**Question.**

If I take a vow to sacrifice an animal when my father recovers from his illness, can I partake of its meat?

**Answer.**

It will not be permissible to partake of the meat of an animal one had taken a vow to slaughter. The meat of such an animal must be distributed

amongst poor and needy Zakat recipients. (Binaayah 12/51)

*Mufti Ismaeel*

### Question.

I have gold and no cash. The gold is under the Nisaab amount. If I get cash, how do I give Zakaat?

### Answer.

In the enquired situation, if you possess gold only, which is under the gold threshold value (87.48g), Zakaat is not payable on the gold.

However, if you have other Zakaatable assets or if you possess gold and cash on your Zakaatable date, then you will combine the gold and cash, and discharge the Zakaat of it (2.5%), if its total value reaches the silver threshold value (612.35g). (Fataawa Mahmoodiyyah 9/380)

*Mufti Ismaeel*

### Question.

After fard salaah why do we move away from where we were and read our sunnah/nafl somewhere else?

### Answer.

It is not necessary but preferable for one to change his place or move from one place to another after performing a Fardh Salaah to offer his Sunnah/Nafil Salaahs.

This is done to differentiate a congregational Salaah from an individual Salaah as an onlooker may consider an individual Salaah to be a congregational Salaah and thus create confusion. Furthermore, by changing ones place of Salaah after a Fardh Salaah, it will increase the number of places where one makes Sajdah, which will testify in ones favour on the day of Qiyaamah.

In any event, one should not change his place of Salaah if the place is crowded or if it will result in crossing directly in front of a person performing his Salaah. (Al-Asl 1/18/Kitaabul Fataawa 2/356)

*Mufti Ismaeel*

### Question.

I would like to know the ruling on a woman sitting to read salaah in the latter stages of her pregnancy? Is it allowed?

### Answer.

In general, a pregnant woman is not exempt from standing and performing Salaah. However, if a pregnant woman experiences severe difficulty in making Qiyaam (standing) and/or Ruku and Sajdah, then she may sit and perform Salaah, irrespective if this occurs during the early or latter stages of pregnancy. (Tahtaawi Ala Maraaqil Falaah 1/400/1)

*Mufti Ismaeel*

### Question.

As is common knowledge there are many hadiths with regard to importance and the obligation of keeping family ties in Islam. Does this also apply with regard to all in-laws such as keeping family ties with father in law, mother in law, brother in law, sister in law, son in law, daughter in law etc. Are the keeping of such ties obligatory on a Muslim and/or if such ties are broken will it earn the displeasure of Allah. And does it apply to the one who breaks such ties or to all parties concerned. Also this does not create a good environment and makes it difficult for the family member that is married to maintain good family ties.

Also what does keeping family ties actually entail. Understandably the relationship is not the same as a blood relationship. Merely greeting for the sake of doing so when meeting by chance or at a function for the sake of pretense in public and avoiding the inlaws as far as possible. Does that mean the ties are broken or maintained.

### Answer.

The obligation of maintaining family ties does not extend to one's in-laws. It rather refers to one's own family. Nonetheless, a good relationship with one's in-laws is still important as it impacts on the husband's relationship with his wife

and his children. If the relationship with the in-laws sours then the marriage will not be left unscathed.

In most relations in life, a level of patience and tolerance is required. Life is not hiccup-free. When considering the issues you have with your in-laws and how to deal with them, reverse the situation in your mind and imagine your wife in your position having to deal with the same issues with your family. The manner in which you think it appropriate for her to deal with your family is the manner in which you should deal with your in-laws

(Do note that a man's sister-in-law is not his Mahram, hence purdah should be maintained between them.)

At the end of the day, we all are human which, by default, means that we are flawed. Hence, it is to be expected that someone would say or do something inappropriate or behave in an unbecoming manner. When Allah speaks of the righteous, He says, "Those who give (in charity) in times of both ease and hardship, those who suppress their anger and forgive others; and Allah loves those who do good." (Surah 3, Verse 134)

In this verse, there is a subtle indication that we will be faced with situations that anger and infuriate us, that try our patience and that we will have to deal with people who will offend us. For only if this happens will we be able to gain the virtue of suppressing our anger and forgiving others.

We should also consider that our in-laws have given their daughter and their sister to be under our care, to be of assistance to us, to be our partners and faithful companions and to be the mothers of our children. They will be the grandparents, uncles and aunts of our children who will love and care for them. If we cannot have patience with our in-laws and forgive their mistakes, then who will have patience with and who will we forgive?

Yes, there are times when the situation becomes really intolerable and to associate with our in-

laws only results in misery. In such situations, a cooling of relations is in order and a superficial relationship of merely greeting and exchanging pleasantries when necessary is acceptable. But this is generally not the case. We must ask ourselves, how much have we implemented patience and forgiveness in our relationships with them? Unfortunately, there are many people who are quick to anger and slow to forgive. Yet, the Sunnah of our beloved master, Rasulallah (saws) was that he was slow to anger and quick to forgive; a practice that everyone of us, husbands, wives and in-laws, should strive to inculcate in our lives. If we do this, then we will undoubtedly save many marriages from the problems and heartache that they currently face.

*Mufti Moosa*

#### **Question.**

If you give sadaqah in someone else's name, does the giver of the sadaqah get any reward? Or does the reward go completely to the one in whose name it was given?

#### **Answer.**

Both the giver and the person for whom the reward is intended will be rewarded.

Sayyidatuna Aa'ishah (ra) narrates that a man came to the Prophet (saws) and asked him, "My mother passed away suddenly and she did not get a chance to make a bequest. I think that if she had a chance, she would have given charity. So if I give charity on her behalf, will she be rewarded and will I also be rewarded?"

Rasulallah (saws) replied in the affirmative (meaning that both will be rewarded. (Sunan Ibn Majah)

*Mufti Moosa*

#### **Question.**

Can you please explain to me how do I perform my salaah when I'm travelling and when I get to a destination and stay there less than 15 days,

#### **Answer.**

A person who intends to travel a distance of 78 kilometres or 48 miles or more (from the boundaries of one's city/town) is categorized as a Musaa-fir (traveller).

If a Musaa-fir (traveller) intends to remain at a destination for less than fifteen days, he will also be categorized as a Musaa-fir (traveller). However, if a Musaa-fir (traveller) intends to remain at a destination for fifteen days or more, he will only be categorized as a Musaa-fir (traveller) during his journey. Once he reaches his destination, he will not be categorized as a Musaa-fir (traveller).

As such, if you intend to travel a distance of 78 kilometres or 48 miles or more and stay at a destination for less than fifteen days, you will be categorized as a Musaa-fir (traveller) during your journey and once you reach your destination.

A Musaa-fir (traveller) will make Qasr i.e. perform two Rakaats of Fardh Salaah instead of a four Rakaats Fardh Salaah. Qasr will be made in the Fardh Salaahs of Zuhr, Asr and Esha Salaahs. There is no Qasr in the Fardh Salaahs of Fajr and Maghrib Salaahs. Similarly, there is no Qasr in Witr, Sunnah and Nafl Salaahs.

The Sunnah and Nafl Salaahs should be performed if a person is not in a hurry whilst travelling. (Nurul Idaah 99-102)

*Mufti Ismaeel*

### **Question.**

A family member was not in a conscious state for 2 months before passing away and was unable to perform Salaah. Is there Fidyah for the Missed Salaahs?

### **Answer.**

In principle, if a person had been unconscious for a period of five Salaahs or less, it will be necessary to make Qadha (make up) of the missed Salaahs. In an event of a person passing away in such a state, the Fidyah amount of the missed Salaahs will suffice Inshallah.

However, if the period of unconsciousness lasted for six Salaahs or more, Qadha and Fidyah of the

missed Salaahs will not be necessary. (Hidaayah 1/78)

*Mufti Ismaeel*

### **Question.**

What is the reason for the Imam to hold the staff at the time of the Khutbah of Jumuaah?

### **Answer.**

It is a preferred act (Mustahab) for the Imaam/ Khateeb to hold a staff (Asaa) with his left hand whilst delivering the Khutbah of Jumuaah.

The scholars of Jurisprudence (Fuqahaa) have written that if the Muslims conquer a city by the sword, the Imaam should hold a sword whilst delivering the Khutbah, signifying the authority of the Muslims.

However, if the Muslims do not conquer a city by the sword but through the efforts of propagating Islam or there is a truce/agreement in place, then the Imaam may hold a staff whilst delivering the Khutbah. (Shaami 2/163/Fatawaa Darul Uloom Zakariyya 2/706)

Note: The above will be preferred (Mustahab) provided that it is not considered obligatory, compulsory or an emphasized Sunnah act.

*Mufti Ismaeel*

### **Question.**

I had my menses after the Zuhr time started but before I read my Zuhr Salaah and also before the Zuhr time finished. Do I have to make Qadha of this Zuhr Salaah after I become clean?

### **Answer.**

The termination of a Salaah time determines the obligation/non-obligation of Salaah in accordance to a person's circumstance.

In the enquired situation, at the termination of the Zuhr Salaah time, you were in the state of menstruation (Haidh). Hence, it will not be necessary for you to make up the Zuhr Salaah as the performance of Salaah in such a state is not obligatory. (Shaami 2/131)

*Mufti Ismaeel*

*Lesson from  
The Qur'an*



*Do those who have  
committed evils as-  
sume that We will  
make them like those  
who believe and do  
righteous deeds, so as  
their life and death  
becomes equal?*

*Evil is what they  
judge. And Allah  
has created the heav-  
ens and the earth  
with just purpose,  
and so that every-  
body is recompensed  
for what he (or she)  
earned. And they  
will not be wronged.  
[45:21-22]*

# Divine Requit and Rationality

Of the two verses mentioned, the first one argues rationally that Divine reward and punishment are necessary. Every person is a witness to the fact that no one receives his full measure of reward or punishment for the good or bad deeds he does in this world. Generally, the unbelievers and evil-doers wallow in wealth and lead a life of luxury. The obedient servants of Allah, on the other hand, live in poverty, hardship and misery. In the first place, the crimes of the wicked criminals are often not detected. Even if they are detected, more often than not, they are not apprehended. If they are apprehended, they swear oaths - lawfully or unlawfully, truthfully or falsely - and try to find loopholes to escape punishment. In this way, one in a million might be punished and that too not fully. As a result, the rebels, who follow their selfish and base desires, move about in high spirits and without any hindrance, enjoying full powers in this world. The believers, on the other hand, who follow the Shari'ah strictly, do not touch many kinds of wealth and give up many pleasures because they treat them as unlawful. They only adopt the lawful ways of gaining anything in order to avoid calamities and afflictions. Thus they are deprived of many a comfort and pleasure in this world. Since this is the state of affairs where people are not rewarded or punished in this world in commensurate with their actions, it follows necessarily that there must be another world - the Hereafter and life after death - where people will be recompensed fully for their deeds. Otherwise, it would be absurd to refer to stealing, robbery, adultery, fornication, murder and so on as crimes, in this world. These people often lead a very successful life in this world. A thief or a robber acquires so much of wealth in a night that a university graduate might not be able to acquire it in years of employment and hard work. If there is no such world as the Hereafter and accountability, then the thief or the robber would be thought to be better than the respectable university graduate. No reasonable person would ever accept this position. If it be pointed out that every government in the world has legislated se-

vere punishments for criminals, then we would respond that experience shows that only the foolish criminals get caught. The clever habitual criminals always find loopholes, and ways and means of escaping punishment. For instance, the escape-door of bribery is always open for them and that is sufficient for them.

In short, the need for the Day of Requitall may be denied only when it is conceded that there is no such thing as good and bad; or that whatever one acquires, by fair means or foul, it is absolutely rewardable. But no one accepts this position. Similarly it is absurd to believe that there is distinction between good and evil, but the consequences are equal, rather the criminal should have a more comfortable life than the righteous and innocent ones. There could be no greater degree of wrong than this. It is to this absurd judgement that the Qur'an refers in ("...so as their life and death becomes equal? Evil is what they judge... 45:21)". It is a very

unreasonable and unjustifiable position that evil-doers should be placed on the same pedestal as the righteous persons. Since the reward and punishment in this world are not given in full measure, then it necessarily follows that there should be life after death in the Hereafter where reward and punishment will be paid in full measure. Thus the second verse in the set complements the same subject (...and so that everybody is recompensed for what he (or she) earned. And they will not be wronged. - 45:22). In other words, the Day of Requitall is necessary in order to wipe out wrong and injustice. As for the question, why the people are not requited or recompensed for the good or bad deeds in this world, we would respond that this is not in keeping with the Divine wisdom of creation: He made this world the 'domain of deeds and test-n-trial', not the 'domain of requital'. Allah knows best!

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

"Those who refrain from committing wrong actions out of their love for Allah are of the highest status in His sight."

-Ibn Qayyim



# Lessons from Sahih Bukhari

*Dr. Rafiq Ahmad*

## The Book of Salah

**Chapter 86 : The mosque in a thoroughfare not causing any hindrance to the people. Al-Hasan, Ayyub and Maalik all said this.**

### **Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab**

A general road does not belong to any particular person and is therefore commonly shared by all people; similarly, a mosque also is not anybody's personal property. According to the learned scholars, if someone wants to construct a mosque in a thoroughfare, it has to fulfil two conditions. First, it should not cause any hindrance to pedestrian or vehicular traffic. Second, no one should have any objection to it. According to some Hanfite scholars, permission should also be sought from the court or concerned Govt. authority in such a nature. (Eidhahul Bukhari)

### **Hadith No. 463**

#### **Narrated Aisha**

**I had seen my parents following Islam since I attained the age of puberty. Not a day passed but the Prophet visited us, both in the mornings and evenings. My father Abii Bakr thought of building a mosque in the courtyard of his house and he did so. He used to pray and recite the Qur'an in it. The pagan women and their children used to stand by him and look at**

**him with surprise. Abu Bakr was a Softhearted person and could not help weeping while reciting the Qur'an. The chiefs of the Quraish pagans became afraid of that (i.e. that their children and women might be affected by the recitation of Qur'an)."**

### **Comments**

Sayyida Aisha mentions that her parents had embraced Islam before she attained puberty. In other words it can be inferred that ever since she started understanding things she had seen her parents practicing Islam. Rasulullah (saws) had such a close association with Sayyidna Abu Bakr that he used to visit their house both in the mornings and evenings. This was the period of early days of Islam in Makkah when the Makkan pagans were severely persecuting the followers of this new faith, and when this persecution reached to its extreme, Sayyidna Abu Bakr decided to migrate to Abyssinia, now Ethiopia. On his way to Abyssinia, Sayyidna Abu Bakr met an influential person—Ibn al-Dhugna, who asked him the purpose of his journey towards Abyssinia. Sayyidna Abu Bakr told him that since the Makkan pagans had made it difficult for them to live in peace, he decided to migrate to Abyssinia. Ibn al-Dhugna was surprised and asked Sayyidna Abu Bakr how could the pagans

afford do so when he was highly philanthropic. He persuaded Sayyidna Abu Bakr to return back to Makkah and stay under his refuge and also promised that nobody would even touch him with the intention of any harm. When Ibn Dhugna told the Makkan pagans that he had given refuge to Sayyidna Abu Bakr, they agreed on the condition that he should would not pray publicly. After this incident, Sayyidna Abu Bakr used to offer his prayers inside but he could not resist it too long, and shortly thereafter again started praying and reciting the Holy Qur'an outside in the compound of his house; and while doing so, unable to control his emotions, he would reduce to tears. The pagan women folk and children would assemble around him feared and surprised to see his condition. Perturbed and concerned that their women and children might get influenced by Islam, the pagans went to Ibn Dughna and expressed their inability to honour the agreement between them. Forced by the situation, Ibn Dughna withdraw his support to Sayyidna Abu Bakr. After this incident the migration to Madinah took place under the divine command.

### **Lessons from this hadith**

A mosque can be constructed on the roadside only if it does not cause any hindrance to people.

It also shows the distinguished character of Sayyidna Abu Bakr viz.,

a) His closeness to Rasulullah (saws).

b) His being first to embrace Islam.

His sacrifices for the cause of Islam.

His attachment to the recitation of the holy Qur'an.

The softness of his heart and the tremendous influence which the recitation of Qur'an had over him.

### **Chapter 87 : Praying in a market mosque.**

**Ibn Awn prayed in a mosque in a house whose door used to be locked while they were**

**inside.**

### **Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab**

The issue of 'market mosque' has been comprehensively debated by the jurists. Some of them say that it means an earmarked market area specified for the prayers and not a conventional mosque, while some others mention that it is a conventional mosque in a market place.

### **Hadith No. 464**

#### **Narrated Abu Huraira**

The Prophet said, "The prayer offered in congregation is twenty five times more superior (in reward) to the prayer offered alone in one's house or in a business center, because if one performs ablution and does it perfectly, and then proceeds to the mosque with the sole intention of praying, then for each step which he takes towards the mosque, Allah upgrades him a degree in reward and (forgives) crosses out one sin till he enters the mosque. When he enters the mosque he is considered in prayer as long as he is waiting for the prayer and the angels keep on asking for Allah's forgiveness for him and they keep on saying: 'O Allah! Be Merciful to him, O Allah! Forgive him, as long as he keeps on sitting at his praying place and does not pass wind. (See hadith No. 620).

### **Chapter 89 : The mosques en route to Madinah and the places where the Prophet prayed.**

### **Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab**

Rasulullah (saws) travelled from Makkah to Madinah once on the occasion of Hijrah (migration), and second time from Madinah to Makkah and back to Madinah on the occasion of farewell Hajj famously known as 'Hajjatul Vida'. It used to take 7 to 8 days to cover the distance from Makkah to Madinah and the Prophet (saws) had to offer compulsory prayers 35-40 times during the journey. For the first migration he left Makkah on Thursday, stayed in the cave

'Thour' for 3 days, and resumed his journey towards Madinah on Monday and reached there the next Monday.

#### **Hadith No. 465**

**Narrated Musa ibn Uqba**

**"I saw Saalim ibn Abdullah looking out for some places on the road where he would pray. He related that his father used to pray in them and had seen the Prophet (saws) pray in those places."**

**It is related from Nafe' that Ibn Umar used to pray in those places.**

**Ibn Uqba said, "I asked Saalim and I only know that he agreed with Nafe' on all the places except for a difference regarding the mosque at the hill of ar-Rawha'.**

**470. It is related from Abdullah that the Messenger of Allah (saws) used to stop at Dhu'l-Hulayfa when he performed umra or hajj under an acacia tree at the spot where the mosque is located at Dhu'l-Hulayfa. When he returned from an expedition or was coming from hajj or umra and was on that road, he came down along the riverbed and emerged from it and would make his camel kneel at the dip which is on the eastern side of the riverbed. He stayed there until morning, not at the mosque which is by the rocks nor on the hill with the mosque on it. There was a water channel there, where Abdullah prayed, with sand heaps in it. The Messenger of Allah (saws) used to pray there. The floodwater drove the pebbles down until the place where Abdullah used to pray was buried.**

**Abdullah related that the Prophet (saws) prayed at the site of the small mosque which is below the mosque at the hill at ar-Rawha'. Abdullah knew the place where the Prophet (saws) had prayed. He said, "It is on your right when you are standing in prayer in the mosque." That mosque is on the right hand**

**side of the road when you are going to Makka, a stone's throw or thereabouts from the largest mosque.**

**Ibn Umar used to pray towards the small mountain which is at the end of ar-Rawha'. That mountain ends at the side of the road near the mosque, between it and al-Munsaraf when you are going to Makka. A mosque was built there. Abdullah did not pray in that mosque. He left it to his left and behind him. He prayed in front of it towards the mountain itself. Abdullah came back from ar-Rawha' and did not pray Zuhr until he came to that place where he prayed. If he was coming from Makka and passed by it an hour before Subh or at the end of the night, he stopped until he could pray Subh there.**

**Abdullah related that the Prophet (saws) used to alight under a large thornless tree below ar-Ruwaytha on the right hand side of the road, facing the road in a wide level place and go on until he emerged from the small hill about two miles below the road of ar-Ruwaytha. The top of it is broken and inclines inward. It stands on a flat place where there are many sand-dunes.**

**Abdullah related that the Prophet (saws) prayed at the end of the upper part of the valley behind al-'Arj if you are on the way to Hadba. There are two or three graves at that mosque, on which are piles of stones, to the right of the path at the large stones marking the path. Abdullah used to return home from al-'Arj after the sun had declined from midday. He would pray Zuhr in that mosque.**

**Abdullah ibn Umar related that the Messenger of Allah (saws) alighted at the thornless trees at the left of the road in the river bed below Harsha. That slope joined the foot of Harsha about a bows-shot from the road. Abdullah used to pray at the thornless tree which was nearest the road. It was the tallest of them.**

Abdullah ibn Umar related that the Prophet (saws) used to alight at the slope which was closer to Marr az-Zahran towards Madinah where it descends from the small valleys. He would alight on the flat of that slope to the left of the road when you are going to Makka. There is only a stone's throw between where the Messenger of Allah (saws) alighted and the road.

Abdullah ibn Umar related that the Prophet (saws) used to alight at Dhu Tuwa and spent the night there until morning when he would pray Subh when he was going to Makka. The place where the Messenger of Allah (saws) prayed was a great mound which is not inside the mosque which was built there, but is lower down.

Abdullah related that the Prophet (saws) faced the two gaps in the mountain between him and the tall mountain towards the Ka'ba. He put the mosque that was built to the left of the mosque at the end of the mound. The place where the Prophet (saws) prayed was lower than it, on the black mound located ten cubits or thereabouts from the other mound. He prayed there facing the two gaps in the mountain between him and the Ka'ba.

## Comments

These hadiths speak about the journey of 'farewell hajj' or 'hajjatul vida.' En route from Madinah to Makkah various mosques have been constructed particularly at places where the Prophet (saws) offered his prayers.

The learned scholars hold different opinions with regard to the issue whether the places where Rasulullah (saws) had offered prayers hold some sanctity or not. As is evident from the words of the chapter title and the quoted hadith Imam Bukhari seems to be of the opinion that these places do hold some sanctity.

Sayyidna Ibn Umar is reported being very keen in finding the places where the Proph-

et (saws) had offered prayers during his journey from Madinah to Makkah. He would make it sure to offer prayers at those very places, which indicates that these places do hold some sanctity.

## Do the places visited by the Prophet (saws) hold sanctity or not?

Points in favour of the argument

1. Ibn Hajar says:

It is preferable to look for the impression left by the Prophet (saws) as is evident by the action of Ibn Umar. (Fathul Baari)

2. Allaama Ayni reports in Umdatul Qaari:

Indeed, when Rasulullah (saws) reached the mosque located at the centre of (a place called) 'ar-Ruhaa', near 'Irqu az-Zabia', he said, "This is a valley from among the valleys of paradise where seventy prophets have offered prayers before me".

3. Imam Bukhari has quoted a hadith mentioning Itbaan bin Maalik requesting Rasulullah (saws):

**"O Messenger of Allah (saws)! I would like you to come to my home and offer prayers therein so that I can take that place as 'Musalla' (prayer place) for myself".**



*Copy to page from 25*

about Allah, imagine that!

But now, a few days later, let's think seriously about this. The umbrella organizations will only do what the general Muslim populace has proven to be hungry for. So let's just start doing our own local events and conferences, and make it trickle upwards. I'm talking about the fundamentals of Tawhid and Islam here, not the classical debates. I'm talking about: Who is Allah? What does being Muslim entail? And we must get into the nitty-gritty of what happens and what we are supposed to do when belief crosses culture and politics.

Wallahu wali al-tawfiq.

# An Evil Foreboding?

*Straight Talk*



*Anyone who hasn't learned this from past human history is either uneducated or is a fanatic, or both. Muslims have a special responsibility. If they decide to remain in the slums, or lead slum-like lives in inner cities, then, that is not a choice approved by their Lord, writes SYED IQBAL ZAHEER*

Lack of enthusiasm for life and its activities, chronic laziness, lethargy, and negativity, are diseases that seem to have struck the Ummah at a wide scale. It is visible in many parts of the Muslim world. What could be the reason?

There could be not one but many reasons combined. For example, it could be because of wealth easily acquired by the previous generation. When a people inherit wealth, without having to drop a drop of sweat for it, it leads to the false idea that their Lord is happy with them for having bestowed wealth without any efforts that they put in. Thus, they run into the belief that they deserve the wealth and the benefactor is none but God. So, they decide that it is time to relax and enjoy the benefits of the Divine bestowal. They ignore the Qur'anic verse:

**"(Unto) everyone — these as well as those — We extend (freely) the bounties of your Lord; the bounties of your Lord are not such as to be denied (to anyone). See then how We give preference to some over others. But surely, the**

**Hereafter is greater in rank and greater in excellence." (17: 20-21)**

On the other hand, a people easily acquiring wealth could be a trial event. Said our Lord:

**"Maybe your Lord will destroy your enemy and grant you succession in the land to see how you will conduct yourselves." (7: 129).**

And,

**"And, if We make him (man) taste mercy from Us after an affliction had touched him, he will surely say, 'This is my due. I do not believe the Hour will be struck. And, if I am brought back to my Lord, then, surely, there (too) shall be good for me with Him.'" (41: 50)**

Such endowment then demands behaviours and attitudes in complete contrast to that of those who were destroyed. So, what happens when the revolutionary change required is not manifested?

Yet, despite the heedlessness and warnings, a sudden withdrawal of the wealth may not happen. It may happen gradually. The work-shy attitude and indolence could be a sign of Allah's displeasure for the attitudes adopted after granting the material blessings. We observe that these attitudes and dollar-friendly style of life have left the Ummah – by and large – dependent on others. This, in turn – with the Arab world as the foremost example – has reduced it, in areas that matter most, to practically tribute-paying disguised vassal states.

Banking on the moral failings pointed out above, their enemies have, in some countries, been trying to send them out of the mainstream. Strangely, however, the Muslims in such countries perceive the intentions against them but respond by adopting the attitude of “couldn't care less.” This kind of response deepens the malaise.

A consequence few realize is that – considering their large numbers – such response ill bodes for the nation too, as it does to the Muslims. It will hurt both the aggressor and the aggressed against because it is one boat that carries both. If the boat sinks, both sink. If the boat goes round and round, without much progress, both go

round and round.

Thus, we see that the consequences are serious. Some thinkers and cool analyzers are predicting that – if the things keep going the way they are going – the state could become a destabilizing factor in the region in about 30-40 years, if not earlier. Already it seems like the “turn around” stage is behind.

If the Ummah lives for God, then, it wouldn't care how it is treated by others. Enough if Allah is pleased with them. But the Ummah has no direction, no goals, and no ambitions. And Allah does not approve of the characteristics connected with lethargy. He approves of dynamism. The Prophet has said, “A strong believer is better, and more appreciated by Allah, than a weak believer.” (Hadith shortened). A strong believer is an asset to his family, his society, and his nation. A weak believer is a burden on his family, his society, and his nation.

Those nations who have advanced during the last 100 years, had understood this as an important factor in achieving progress: go hand-in-hand with the entire population. While those who did not understand, or refused to understand, are struggling to rise, struggling and





**The Prophet Mohammed (S) said...**

**"Do not turn away a poor man.. even if all you have is half of a date. If you love the poor and bring them near to you.. God will bring you near Him on the Day of Resurrection."**

**Al Tirmidhi, Hadith 1376**

struggling. So they will remain – with promises by the politician that the ‘turn around’ is at the corner. Fanatics do not understand what normal minds do. Throughout history, they have been the cause of many a state’s ultimate failures.

A large chunk of a nation’s population, if deliberately left behind, and the large chunk agreeing to the project-plan, will gradually pull the nation down. Their weight will be too much for the rest to carry along. (In some countries, the working population is supplying free food and some amenities, to a quarter of its population in slums, who produce nothing).

The problem unattended, unrests, rebellions, revolutions follow. After some struggle to control and restore order, police and army melt away, refusing to fire and fire and fire on their own people. Consequently, a lot of people lose

the life. The rich, the politicians, the land-owners, and the elites are hunted down and slaughtered in cold blood by the millions who had been condemned to inhuman life for decades. It takes several years for the tempers of the oppressed to cool down, get over their madness, and a new cycle starts.

Anyone who hasn’t learned this from past human history is either uneducated, or is a fanatic, or both. Muslims have a special responsibility. If they decide to remain in the slums or lead slum-like lives in inner cities, then, that is not a choice approved by their Lord. `Ali ibn Abi Talib is reported to have said: “Kaada al faqru an yakuna kufuran” meaning, extreme poverty is close to being Kufur, and we know that features like lethargy and its sisters lead to extreme poverty.

# In God We Trust: The Last Wish

*Why Choosing Charity when Asking for a Second Chance at Life*

*Shakeel Humayun*

**R**unning out of time. That is when the human mind prioritizes tasks and cuts the fluff. When a person realizes his biological clock is at its last ticks, what does he prioritize? Out of the many activities of life, God singles out just one that some will choose:

**My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be among the righteous. (Quran 63:10)**

People on the Day of Judgment will ask for a second chance at life. After living a life of evil deeds, they will witness the benefit of living a life according to God's revelation. The doers of good will be radiant with joy, looking forward to entering Paradise. The doers of evil will be fearful, anxious for a way to avoid entering the Hellfire.

**If you could but see when the criminals are hanging their heads before their Lord, [saying], 'Our Lord, we have seen and heard, so return us [to the world]; we will work righteousness. Indeed, we are [now] certain.' (Quran 32:12)**

But these people will realize the benefit of good deeds after death.

The person requesting more time at the pangs of death did not have to witness the Day of Judgment to understand the benefit of good

deeds, especially charity. He understood the value of giving charity. His only problem was procrastination. Unfortunately, the inconvenient truth is that a delay is not possible:

**But never will God delay a soul when its time has come. And God is Acquainted with what you do. (Quran 63:11)**

Requesting for time, the person didn't ask for one more visit to his favorite resort. No, nothing from the material world at all. Interestingly, he didn't even ask to make one more prayer (salah) or recite the Quran. The only deed on his mind was an opportunity for giving charity. But why charity? Here are the reasons.

## **1. In God We Trust**

God offered a Trust to His creation. The trust was to be given free-will. As recipients of free-will, creation was to show their trust in God by complying, willingly, with His instructions. The heavens, the earth, and the mountains all refused to accept this Trust. Man, however, accepted to take it on.

**Indeed, we offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they declined to bear it and feared it; but man [undertook to] bear it. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant. (33:72)**



As a result, God sent man guidance on what is beneficial and harmful. However, due to man's finite nature, some of these instructions baffle many. Some opt to reject what they cannot fully grasp. Some refuse to trust – or believe – in God's instructions if they cannot prove its validity in a laboratory. Some even ridicule God's instructions, believing they know better. Anyhow, a few do trust in God and do follow His revelation.

Within the charter of Trust, lies a commandment that is fully built on trust. It is the commandment to give charity (sadaqah):

And spend [in the way of God ] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, "My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be among the righteous." (Quran 63:10)

God promises to replace any charity a person may give with an equal amount in return, and more.

But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] – He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers. (Quran 34:39)

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of God is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And God multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing. (Quran 2:261)

Sadaqah (charity) is an Arabic word that comes from the verb "to trust": sa-da-qa. If God guarantees to replace charity with more, what then holds a person back from giving charity? The weakness of trust in God.

## 2. Opportunity Cost

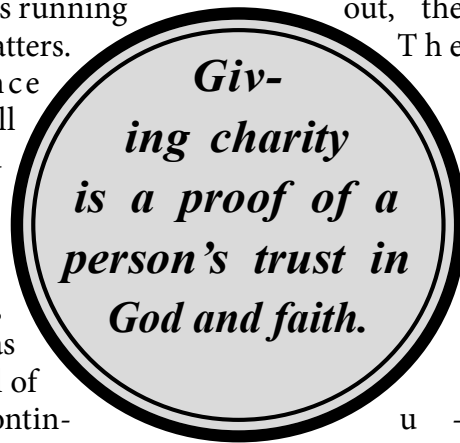
As death approaches, the person comes to the hard realization that all his wealth will remain behind without him. After a few moments, he will not be able to cut a single check. What will

happen to all his wealth? Will it be squandered, used for evil, or for good? That is unknown.

The opportunity cost of not spending his wealth in charity, up to one-third as legally allowed by the shariah, is very high. He is guaranteed rewards for his charity, but there's no guarantee what will happen when others spend the wealth.

## 3. Continuity Potential

At his deathbed, a person could request an extension for life to make an additional prayer (salah), but the Quran mentions charity instead. When time is running out, the choice matters. The performance of salah will be recorded as a good deed– and it ends there. Charity, however, has the potential of becoming continuous (jariah).



If a person gives charity to a mosque, for an example, he will receive the reward for every person that comes to pray, recite Quran, teach, etc. as long as the mosque exists. While the performance of salah ends at a person's taslim (salutation to end the prayer), the rewards of the continuous charity continue even after his death. That is a wise choice and investment. Prophet Muhammad said:

### **Giving charity is a proof. (Muslim)**

It is a proof of a person's trust in God and faith. People risk making business investments in the thousands of dollars hoping for a profitable return. These investments do not come with guarantees. However, the returns for spending in charity are guaranteed. The only question is, do we trust in God?

# THE IMPERATIVE OF SEEKING KNOWLEDGE

**Khalid Baig**

“**A**nd the believers should not all go out to fight. Of every troop of them, a party only should go forth, that they (who are left behind) may gain sound knowledge in religion, and that they may warn their folk when they return to them, so that they may guard themselves against evil.”  
(Al-Tauba 9:122)



According to the renowned Quranic scholar, Abu Abd-Allah Al-Qurtubi (d. 671 A.H.) this verse lays the foundation of Islam's education policy. The goal of that education is described as seeking 'tafaqquh fid deen', translated above (by Pickthall) as sound knowledge in religion. It can also be translated as sound understanding of religion. The choice of fiqh (understanding) over ilm (knowledge) here points out that what is required is not mere literacy, but insight. And it has to be of such a level that it can be a force

against evil. A purely intellectual exercise bereft of that practical utility does not qualify.

This message itself is very important but what is even more important is the context in which this verse was revealed. For it happened after the Tabuk expedition, which saw the largest mobilization of the Islamic State under the leadership of Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) himself. To face up to one of the two super powers of that time, every able bodied Muslim was called upon to join the jihad. Despite the most adverse circumstances, everyone responded, except ten Companions who were

reprimanded and later forgiven. Sura Al-Taubah contains a detailed account of all this, emphasizing the importance of responding to the call for jihad when that call is made by a competent authority. Then this verse explains that jihad should not be the only preoccupation of the Islamic State. Seeking knowledge is so important that even during the prosecution of a war, a segment of the society must be engaged in it.

Most of us are familiar with the hadith, reported by Anas (Allah be pleased with him): "To acquire knowledge is the duty of every Muslim man and woman." What kind of knowledge does this hadith refer to? The same as is meant in this hadith: "The scholars are heirs of the Prophets. The Prophets do not leave behind an inheritance of gold and silver; they leave behind the inheritance of knowledge. Whoever acquired knowledge, acquired a lot of wealth."

Does it mean that every individual Muslim must also become a religious scholar? Not at all. What is required of an individual is only sufficient knowledge that can enable him or her to carry out their religious obligations. As a minimum every Muslim must learn the articles of faith and what they really mean. He or she must also learn the laws and teachings of Shariah as they relate to their life. The basic rule is that accompanying every religious duty is another duty to learn about the requirements of that duty. Thus it is our duty to learn Shariah teachings about Salat, Fasting, Hajj, and Zakat. For a businessman, it is a religious duty to learn Islam's teachings about economics and halal and haram transactions. For a person getting ready to get married, it is a religious duty to learn Islamic teachings about marriage and spousal rights and responsibilities. And so on.

Similarly, some spiritual knowledge is part of this required Islamic course, says Mufti Muhammad Shafi, the late grand Mufti of Pakistan. One must learn about the nature and forms of arrogance so it could be avoided. Similarly rage, jealousy, and malice. One must learn about de-

sirable spiritual qualities like humbleness, patience, and gratitude. There is a surprising depth of knowledge about such subjects in Islamic literature. And although they may not seem to be important subjects for serious study, one can recount innumerable cases where Islamic communities have been damaged beyond repair by 'highly educated' people, who were uneducated in these subjects.

Such knowledge would not make us experts. The expert knowledge belongs to the scholars who pursue in depth study of Qur'an, Hadith, exegeses or tafsir, jurisprudence or fiqh, history and myriad other subjects in Islamic sciences. There must be some people in each community who devote their lives to the pursuit of such expertise, and as long as some do, others are relieved of the responsibility. That is why it is called as fard-kifayah or collective responsibility.

The acquisition of skills that may help one earn a living -- the real focus of nearly all education that goes on these days-- falls in the category of mubah or merely permissible. Here one has wide latitude from a religious point of view. One can choose any profession, as long as it does not fall in the category of prohibited activities, and get needed education to earn a living from that profession.

Similarly, one may pursue studies to satisfy one's curiosity. It is obvious that people will differ greatly in their abilities and inclinations in this area, and that is accommodated by the Shariah. It generally does not force or restrict this pursuit.

Of course there is a problem when social or even physical sciences are taught with a secular perspective. In that case social studies, history, or biology all become camouflages for teaching secular philosophy. Islam, of course, cannot permit that. A believer cannot teach that man evolved from apes because Darwin said so and an imported text book presents it as a fact. This is certainly a big problem and it requires a separate discussion.

A bigger problem occurs when the different categories of fard and mubah are confused, leading to a tremendous misbalance. A person obtaining a college degree has fulfilled his duty as required by this hadith. Right?

Not quite.

A person may become the best scientist, engineer, or whatever, but if he has not acquired the basic knowledge about his religious obligations, he simply has not discharged his duty to acquire knowledge. In the eyes of Islam, he remains an uneducated person.

Today we have millions of people in the Mus-

lim world who may have obtained many degrees but they have not learnt how to read the Qur'an or offer the Salat, or even perform wudu. They may have no idea about Islamic teachings about the situations they encounter in their daily life. Home life. Business life. Social life. How many MBAs have learnt Islam's teachings about business and commerce? How many Muslim doctors have learnt the Islamic medical ethics? We are the educated-illiterate class -- the product of colonial education systems. Our 'education' keeps us from acknowledging our ignorance. Do we know?

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***Some of the righteous scholars have said: The most virtuous of deeds is having a clean heart towards others, generosity, & sincere concern for the ummah. Anyone who reached lofty status, did so through this...not through abundant optional fasts & prayers. (Lata'if)***

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*cont'd from page 23*

asked for the books of Abu Hanifa to benefit from them.

Meanwhile, Muhammad Ibnul-Hassan, a student of Abu-Hanifa's, held a session in Iraq to present the approach of Malik.

Once, Imam Abu Hanifa sent to Imam Malik consulting him on an issue before announcing his opinion to the public. Abu Hanifa did not agree about naming a sinful person a disbeliever. Imam Malik agreed, so Abu Hanifa announced it. This did not arise from one meeting only, but there were numerous correspondences which contributed more to their integration.

The Abbassid Caliph Al-Mansour once came to Imam Malik offering him to cancel all other jurisprudential approaches, making Malik's approach prevail, and also writing his book in gold and keeping it inside the Ka'ba.

Imam Malik who once rejected all other approaches and asserted on the opinion of the

people of Madinah told him not to do so because the companions of the Prophet (saws) are spread all over the world. Those were Abu Hanifa's words from their encounter.

Look at the superb manners and morals of differentiating with someone as well as handling the truth.

The first principle indicates that difference is a universal fact that needs to be respected. You have to respect that variation is a part of our existence. The second principle shows that variation complements us; it is an advantage and not a drawback. You have to look at this as an enriching advantage. The third principle is that at the moment of dispute, calm and honest dialogue helps you see the truth from all perspectives. Truth is one, but it has many aspects and paradigms. The fourth and final principle is that at the moment of conflict; never forget the proper manners of dialogue. You must believe in those four principles as the basis of coexistence.

*Source: muwatta.com*

# When Imam Abu Hanifa met Imam Malik

Before Malik and Abu-Hanifa's encounter, Imam Malik used to say, "Beware of the people of opinion." Abu-Hanifa's school was called the "school of opinion." Before their meeting, there was a lot of talk and exchange of letters but they only met during the rituals of the Hajj.

When they finally met, they chose to address three issues which were viewed differently by each party. The first jurisprudential issue was about how to address hypothetical questions; things that had not taken place yet. In Imam Malik's juristic school of thought, we should not imagine situations and ask about things that have not happened, as this distracts people from already existing issues and lead to controversy. Imam Malik brought his evidence from various ayahs and ahadith. He stated the ayah where Allah says what can be translated as, "They ask you concerning the new moons (Literally: crescents)." (2:189). Such questions are meaningless. Allah replies in the ayah, that can be translated as, "Say, "They are fixed times for mankind, and (for) the Pilgrimage." (2:189)

His other evidence was that Umar Ibn



alKhattab cursed the one who asked about situations that have not happened and used to say, "Do not engage us with things that have not happened, keep people busy with the truth instead."

People used to come to Imam Malik and ask him hypothetical questions and he used to get angry and tell them not to ask about things that have not happened yet. Those people were usually from Iraq where Imam Abu-Hanifa was,

who supported this kind of questions.

As for Imam Abu-Hanifa, his approach was based on inventing situations that have not happened. He invented 60, 000 such situations.

In their meeting Imam Malik disapproved Imam Abu Hanifa's view. Abu-Hanifa replied that the circumstances in Iraq are different from Madinah. Iraq is the capital of the Caliphate and everyday there are new things being introduced and they should be prepared, while in Madinah problems are fixed and limited.

Then, he gave an example when he discussed with his students a situation of a woman whose husband traveled and was absent for so long that she thought he was dead and hence she married another man. Suddenly, the man returned. What should be done then? Imam Malik wondered why they would ask about things that have not happened, but Abu-Hanifa said that in Iraq, where soldiers went on conquests, this might occur and they should be ready for such situation. Imam Malik was silent.

Imam Abu-Hanifa reminded him of what the Prophet (saws) said when a man came to him saying, "Imagine if a man comes to take my money, what shall I do?" The Prophet (saws) told him not to give it to him. The man asked again, "Imagine if he fights me?" The Prophet (saws) urged him to fight him too. The man asked, "Imagine if he killed me? The Prophet (saws) said that he would be a martyr. The man asked once more "Imagine if I killed him?" The Prophet (saws) said that the man killed would go to the hell-fire.

Abu-Hanifa said that the Prophet (saws) was asked by about a hypothetical situation four times. When Malik said that this was for a purpose, Abu Hanifa replied, "In Iraq we do it for a purpose too." Then, Al-Layth Ibn-Sa'ad said, "Glory to Allah. By Allah, you are enriching Islam." Imam Malik kept people away from indulging in trivial issues and Imam Abu Hanifa was questioning the future to protect people. That was what the Prophet (saws) did. He for-

bad asking about things that are hypothetical and replied to an important situation that could happen in the future.

Both Imams reached a conclusion of holding on to what they were doing, but to then integrate both approaches for the benefit of Islam.

The four principles previously mentioned certainly to this debate. Their difference of opinion is a natural phenomenon because the minds and environment of Iraq are unlike those of Madinah. Their difference of opinion resulted in an environment that enriched Islam. The calm and honest dialogue helped in presenting the various opinions and truths from all aspects. Meanwhile, the manner of conversation between both men was civilized, polite and outstanding.

The issues they discussed were not petty. Nowadays some people leave the obligatory issues related to the unity of the Muslims and dispute over trivial matters. Both Imams differed on core issues, but there was love and understanding between them.

The second issue which the imams disagreed on was that of the consensus. In Islam, in order to reach a solution for any question is look it up in the Qur'an. If you did not find it, to look it up in ahadith, if not; then apply the rule of the consensus of the scholars.

Imam Malik believed that the consensus should be that agreed by the people of Madinah only because the companions of the Prophet (saws) lived and died there and so did his nine wives who saw all his actions and witnessed all his deeds. They are about 10,000 companions.

A man came to Imam Malik and asked him about disputed matters. The Imam said, "Search for the opinion of the people of Madinah. When you find it, be sure that it is the truth." He said to another one, "You can find knowledge in Madinah, as Qur'an was not revealed in Euphrates (meaning Iraq and Abu Hanifa's school)."

Imam Abu Hanifa was 13 years older than Imam Malik, yet he respected him. He replied,

“Malik, the conquests during the reign of Umar Ibn alKhattab distributed the Companions all over the world. You say that in Madinah there are 10,000 companions. In the last battle of the Prophet (saws) there were about 120,000 companions, so where are the rest? You cannot deny that Umar Ibn alKhattab sent the companions particularly to teach people in different countries.”

He started to numerate some companions such as Muadh Ibn Jabal whom the Prophet (saws) described to be the most knowledgeable and sent him to Yemen. Also, he mentioned Abdullah Ibn-Mas’ud whose way of reciting Qur’an was recommended by the Prophet (SAWS) for the people. He added the names of Abu-Dhar, Zubair Ibn al-Awwam, and Sa’ad Ibn-Abi-Waqqas in Egypt, Hudhayfa Ibn-Yaman, Abdullah Ibn-Mas’ud, and Ali Ibn-Abu-Talib in Iraq, Abu-Ubayda Ibnul-Jaraah, Bilal and Abul-Dardaa’ in Syria, etc.

Then, he narrated the hadith of the Prophet (saws) where he said that his companions are like the stars any of which can guide people. Imam Abu-Hanifa went on to say that the brilliance of Umar Ibn alKhattab is what led him to send the companions all over world and kept some in Madinah to keep a balance. Thus, Imam Abu-Hanifa showed Imam Malik that the distribution of the companions was for the sake of the integration of the ummah.

Al-Layth Ibn-Sa’ad said, “By Allah, this also, is an integration of the ummah.”

When you look from another angle you can see another aspect of the truth. This is the virtue of difference; to help you see the truth from all its aspects. If all people think alike, they will see only one side of the truth, but Allah whose name is the Truth wants you to see all the sides.

The third issue tackled in the meeting was about the school of opinion and hadith. Imam Abu-Hanifa expands the explanation of the ahadith to the extent that he concluded 100 lessons from one hadith. Imam Malik saw that it as an

exaggeration and overloading the hadith which the Prophet (SAWS) did not want.

Imam Abu-Hanifa replied that in Iraq, Greek, Roman and Persian philosophies and sciences are invading them, so he needs to keep people fixed on the path of the Prophet (saws). That is why he was searching in ahadith to counter the new ideas. On the other hand in Madinah, there are none but the companions and their followers, so there is no need for expansion in elaborating ahadith. Al-Layth Ibn-Sa’ad said, “This too is integration” Both Imams complement one another in keeping Islam.

If you discuss your problems calmly and honestly with your wife or husband, many problems will be solved. Similarly, if the politicians in Iraq, Darfur, and Lebanon, the religious scholars and the scientists do the same, many problems will be solved.

After the two Imams left the meeting, Al-Layth Ibn-Sa’ad, an Egyptian Imam whose juristic school of thought was just as superior as the other four Imams but had no students to spread it, was keen on knowing the impression of both sides.

He went to Imam Malik and asked him. Malik wiped his sweat and said, “By Allah, Abu-Hanifa made me sweat. By Allah, he is a true jurist. I’ve never seen a man debating like that. By Allah, if he told you that this iron rod is made out of gold, he would convince you.”

Al-Layth went to Imam Abu-Hanifa who said, “I debated hundreds of men, but have never seen a man accept the truth as fast as him.”

We need to teach the coming generations these manners. This is important for everyone; journalists, politicians, people working in the media, scholars, husbands and wives, parents and children.

What happened after that? First, Imam Abu-Hanifa sent his son Hammaad to Madinah to learn the jurisprudential approach of Malik and his book ‘Al-Muwatta’. Then, Imam Malik

*cont’d on page 20*

# Nothing in the universe is more important than Allah

Dr Shadee El-Masry

In every era, in every society, there's a common phrase people use to praise a person. In ours it's the generic expression, "good person." So...what exactly is a 'good person'? If someone saved four lives, but it was then discovered that he killed his mother and father in cold blood with no regrets, would they be considered good? He saved four and took two, so the net is a positive two. But if you said no, he can't be good for killing his parents, then you've just implied that 'goodness' has some hierarchy. So this "good person" thing is starting to be less generic and more specific.

There's a hierarchy of deeds. Not all deeds are equal. If the categorically superior deed was skipped, then it doesn't matter how many lesser deeds you did. The hierarchy must be observed. Which brings us to our point: who or what determines this hierarchy?

I was a bit surprised—even though I shouldn't have been—when last week, people (Muslims) were saying explicitly that they believed that what people did for humanity was more important than if they believed in Allah or disbelieved in Him. One said, "I don't think God is going to judge people by their religion, but by what they do for people."

I thought to myself...? People are more important than Allah? What's going on here? Mus-

lims are saying this? Do we have a religion here or not?

Then I realized, you know what, I think we've just been assuming one of the most important parts of aqidah and not explicitly stating it or teaching it (which is why I highly encourage people follow Sh Hamzah Wald Maqbul's Tahawiyya lectures and soon-to-be book).

Tawhid is not just that there's only one god, but that nothing in the universe is more important than Allah.

That's the line: NOTHING IN THE UNIVERSE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN ALLAH.

People are not more important than Allah. Humanity at large is not either. I think this is the central pillar that's been subtly displaced by the nuances of Humanism, which are embedded in all facets of modern life from literature to governance to Super Bowl commercials.

In the Renaissance, European intellectuals in Florence and Venice had lost faith in the Church, but they needed something to fill the void in place of God: they chose us, humans. (In a sense, it actually confirms our belief that the most noble creation is the human being, so in the absence of belief in the Divine, they went with humans.) Humanism thus became a grand celebration of the human being. In the next gen-

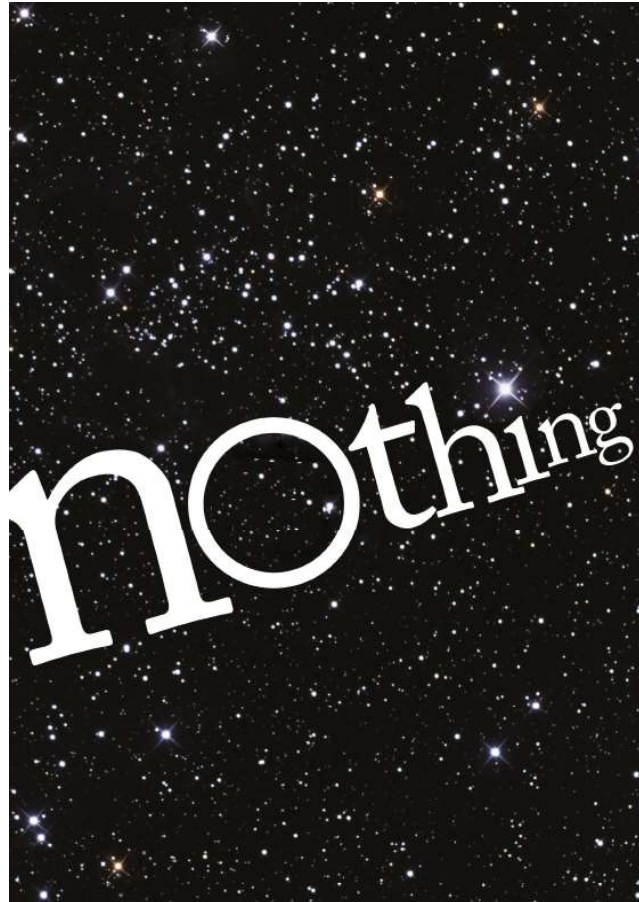


eration, a synthesis was developed: Christian Humanisms.

Muslims have a type of Muslim Humanists. It began as 'Islamic Modernism,' in which Islam is viewed as a tool to make our life in this world easier and better. The Muslim went from someone whose purpose is to serve Allah, to someone who uses Islam to serve his or her own lot in life. The true vision of Islam is lost on these folks. The sign of Islamic Modernism is that if you're around them you get this odd feeling: "Wow, we're doing a lot of work, but what about Allah in all this??" There seems to be no mention of Him at any turn! Du'a becomes just a ceremonious thing, not a real tool. The modernist agenda is solely filled with issues that affect Muslim worldly life. Discussing what Allah asked us to do—doctrine, law, spirituality—is redundant and mostly ignored. If knowledge is approached at all, it is interrogated and tortured until it divulges the fatwa of our choice. Contentions about the Sunnah and orthodoxy—the right way to practice Islam (everything worth doing has a right way to do it and a wrong way)—are viewed as sectarian, and worse, something impossible to know.

And then there's Islamic Modernism's illegitimate child: Reformism. The sign of Reformism is the visible, palpable, unbridled \*anger\* that is expressed when a regular Muslim merely utters a certain hot button ruling or belief. If you're lucky, they'll just roll their eyes and call you 'haram police.' Otherwise, they will come after you and make sure to smother you until you learn never to talk like that again. And if you want to know what the hot button issues are, just go onto HuffPost, watch MSNBC, Rachel Maddow, that whole liberal crowd. Anything that would upset them upsets a Reformist Muslim.

Now back to Humanism. As it pervaded all the social sciences, this subtle prioritization of humanity—us—over God takes root little by little, until we reach a cross-roads that shows us how far we've really gone: a person is lauded



solely for what they do for humanity, and oh by the way, the fact that he insults God is just an unfortunate wrinkle in the bigger picture. The Muslim who thinks like this has to be woken up, 'Excuse me, your scales are upside down.' If the most important thing in the universe is Allah, then the best deed is belief in him, and the worst deed is rejecting Him.

From what I've been seeing recently, Priority #1 amongst us is to revive and re-cement this very simple but utterly core foundational conviction: NOTHING IN THE UNIVERSE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN ALLAH. This is what's at the top of the list. After that gets cemented, then we can talk about everything else.

In the first write up of this, I ended it with this joke: Now if this idea catches on, we may end up one day with a conference by Muslims

*Cont'd on page 12*

# Masculine, Faminine and a Cycle of Oppression

Muhammad Ghilan

What does it mean to champion women's rights and identify oneself as a feminist? Though it appears simple and easy to answer, this question is anything but that. This

is especially so for a practicing believer. A quick Google search on this topic will generate results like "This is how Islam led the world with women's rights"; "Women's Rights in Islam"; "Rights Islam Gave Women Before Western Feminism Did"; "How Islam Confirms Women's Rights"; and "Women's Liberation through Islam". There is even a whole Wikipedia page titled "Islamic Feminism". The general aim behind this discourse, despite its diversity, inconsistencies, and



conflicts within its advocates on what it means to be a Muslim feminist and what Muslim women want, is to respond to Western critiques against what is deemed to be an oppressive religion towards women. The problem, however, is in the inherent impossibility of answering the proverbial question, "When did you stop beating your wife?" in a way that would not only satisfy the critics without tacitly incriminating oneself, but also while being consistent with Islamic values and cosmology within a paradigm that rejects

the Unseen.

We live in a postmodernist age of feelings. Like feminism, postmodernism is hard to give a definition to, which ironically tells you something about this philosophy and what it stands for. If you review the literature in search for a unifying theme, you will find the diversity of thought that falls under the category of “postmodernism” quite overwhelming. That is until you realize what underlies these differences is a single unifying belief – that there is no such thing as absolute Truth. What you have are opinions and points of view. No belief can claim to have authoritative validity in relation to others. What you have are perspectives, and they are all equivalent in their claim to authority, and it becomes a matter of who is in a position of power to determine what is authoritative. It is from this that we get the concept of structures of thought determining the narratives they draw their powers from, and Michel Foucault’s archeological method which negates logic and grammar as the ultimate arbiters of what language really means.

Let us take Islam as an example to see how this plays itself out. A traditional way of approaching scholarly texts assumes that the authority of rulings and interpretations put forth depends on factors related to the educational pedigrees and peer testimonials of scholars who evaluate these texts using academic criteria. It is focused on the logical structure and coherence of the text and conclusions of the author based on scriptural evidence to support it where needed. In a way, scholarly work is nothing but commentary on Scripture. Historical and cultural contexts are heeded to the extent that they inform our understanding of

what these scholars were writing about, but they do not determine their truth-value. In this view, historical development and cultural differences informed, rather than determined, how legal theory and rulings developed and progressed over time. This does not mean that it has always worked that way in every instance. One can point to cases where this idealistic approach was not followed. However, it is how Islam has been and continues to be traditionally engaged with in a general sense.

A postmodernist approach on the other hand does not even allow for logical structure to rise to the level where it can be seriously considered. It is simply ignored. Instead, the text is approached with the assumption of it being a necessary product of social and political power dynamics, the type of which to be most concerned about in the case of those interested in women’s issues is patriarchy. In this view, rulings that differ between men and women in Islam are not a product of interpretation of Revelation, but a product of men deciding what Revelation says in a way that would privilege

them. They are inherently oppressive. Therefore, having elevated the subjective experience and rejected objective measures in the postmodernist approach, being men automatically excludes male scholars from being able to issue rulings that could be considered authoritative for women. This is not about women scholars being able to reveal dimensions of meaning that men could miss due to differences in their respective experiences in the world (the same could also be said about men being able to reveal dimensions of meaning missed by women). Rather, the postmodernist approach negates anything men would say about Scrip-

*Rather than being sought for the sake of increasing one’s knowledge and level of erudition in order to mold oneself into a more refined human being, the goal of education has been re-defined in terms of its practical utility as defined by capitalist ends.*

tural meaning because they cannot transcend their structure of thought. Remember, logic and grammar do not have a role to play here. One can even say that logic and grammar are part of the patriarchy, and they too must be dismantled. It is hard to see what is the point of having Scripture if one adopts such an approach to it. At most, it might serve an aesthetic function.

This points out a more fundamental problem with elevating the subjective over the objective in the approach to the Islamic tradition. Pushed to its logical end, assuming that differences in rulings between men and women are products of patriarchy and as a consequence oppressive to women entails accusing the Beloved (saws), being a man, to have engaged in such behavior. The only way to avoid this charge and square the circle (or circle the square – we would not want to privilege one shape over the other after all) where these postmodernist concepts of patriarchy and feminism are projected onto the past, is to either reject narrations as inauthentic, and if that is not tenable to historicize them so as to restrict their authority to a certain time and place. In this case another problem arises as Islam is by implication no longer a complete religion valid for every time and every place. That is the conundrum of using postmodernist concepts in approaching the Islamic tradition. Somehow one has to eat their cake and have it too.

The role of the intellect for a postmodernist is not to find Truth. They have already discarded such notions as fiction. What is called “Truth” is nothing more than a product of relationships that give rise to social institutions and concepts, which serve those who stand to benefit from

them. There are no objective Truths here. Rather, there are accidents of circumstances. This begs the question about the role of the intellect and rationality. Foucault tells us that the intellect should be employed to problematize conditions under which we live. As he put it in *The Use of Pleasure*, thinking is “the endeavour to know how and to what extent it might be possible to think differently, instead of legitimizing what is already known.” [emphasis mine]

In the modern age, if you are not engaged in an intellectual exercise of deconstruction with the intent of destruction, you are not intelligent. Hence, we get the view of a believer in God, the Messengers, and tradition, as one who is irrational and under the iron grip of blind faith. The practice of authentically transmitting the Quran, the Sunnah of the Beloved (saws), and what Muslim scholars who were deemed authoritative over time have penned down is seen as the activity of a stagnant community that refuses to progress. In the case of Muslim women, for example, deciding to follow the hijab or niqab rulings is not a rational act rooted in reflection over what the Quran, the Hadith, and scholars interpreting these sources have said, followed by personal conviction, but an act of a woman brainwashed into defending her own subjugation and oppression.

Though calling for equality between men and women appears noble at first glance, as it resonates with our innate sense of justice, the concept of the equality being advocated needs to be parsed out to ensure that it does not entail a call for oppression. We must get beyond the captivating power of such words upon our sensibilities so as to not commit an injustice in our attempts to reach justice. When we speak

*In  
such a world  
that lacks harmony be-  
tween the masculine and the  
feminine, and where the origin  
of each essence is negated, men  
and women become nothing more  
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trasting reproductive systems  
and slightly different bio-  
physiologies.*

of equality between men and women, at least two questions must be answered: what type of equality are we talking about? and what is the standard that we will use to confirm such equality has been achieved? To give a weightlifting analogy, every healthy person can go to the gym and train to become fit and strong. But how much volume and weight can be handled differs between people depending on how long and how often they train and their nutrition, factors which are under their control to a large degree, and on their biophysical makeup, which is limited by their genetics.

In weightlifting competitions, competitors are divided by weight and sex. The reason for this should be obvious. If you want to compare relative strengths, you need to establish weight classes where competitors are comparable. You also need to divide them by sex because differences in average skeletal structures and bone densities, result in different biomechanics that automatically, on the whole, advantage males over females in physical performance. Unless we are looking for pure inconsequential entertainment, it would be unjust to set up a competition where none of these categories exist. Even our desire for amusement has a limit here, or otherwise we would accept to watch a boxing match between a man and a woman, a sight I can safely assume no sane person would advocate for.

If we mean by equality that men and women are the same, the Qur'an asserts otherwise. Before the birth of the Virgin Mary her mother, believing that she would give birth to a boy, had vowed to devote what she had in her womb to God's service in the temple:

**“When the wife of Imran said: My Lord! Surely, I vow to You what is in my womb, to be devoted (to Your service); accept therefore from me, surely You are the Hearing, the Knowing. So, when she brought forth, she said: My Lord! Surely, I have brought it forth a female — and God knew best what she brought forth—and the male**

**is not like the female, and I have named her Maryam, and I commend her and her offspring into Your protection from the accursed Satan.”**  
[3:35-36]

Unless equality is equivocated with sameness, declaring that “the male is not like the female” should not be controversial. Indeed, on face value most people would acknowledge and even accept this. However, actions speak louder than words. When the current discourse on gender equality and social engineering propositions to establish it are examined closely, declaring that men and women are inherently different is blasphemous in a world where education and public platforms are dominated by liberalism for an ideology and philosophical naturalism for a faith. In fact, this Quranic declaration is nonsensical within such a paradigm, because the male and the female are not merely matters of biology in Islamic cosmology. What we call “man” and “woman” are material manifestations of the created duality referred to in the Quran where God says, “And that He created the pair, the male and the female” [53:45], which act as vehicles in this world to manifest the duality of Divine Attributes, those of Majesty coming forth predominantly in the masculine form, and those of Beauty dominating in the feminine form. It is balance between the masculine and feminine that should be sought to create harmony, not sameness.

Sameness implies oneness, and oneness is God's alone. Sameness implies self-sufficiency, and self-sufficiency is God's alone. Sameness implies completeness, and completeness is God's alone. Creation on the other hand is the beautiful and diverse spectrum of deficient multiplicities that arise out of the initial paired duality. Each side of the paired duality is deficient in ways that render it unstable and in a state of constant anxiety until its deficiencies are complemented by the other side. That is the indication given in the verses recited at Muslim

weddings:

**“And from among His signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves so that you may find tranquility in them, and He put between you love and compassion; most surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect.” [30:21]**

The first act of oppression towards men and women is to disconnect them from their metaphysical sources and treat them as nothing but physical bodies. The second act of oppression comes in the assumption that they can be compared with the impossible goal of achieving sameness. Moreover, given the irrational belief in philosophical naturalism that dominates popular intellectual discourses, and the power dynamics emphasized by postmodernists, there is no real independent standard that can be applied to make a comparison, in the true sense of the word, between men and women possible. Instead, what we have is an evaluation of women's achievements based on masculine metrics.

If we reflect on why this comparison is even made in the first place, we will come to realize that it stems from another problem. Ever since the Industrial Revolution and what is referred to as the Age of Enlightenment, human beings have been stripped of their essence and reduced to being nothing more than primates who by sheer evolutionary randomness happen to gain this curious ability to communicate through more complex language than bonobos and chimps in a way that allows us to share knowledge and give rise to culture and civilization. It is all an accident and although leading intellectuals of this age talk about human dignity and human rights, in reality it is all sophist rhetoric without a transcendent basis to justify it or even the practice to confirm it. The value of the human being in this paradigm is not because of something essential to them that we call “humanity”. Indeed, there is no such thing. The real value of a human being in a materialist culture focused on production and consumption is in what an

individual can contribute to that bottom line.

Men were the initial victims of this because they were the ones who went out to work. It was not until men accepted to go kill each other in modern warfare at a mass scale in service of old demons who mobilized them in the name of nationalism that factories needed to tap into the female population to keep factories running. In addition, industries were created to advance this new value system where women with children went to work to make money that they then gave to a stranger to take care of their children. The historian Stuart Ewen highlights this in his book *Captains of Consciousness* where he writes:

“The advancement of consumerism touched on the intimacies of social life, as industry worked to forge a new definition of the family which would mesh with the gears of the productive machine. By the 1920s family life had become contested ground – eroded by increasing divorce, its authorities under fire from the women's movement; people felt that what had once sustained an active social life was becoming ineffectual and often painful. The demarcation of what the family should be through advertising represented an attempt at recomposition – redefining family roles so as to bring them in tune with the rhythms of the age.”

Two of the casualties to this age of production and consumerism were education and motherhood. Rather than being sought for the sake of increasing one's knowledge and level of erudition in order to mold oneself into a more refined human being, the goal of education has been redefined in terms of its practical utility as defined by capitalist ends. Furthermore, given that the value of the human being in the modern age is based on what they can produce in service of the greater capitalist machine, anything that detracts from realizing one's full productive potential is perceived as an obstacle. Thus, motherhood is not an honored state of being but a hindrance to a woman's career progress and potential earnings that she could pump back

into the machine as a consumer. This is readily palpable in reactions a woman might receive if she declares she decided to quit her career in order for her to focus on raising the children. This is especially so for women who attained higher levels of education and chose to spend their days looking after their children instead of contributing to some company's bottom line. They are made to feel guilty for having "wasted" their years and their degrees. Think about what is being really said here for a second: children benefiting from having a highly educated mother dedicate her time and knowledge to them are a "waste of her education".

The sanctity of motherhood in Islam cannot be overstated. How do you think Prophets and Messengers came into this world? God could have sent angels, but He chose to send men. Moreover, God could have created them without involving the biological sequence of events we are all familiar with, but that was not the case. To come into this world Prophets and Messengers had to enter through the gate of mercy we call the womb, *ar-Ra'him*, which lies within the woman. Not only that, but just in case we got confused and thought men were indispensable in this process, God's Word Jesus Christ peace be upon him was brought as a sign. God does not create in vain and among the lessons to be learned from Christ's birth is the status of motherhood. Women are the gateways of God's mercy and revelation to this world.

The Merciful, *ar-Rahman*, is the predominant Divine Attribute of God, which shares the same root letters in Arabic for the womb. The misguided quest to achieve sameness based on masculine standards established by a consumerist culture that rejects the Unseen does not only desacralize motherhood, it is also an active attempt at closing off the gate of mercy to the world. It places an undue burden on the woman who feels the impulse to claim that status, either through biology or adoption, by making her experience guilt for her feelings, and lays out an

expectation to ignore them in favor for material pursuits that are euphemistically called achievements and are celebrated by a culture that negates her feminine essence. Furthermore, negation of the feminine and evaluation of women's success based on male standards established in the modern age, which are not necessarily rooted in Islam, have led to a transgression of the balance being referred to in the Quran as part of God's creation:

**"And the heaven, He raised it high, and He made the balance. That you may not transgress the balance. And keep up the measure with equity and do not make the balance deficient." [55:7-9]**

As the old Arabic proverb goes, "Everything that goes beyond its limit turns against it." Without a manifestation of the feminine to counterbalance and temper the masculine on the scale as God had placed it in the world, toxic masculinity is the natural consequence. In such a world that lacks harmony between the masculine and the feminine, and where the origin of each essence is negated, men and women become nothing more than physical bodies with contrasting reproductive systems and slightly different biophysiology. What is referred to as toxic masculinity today is a result of ongoing efforts to erase the feminine. Instead of men and women manifesting the Divine Attributes of Majesty and Beauty in harmony, they become animals whose sole purpose is the production, collection, and consumption of material things until the dirt of the Earth consumes their bodies. Before they get buried under that dirt, they try to put their reproductive systems to use to produce more of their kind to keep this terrestrial cycle going. During this time of production and consumption, concepts of masculinity and femininity take dimensions of meaning devoid of their Divine sources, focusing on terrestrial manifestations of dominance for the male in all its forms, and of sexualization for the female in all its uses. That cannot be called being human.

# Get Organised

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Kara Regan

Have you ever noticed piles of shirts, jackets and other assorted items accumulating slowly on your chairs, bed, floors, and closet? Have you seen stacks of untouched mail, bills, and letters sitting on your table for weeks? What about your desk drawers that are filled with anything and everything? What about your car? Your refrigerator? Your bathroom? Have you stepped back to take a look at the disorganization we are capable of creating?

I want to share with you how living in disorganized spaces has a bad effect on our Iman and happiness.

I call these little messes ‘silent destroyers’- they go unnoticed until the affects have already taken place. Personally, I am a very organized person and it has been the utmost important thing to me since I can remember, but, after marriage and having a child, the utmost important things on someone’s list tend to change. I began noticing the piles of clothing stacked on chairs, the toys hidden under the couch, the unopened mail stuffed away in a drawer out of sight. I realized at that moment how I had been feeling down, how the focus in my Salaah decreased, and how my inspiration and energy to

do everyday tasks diminished.

Sakeena (tranquility) is supposed to be in every Muslim’s life, in everything that they do, because peace of mind and peace of heart help us get through our days and focus on our obligatory worship. Living in a world of clutter takes a person’s sakeena away, without them feeling it until it is gone. It can lower the Iman to the point of taking away the khushu’ (reverent awe) in your salaah, your mind aimed at the mess surrounding your place of prayer. How can one be fully happy, satisfied, and productive if they come home to a place chaotic with disorganization? I have always lived off of the saying “a cluttered desk is a cluttered mind” because there is so much truth in it.

Cleanliness in Islam is not only about keeping our hygiene good: it is also about being clean in every aspect in our lives. Allah’s Messenger (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said, “Cleanliness is half of Faith,” so if half of your faith is disorganized and messy, why wouldn’t your Iman decrease with it?

Narrated Abu Malik Al-Harith bin Asim Al-Ash’ari (may Allāh be pleased with him): “Truly, Allah loves those who turn to Him constantly



and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean” [Qur’an: 2:222]. Iman increases with obedience and decreases with disobedience. Have you realized that by living messily, you are living in state that is also a disobedience to Allah (glorified and exalted be He)? No wonder why our Iman gets so low in such circumstances! Take a second and imagine yourself sitting to read Qur’an, or starting Salaah, and you are surrounded by a messy house. Every Muslim should make an effort to keep a clean home to please Allah (glorified and exalted be He) and have a peaceful home environment.

### Steps to Help You Get Organized

- It starts within. You must have the desire to obey Allah (glorified and exalted be He) when he ordered us to be clean. By doing so, you are getting reward (insha Allah), so start with your intention to create a solid foundation that lasts a lifetime, not a week.
- Create a plan of organization with your family to maintain a clean home. Help them understand that it is an act of worship. Teach children to keep their own rooms clean and make them feel it is an accomplishment. This will also instill good character for how they take care of their own homes in the future.
- Create simple solutions. Something such as a coat stand for the living room can go very far. Family members are encouraged to hang their items in one place rather than on chairs and couches.
- Create a nice-smelling environment. Scent has been proven to give people energy and optimism, so I suggest buying a plug-in air freshener or candles to keep the house smelling nice.
- Keep the bathroom wiped down every day. Having nicely stacked towels or a comfortable bathroom mat gives us a peaceful place to do wudu and it clears the mind in preparation for worship.
- Create a special area in the living space designated for worship. Have a prayer mat or two lying neatly or folded. Have all of your tools in that area – Qur’an, Islamic study books, etc. It will give you more khushu’ having an area designated for prayer and worship, and as we know, having strong Iman and heart makes us more productive in everything else.
- I hope you gained benefit from this article and if you did it is purely from the blessing and guidance of Allah (glorified and exalted be He). May Allah facilitate this Ummah, keeping us forever productive, Insha Allah



# The Prophet's Eid Celebrations



Eid means celebration, festival. Eid al-Fitr is the Celebration of Breaking the Fast after Ramadan.

Eid al-Fitr as occasion of holy celebration and thanks giving was originated by the Messenger, may profound peace and blessings of Allah saturate his noble soul. It is observed on the first of the month of Shawwal at the end of the month of Ramadan, during which Muslims undergo a month long period of fasting.

According to Islamic tradition, these festivals were initiated in Madinah after the migration of Prophet Muhammad (saws) from Mecca and nascent Islamic state was born. It is reported that when the Prophet arrived in Madinah, he found people celebrating two specific days in which they used to entertain themselves with recreation and merriment. He asked them about the nature of these festivities at which they replied that these days were occasions of fun and recreation. At this, the Prophet remarked that the Almighty has fixed two days [of festivity] instead of these for you which are better than these: Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha.

Since then both the festivals are celebrated by Muslims or all school of thoughts irrespective of region or race. Eidul Fitr is the festival when Muslims offer special prayers and thank Allah for the successful end of the month of fasting

and prayers. A saying of the Prophet says that the Eidul Fitr is a reward from Almighty Allah (swt) who is pleased with his slaves following their month long fasting.

The holy Prophet (saws) advises the Muslims to celebrate Eid by offering prayer, thanks giving Almighty Allah, and forgiving each other.

Regarding Eid-ul-Fitr, the Messenger (saws) said, "When the month of Ramadaan is over, and the night of Eid-ul-Fitr has arrived, that night is called the Night of Prize. Then, in the early morning of Eid-ul-Fitr Allah will send His angels forth to visit all the towns and cities on the earth below. Once they have made their descent, they will position themselves at the entrances to all the streets and alleys. There, in a voice that is audible to every being created by Allah, apart from the jinn and humankind, they will issue a proclamation saying, "O Community of Muhammad, come forth into the presence of a Noble and Generous Lord, who will grant you gifts in abundance and forgive your terrible sin!"

Then when the believers have emerged and presented themselves at their place of prayer, Allah will say to His angels, "O My angels, what is the recompense of the hired labourer, once he has done his job?" The angels will reply, "Our Lord and our Master, You will pay him his wages

in full!” So Allah will say, “I now call upon you to bear witness, O My angels, that I have conferred My acceptance and My forgiveness as the reward for their fasting and night vigil during the month of Ramadaan.” Allah will then say, “O My servants put your requests to Me now, for this I swear by My Might and My Majesty, you will not ask Me this day, in this gathering of yours for anything connected with your life hereafter, without My granting it to you; nor for anything connected with your life in this lower world, without My attending to your need. By My Might and My Majesty, I will not put you to shame, nor will I expose you to disgrace amongst those who are faithfully committed to observing the laws (of Shariah). Now you may depart, knowing that you have been forgiven. You have won My approval, and I am well pleased with you.” [Ghunyalit Taalibi Tareeqal Haq, Vol. 3]

### **Eid and the Prophet’s Empathy**

It was Eid day, the day of celebration and a day of rejoicing. There was an air of festivity in the streets of Madinah. All the people, both young and old were dressed in their best clothes, especially for this special day of Eid.

As it was time for early morning Eid prayers everyone made their way to an open piece of land on the outskirts of the city. The Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace, arrived and led the prayers. After they had finished they all greeted each other and everyone was walking back home. The children running and playing in excitement, smiling and laughing, without a care in the world.

As the Prophet walked back home, he suddenly became aware of a little boy (Zuhair Bin Saghir) sitting by himself on the side of the path. The little boy was crying and looked very sad. The Prophet of love and mercy bent down and patted him on the shoulders and asked ‘why are you crying?’ ‘Please leave me alone’ sobbed the

little boy. The boy didn’t even see who was talking to him, such was his overwhelming sadness.

The loving Prophet ran his fingers through the boy’s hair and very gently and kindly asked him again why he was crying. This time the boy said, ‘My father was martyred fighting, and now my mother has married again and my stepfather does not want me to live at home any more. Today is Eid and everyone is happy. All the children have new clothes and nice things to eat, but I don’t have any clothes except what I am wearing. I have no food and I don’t even have a place to live.’

The Prophet said to him, ‘I know how you feel, I lost both my mother and father when I was a little boy.’ The boy was surprised to hear that it was an orphan who was comforting him, and when he looked up to his great surprise it was the Prophet Muhammad, the most beloved person in the whole world - and he immediately jumped up to his feet out of love and respect.

The Prophet said to him ‘If I were to become your new father and Ayesha your new mother, and Fatima your new sister, would that make you feel better?’ ‘Oh yes, that would be the best thing in the world!’ The boy started smiling. The Prophet took him home and gave him new clothes and good food on this beautiful day of Eid. The boy indeed had a wonderful Eid that day.

Later on Zuhair Bin Saghir, who was a companion of Prophet said, “I was hungry and thirsty. Messenger of God fed me. I was an orphan, but now, Prophet Muhammad is my father and Hazrat Aisha is my mother. I am no longer an orphan.”

Some one asked the Prophet Muhammad, what actions are most excellent? He replied, To gladden the heart of a human being, to feed the hungry, to help the afflicted, to lighten the sorrow of the sorrowful, and to remove the wrongs of the injured.



# Islam Is Ease

Bukhâri narrated in his book Sahih Al-Bukhâri on the authority of Abû Hurayrah that the Prophet (saws) said:

**Indeed, the Religion is easy. And none tries to overtake it except that it overcomes him. So try to hit the mark and seek to come close and receive glad tidings. And use the early morning, the afternoon, and part of nightfall.**

## Sentence-by-Sentence Translation with Brief Commentary and Explanation

“Inn al-dîn yusr”

### Translation

Indeed, the Religion [of Islam] is an easy [religion]; or, Indeed, the religion [of Islam] is ease.

### Explanation

Ease is such an important part of Allah’s religion that it is as if Islam is ease personified.

Allah, Glorious and Most High, lifted from this ummah the burdens and yokes that were on the communities that came before it, whether those burdens which were placed by Allah as punishment, such as strict eating prohibitions, or burdens that came as a result of human perversion of divine law, such as the obligation to perform pilgrimage in a state of nakedness.

“Wa lan yushâd al-dîn ahadun illa ghalabah”

### Translation

And none seeks to overtake the Religion except that he [himself] is overcome.

### Explanation

This means that no one person pushes himself hard in his worship and other aspects of Religion except that he is unable to continue in that

way and collapses, ending up far worse than someone who does not try to push himself even a little in the Religion. In this statement is also a sign of the prophethood of Muhammad (saws) because the type of people mentioned in this hadîth have appeared.

Without searching for an example from the textbooks, it is probable that the reader can remember such an example from his own personal experiences—and if not in matters of Religion, then in any matter in general. It is not meant by this that a person should not strive to achieve a higher level of worship and the like; rather it is meant that one should not push himself to the point where he burns out, or push himself in something that is voluntary to the point that he is unable to perform an obligation. An example of this is like one who prays all night and then misses the mandatory Fajr prayer.

“Wa saddidû”

### Translation

And try to hit the mark.

### Explanation

When a person is aiming at a target for practice, the mark he tries to hit is centered—neither too much to the right or left, nor too high or low. Similarly, a person who is trying to accomplish a goal should be centered and balanced in how much work he does, neither pushing too hard nor being too lax. And in Religion we should seek balance and avoid extremism, whether in one way or another.

“Wa qâribû”

### Translation

And seek to come close [to what you are aspiring to].

**Explanation**

If you want to do something but are unable, then do not abandon it completely; rather try to come as close to your goal as possible and build yourself up, step-by-step, in a consistent manner.



“**Wa abshirû**”

**Translation**

And receive glad tidings.

**Explanation**

The Prophet (saws) is giving glad tidings of a full reward to those who follow this hadîth because they tried in a balanced way—even if they are unable to reach the completion of what they are seeking in their works. This statement teaches us that when we are trying to do something—even if we are not quite reaching what we want—we should still be motivated, positive, and happy because we are striving as best we can. Allah will reward us based on our sincere efforts even if we fall short. In fact, we are sure to fall short because we are human and perfection is for the Divine!

“**Wasta’înû bil ghadwa wa rowha wa shay’in min al-dulja**”

**Translation**

And use the early morning, the afternoon, and little portion of nightfall.

**Explanation**

This prophetic advice shows how to make best use of the day in order to reach large goals. This statement is also somewhat metaphorical because it is as if the person who is trying to reach a goal is a traveler trying to reach a destination. If the traveler tries to walk all day he will become too tired to continue, but if he paces himself then, over time, he can reach the farthest lands. This is a befitting metaphor because this world is nothing but a journey to the next.

These are also the times of day when the body and mind are most active so it is best to make use of them so as to get the most achieved without having to put in too much time or over-strain yourself. So break up the day and night instead of dealing with it like a nine-to-five workday. Work hard in the early morning, then you can relax in the middle of the day, work again in the afternoon, then stop and work again during a brief portion of the night. And be in tune with the day and night by using the prayers as anchors, because that is what affects how alert or tired a person is, not the numbers that are read on the clock.

# Satan's Deceit, Adam's Slip & the Tree of Immortality

*This read starts with the question: Does it matter how one sins? To answer it, it explores the deeper layers of the story of Adam, Satan and the divine command to not eat from the Tree of Immortality, in order to understand why it is that at the end of the story Adam is bathed in grace, while Satan is utterly disgraced. For at the heart of the saga, we discover the theme of divine love.*

Are all sins equal? No, they are not. Are some sins worse than others? Yes, indeed! Does how you sin make any difference to Allah? This may come as a surprise to some, but yes, how one sins does make a difference to Allah. This last point is taught to us in a gem of a saying from the exemplary scholar and saint, Sufyan ibn Uyaynah, who said:

'Whoever sins due to a desire, have hope for him; while whoever sins out of pride, fear for him. For Adam disobeyed out of a desire, but was forgiven, whereas Iblis disobeyed from pride and so was cursed.'<sup>1</sup>

The reference to the Prophet Adam (as) and to Iblis or Satan, lies at the heart of the human drama. The story is recounted at the start of the Qur'an at 2:30-9, and also at 7:11-25; 17:61-5; 20:115-23 and 38:71-85. In the Adamic story, both Adam and Iblis are subject to a single divine command. For Adam it was: 'O

Adam! Dwell you and your wife in the Garden, and eat as you wish, but do not come near this tree.' [2:19] For Iblis: 'Prostrate yourselves before Adam!' and they all fell prostrate, except Iblis, who was not of those who prostrated. [2:11] In both instances, Allah's order was not followed

through: Adam [and Eve] ate from the tree; Iblis refused to prostrate. One could be forgiven for assuming that both these actors would be recipient to similar consequences for having failed to uphold a divine command? But they were not.

On being asked why he disobeyed the command to prostrate, Iblis replied in this defiant and arrogant tone: 'I am better than him. You created me from fire, while You created him of clay.' [7:12] Being made of subtle fire, Iblis presumed himself to be better than Adam, who was heavy and clay-like in nature. So driven by pride, and exercising his own reasoning

*'Whoever sins due to a desire, have hope for him; while whoever sins out of pride, fear for him. For Adam disobeyed out of a desire, but was forgiven, whereas Iblis disobeyed from pride and so was cursed.'*

in defiance of the Divine Command, Iblis set himself up as a god against Allah and thus was cursed. Yet what Satan, in his hubris, failed to acknowledge was the heavenly, luminous substance called ruh or “spirit” that was insufflated into Adam: ‘So when I have fashioned him and breathed into him of My spirit, then fall down prostrate before him.’ [38:72] In spite of Adam’s opaque, earth-like nature, it is this God-knowing spirit which grants mankind the potential to rise above all other sentient creatures.

As for our father Adam (as) his is a story of love; in terms of what drove him, deprived him and distressed him. We read in the Qur’an: But Satan whispered evil to him, suggesting: ‘O Adam, shall I show you the tree of immortality and a kingdom that never decays?’ [20:120] His eating from the Tree of Immortality was not out of defiance of Allah’s will, rather: We made a pact with Adam before, but he forgot. [20:115] However, some of the scholars hold that his forgetting doesn’t refer to eating from the tree, but to not recalling that Satan is his avowed enemy: ‘O Adam, this [Satan] is an enemy to you and your wife; let him not drive you both from the Garden.’ [20:117] In this reading, it is Adam’s love for Allah and his aching desire to remain in His presence that drives him to eat from the tree.

Let us hear from Ibn ‘Ajibah on this point: ‘Realise that Adam’s eating from the tree was not out of obstinacy or wilful disobedience. It was either due to not recalling the command, so he ate whilst being forgetful; which is what some have said, and is what may be meant in Allah’s saying: but he forgot. [20:115] If, however, he ate whilst remembering the command, he did so because: ‘Your Lord forbade you this tree lest you become angels or become of the immortals.’ [7:20] So his love for Allah and his deep attachment to Him made him to want what would lead him to dwell forever in Allah’s company and abide with Him eternally. Or [he wilfully ate because] he desired to become angelic. For

Adam (as) held the angels to be closer to Allah, so he wished to eat from the tree to be an angel who – as far as he was concerned – were the best [of creation].’<sup>2</sup>

Satan whispered to Adam and Eve, in order to lead them by deceit: And he swore to them: ‘Truly, I am a sincere advisor to you.’ [7:21] Adam, in his innocence, believed him, thinking that no one would ever swear by Allah’s holy Name falsely!<sup>3</sup> So he used Adam’s love for Allah and his yearning to be in His presence as a means to make him eat of the tree. Adam was thus deceived into thinking that if he were to become an angel or an immortal, he too would be able to abide in Allah’s holy presence forever – perpetually adoring, glorifying and worshipping God as the angels do. Hence the lover ate.<sup>4</sup>

Ironically, love deprived him – for a while, at least – of dwelling in Allah’s presence: He said: ‘Go down, both of you, from the Garden.’ [20:123] And: ‘There will be for you on earth a habitation, and a provision for a while.’ [7:24] It



was this very same love that caused him to then weep a thousand tears and be utterly heart-broken and remorseful. For unlike Satan who refused to own his sin, but sought instead to justify it, Adam and Eve acknowledged their slip and were remorseful, repentant and longed for God's acceptance: 'Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If you forgive us not, and have not mercy on us, we shall be among the losers!' [7:23] Ibn al-Qayyim wrote:

'By Allah! Having committed the error, Adam neither profited from his rank: 'Bow down before Adam!' [2:34]; nor from his nobility: He taught Adam the names of all things [2:31]; nor his distinction: 'that which I created with both My hands' [38:75]; and nor his glory: and breathed into him of My spirit. [15:29] Instead, he profited only from his humility: "Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If you forgive us not, and have not mercy on us, we will be among the losers!" [7:23]'<sup>5</sup>

One last point, and it's an important one. When we say that Adam "sinned" – Thus Adam disobeyed his Lord [20:121] – it's not the usual type of sin that is driven by the ego's wilful opposition to Allah. Rather, as the Qur'an says elsewhere, it was an unintentional sin; an inadvertent "slip": But the Devil caused them to slip. [2:36] Both courtesy and creed; adab and 'aqidah, demand that we acknowledge this. Courtesy because when one speaks about God's chosen prophets – the crown of all His creation – one does so in the most respectful and reverent way possible; salawatu'Llahi 'alayhim ajma'in. Not to do so could, in certain cases, amount to disbelief (kufr). As for creed, then this is because the texts of the Qur'an and Hadiths, when taken collectively, teach us that the prophets are ma'sum – "infallible" in the sense of being protected from sin and wilful disobedience. Al-Qurtubi stated: 'The prophets are protected from major sins and the reprehensible minor sins, by consensus.'<sup>6</sup>

Although Adam and Eve are the first hu-

mans to violate a command from God, Satan is the first of all Allah's creation to wilfully disobey Him. His decision to rebel came purely from himself and his pride; no one else lured or persuaded him. Furthermore, his decision to continue to disobey God after his initial defiance ensures that God will not forgive him. In contrast, both Adam and Eve immediately felt remorse and sincerely repented. We could say that while Iblis was driven by pride; Adam's slip, in stark contrast, was driven by love and his longing to be with his Lord. Love is what drove Adam to eat – and there is always some special consideration for Allah's true lovers.

The example of the Prophet Adam (as) remains as valid today as it was then. For having turned to God, Adam did not transmit the curse of an "original sin" to his descendants. Instead, he was received into divine grace and a state of harmony was once again restored between him and his Maker: Then Adam received words from his Lord, and his Lord relented towards him. [2:37] A similar grace awaits all those who sin, but turn to Allah in remorseful repentance, following the Adamic example. The key is in pondering God and His grace, which allows one to become closer to Allah and more devoted to Him. In the Adamic saga, Iblis contemplates only himself: Adam constantly contemplates God and being close to Him.

So here's to contemplating closeness!

1. Cited in al-Dhahabi, *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala* (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Risalah, 1998), 8:461.
2. Ibn 'Ajibah, *Bahr al-Madid fi Tafsir Qur'an al-Majid* (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Tawqifiyyah, n.d.), 4:320, citing Ibn Ata'illah, *Kitab al-Tanwir*.
3. See: Qadi 'Iyad, *al-Shifa' bi Ta'rif Huquq al-Mustafa* (Damascus: Maktabah al-Ghazali, 2000), 692.
4. Cf. Muhammad Idris Kandhalawi, *Ma'arif al-Qur'an* (Sindh: Maktabah 'Uthmaniyyah, 1422H), 3:85-90. I am indebted to Shaykh Jaleel Ahmad Akhoun, hafizahullah, for bringing this point, and this superb Urdu tafsir, to my attention.
5. *Al-Fawa'id* (Makkah: Dar 'Alam al-Fawa'id, 2009), 51-2.
6. *Al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1996), 3:194.



# The Prohibition of Injustice

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Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jeelani (ra)

**Q**servants of Allah, beware of injustice for it results in darkness on the Day of Resurrection. Injustice darkens the heart and the face. Beware of the prayer of supplication of the wronged person. Beware of the weeping of the wronged person and of the burning in his heart. The believer does not die before revenge has been exacted on the person who did him injustice and before he has witnessed his death, the black signs of death covering his door, his children become orphans, the seizure of his property, and the transfer of his authority to someone else. When the believer's behavior becomes controlled by his heart, judgment will often be delivered not against him but in his favor, he will not be humiliated but humiliation will be inflicted [on others] in his favor, he will not have his shares reduced but reduction of the shares [of others] will be made to his advantage, and he will not have the women of his family exposed to publicity, humiliated, or surrendered to the hands of wrongful people.

O people, refrain from engaging in idle gossip, amassing worldly goods, and quarreling over them. You will be punished [at the Resurrection] on account of the worldly goods that you have in your hands if you do not give the dues of the poor and the needy and spend the

rest in obedience to Allah (high is He) and in worshipping Him. Woe to you! You are trustees of this property, so do not you feel a sense of shame that you have neighbors who are poor and starving to death while you have turned away from them? Have you not heard His following words: "And spend of what He made you inherit" (from 57.7)? He has informed you that you have been appointed trustees of the wealth but you have considered it your personal property and engaged in mutiny, rebelling against Him. He has not commanded you to spend all of it on charity but appointed for the poor a specified entitlement which is the obligatory alms, expiatory gifts, and votive offerings. Discharge your obligations to the poor then discharge your obligations to the family and relatives. Comforting with charitable alms, in addition to giving the obligatory alms, is part of the good manners of the believer. The person who does business with Allah (mighty and glorified is He) makes profit. The Most Truthful of Speakers has said in His truthful Book: "And what you spend He replaces it" (from 34.39).

O people, do not do injustice to yourselves and do not do injustice to others. Injustice ruins homes, cuts off lineages, darkens hearts and faces, and decreases sustenance. Do not com-

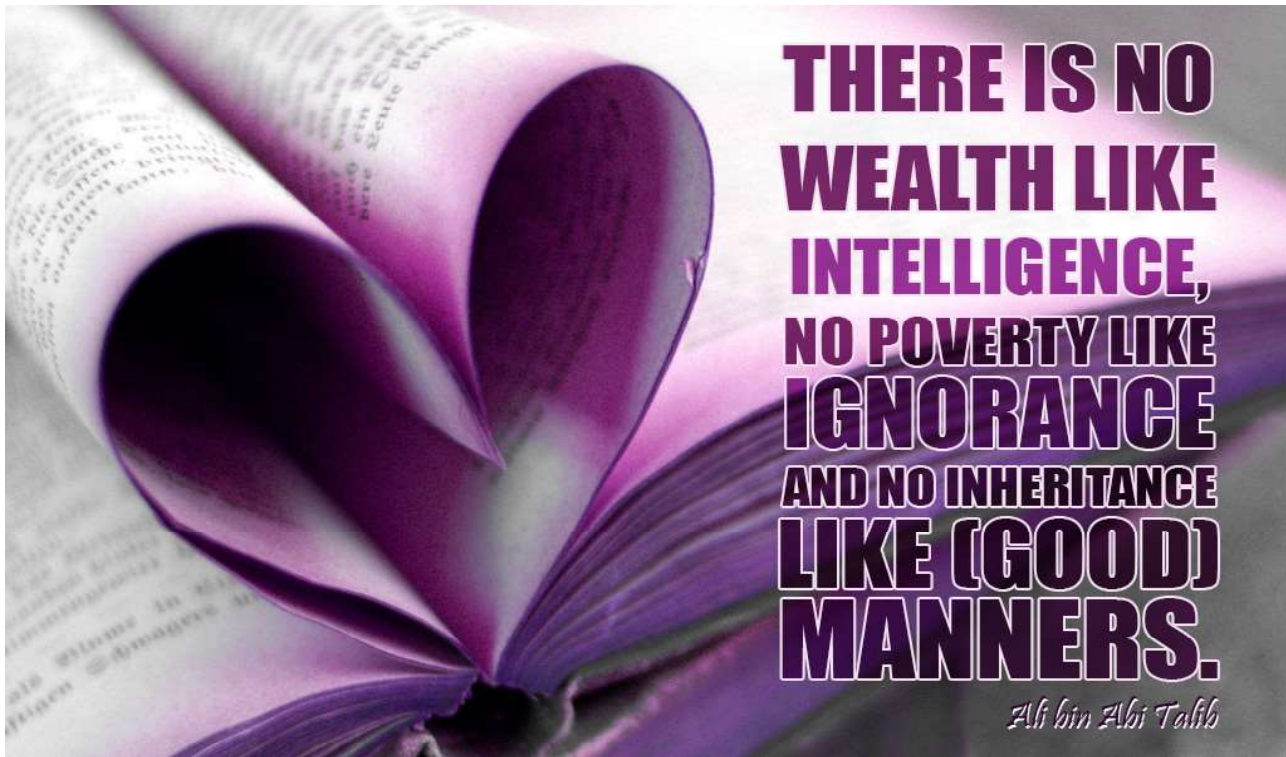
mit injustice for we will have a resurrection. We will certainly be resurrected. It will come soon. We have a Creator who will certainly make us stand before Him, call us to account, interrogate us, and ask us about what we did, be it insignificant or major, including the things that are as tiny as an atom. I am offering you good advice and I do not ask for a fee in return. Do not come close to usury for this amounts to waging war against your Lord and causes the blessing to disappear from your property. Lend a gold coin for one gold coin. If anyone of you is able to give a loan to a poor person and after sometime donate it to him for the sake of Allah, let him do it. He will thus make him happy twice: the first time when he gives him the loan and the second when he turns the loan into a donation. Do this as an act of relying on your Lord (mighty and glorified is He) and having confidence in Him. He compensates, rewards, and gives blessings. Make strenuous efforts not to turn away a beggar. Give him whatever you can. Giving little is better than deprivation. If you have nothing at all to give, do not chide him, but send him away using kind words and never break his heart. This world is a passage that is crossed as night and day alternate. When someone dies, he experiences his own resurrection and comes to know what he has to his credit and what he has against him. Everything has an opposite counterpart: well-being and affliction, good and evil, affluence and poverty, life and death, and honor and humiliation. All of these things are opposites. When one of them arrives, its opposite departs, and in the end there is death.

The Prophet (Allah's prayer and peace be on him) is reported to have said: "Each one of you is a shepherd and responsible for his flock." The father will be held responsible for his children and his wife, and the children and the wife will be held responsible for him. Every master will be held responsible for his slave. Every slave will be held responsible for his master. The teacher

will be held responsible for the pupils. The chief will be held responsible for the people of his village. The king will be held responsible for the people of his kingdom. The Commander of the Believers, who is the shepherd of all people, will be held responsible for his flock. There is no one among you who will not be held individually responsible. Make every effort that you do not do injustice. Make every effort to give the rights to those who are entitled to them. Give gifts to one another. Show mercy to one another. Do not backbite one another. Do not subjugate one another. Help each other, ignore any wrongdoing between yourselves, and do not expose each other's faults. Tolerate your wrongdoing to each other. Leave people under the veil of Allah (mighty and glorified is He). Command what is right and forbid what is wrong, without prying or spying. Denounce any wrongdoing that is apparent but do not concern yourselves with what may be hidden. Do not expose others' faults so that Allah (mighty and glorified is He) will not expose yours. The Prophet (Allah's prayer and peace be on him) loved refraining from exposing people's faults and hated keeping an eye on the shortcomings. Therefore he (Allah's prayer and peace be on him) has said: "Suspend the application of the punishments prescribed by the Law whenever there are doubts." He also said to 'Alī bin Abī Tālib (may Allah be satisfied with him and ennoble his face): "O 'Alī! Give evidence only on something [that is clear] like this," and he pointed to the sun. O young man, the practice of beneficence is to give all that you are required to give and accept only some of what you are entitled to. If you can, donate all that is due to you and add more on top of it. This depends upon the strength of your faith, certitude, and confidence in your Lord (mighty and glorified is He). When you weigh some goods, tip the balance in the customer's favor, for thus Allah will tilt the balance in your favor on the Day of Resurrection. O you who are in charge of weighing, tilt the balance in favor of the per-

son for whom you weigh so that the balance will be titled in your favor [in the hereafter]! It has been reported that the Prophet (Allah's prayer and peace be on him) once borrowed a few silver coins, and when he came to settle the debt he said to the man who weighs: "Weigh and tilt the balance in favor of the creditor." When anyone of you borrows something from another person, he should pay him back something that is better than what he borrowed from him and add some extra, even though this was not stipulated originally. O people, buy from Allah the nearness to Allah (mighty and glorified is He), buy from Allah Allah! As for your allotted worldly shares, they and their dates of arrival have already been determined. They will not increase or decrease whether you seek them or not, whether you worship your Lord or disobey Him, whether you behave properly or badly. Those that are assigned for later dates cannot be made to come earlier and those that are assigned for earlier dates cannot be delayed. Allah is the Provider, whereas everyone else is

provided for. He is the Wealthy One, whereas everyone else is poor. He is the Capable One, whereas everyone else is powerless. He is the One who sets things in motion, the One who causes things to come to a halt, the One who grants authority to someone over another, and the One who puts things at the command of others. All creatures are instruments in His hands. He has assigned a means for everything. Forget the creatures then the means and this world as far as your hearts, private lives, essences, and innermost beings are concerned. Evict from your hearts everything other than Him. Beware of the situation where He would look into your hearts while they quest for other than Him and wish for someone else. Submit and surrender to Him. Believe in the oneness of God and be consistent in this. Be satisfied with the preordained decree and be extinct to the One who preordains. Listen to your Lord (mighty and glorified is He), but be deaf to His creatures. Be deaf and blind as far as the creatures are concerned.



# Bling Bling

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Habib and Sa'ad Quadri

**B**ling Bling Showing Off This is a society that thrives on showing off: showing off how much money a person makes, what clothes a person wears, even showing off who one dates! Take sports stars, actors, actresses and musicians, most live a life of luxury and live that life very publicly. They talk about and display the beautiful things they own. That in itself is a problem. Many of these people will develop a complex in which they feel they have earned these luxuries on their own, and have achieved their fortune by their own hands. As a result, these individuals no longer see that Allah has blessed them and so they are ungrateful to Allah.

As if bragging about and flaunting one's wealth aren't bad enough, what comes after this is jealousy and envy. Enough becomes not enough and you begin to envy those with more than yourself. You may create jealousy in others. Even worse, you begin to belittle those whom you perceive as beneath you. For example, if you purchase a new pair of Nike's, you may tell others to "check this out; it cost so much. I'm the first person to get them. They're limited edition." If Allah has blessed you with money, then it is understandable that you purchased such an expensive item. But, we see this quite a bit among younger teenagers – they begin to point out shoes and say things like, "Look at those shoes, they're from Payless," or "Those Nike (or Converse, etc.)

are out of style; no player wears them," and they begin to mock the student wearing those shoes. When you make people feel bad for what they are wearing or you make them feel embarrassed, then this is a clear indication you are in need of an ego check. Think about the many examples throughout history of people who would show off and boast and how Allah humbled them.

The Qur'an speaks about the Pharaoh, who used to say about himself,

**I am your lord most high. (Qur'an 79:24)**

Speaking about bling, the Pharaoh had the entire world at his feet. The entire known world feared him; the people of his land submitted to his will and would do anything for him. The riches of the country were brought to him and the most amazing and beautiful palaces were constructed for him. The Egyptian pyramids built with such awe-inspiring accuracy are a testament to the high level of command the Pharaoh held. Now imagine the audacity of a man who enjoyed such bounties from Allah, and despite this he proclaimed lordship for himself! His ingratitude to Allah eventually led him to attempt to destroy the din of Allah and the prophet of that time, Musa (as). The Pharaoh was blinded by the arrogance he had attained and practically thought himself invincible enough to ride his army through the parted Red Sea. It was during this act of con-

tempt that Allah showed the Pharaoh the error of his ways by causing the Red Sea to collapse and drown him with his army. If this was not enough, Allah said to him,

**Ah now! And surely you used to sin before and were from the wrongdoers? This day We shall save your body so that you may be a sign to those who come after. (Qur'an 10:91-92)**

Another example that highlights the dangers of arrogance is the story of Qarun in the Qur'an. Qarun was from the people of Musa (as). Allah blessed Qarun with an enormous amount of wealth. Such was his wealth that it is mentioned in the Qur'an,

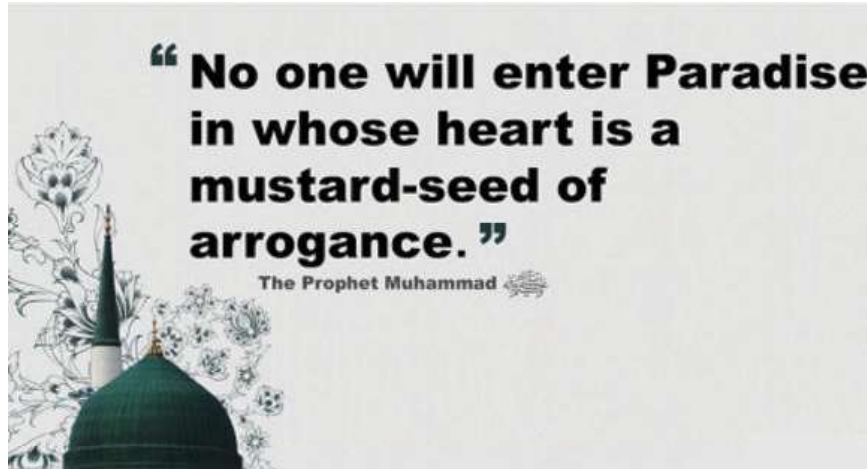
**Verily Qarun was from the people of Musa, but he rebelled against them. And We had bestowed upon him such treasures that their very keys were heavy for a group of strong men. (28:76)**

Imagine how great the wealth of an individual must be that the keys to his wealth were so big and heavy that it took a group of strong men to carry them. The people of his community used to see his wealth and wish they possessed what he possessed. Wise individuals warned him to be grateful to Allah and not hoard his wealth; rather, they suggested he use it to grow closer to Allah and seek the reward of the hereafter. Qarun did not heed their warnings and was arrogant. As a result of his arrogance,

**Then We caused the Earth to swallow up him and His house. (Qur'an 28:18)**

What is most surprising is that those who envied the wealth that he bragged about said, after seeing his end, that:

**Verily it is Allah Who enlarges the provision or**



**restricts it for any of His servants He pleases! Had it not been that Allah was gracious to us, He could have caused the earth to swallow us up! Ah! Those who reject Allah will assuredly never prosper. (Qur'an 28:82)**

The people of Musa (as) saw the result of a person who was given gifts from Allah and, rather than being grateful, claimed such bounties for himself and boasted to others of having earned it himself. As a result, Allah took him from this Earth by having it swallow him whole. Allah reminds us beautifully of the self-deception that arrogance involves:

**And do not walk arrogantly upon the Earth. Surely you cannot tear the Earth [apart] and you will never be taller than the mountains. (Qur'an 17:37)**

Showing off isn't restricted only to displaying our wealth. People often show off skills they have been blessed with. A new phenomenon in sport is showing off and boasting. Previously in basketball or football, when someone made a great play the crowd would go wild, pump their fists, give high fives, and scream out loudly. Now, ordinary basketball has been slowly transformed into street ball or And-1 basketball. The name of the game is no longer only to score points but is to do tricks that not only embarrass the player, but truly humiliate him. The object of sport is

now to “break someone’s ankles,” and then point out that you did it. Talking nonsense and making the other individual look foolish is accepted and promoted. In football, scoring a touchdown almost necessitates doing a dance to incite anger from the opposing team. Players have become more concerned with statistics than winning games. What professionals are doing has slowly trickled down to the youth. We, as Muslims, need to be careful we keep humble when doing anything, including playing sport because too much talking nonsense and showing off may result in Allah Himself humbling us.

Another example, which is more subtle, is our human tendency to want to gain acceptance and respect from others by revealing our intelligence or skills in a less obvious way. For example, people may find faults in the speakers or scholars, merely to sound smart to others around them. It is one thing to criticize a speech through opinions, saying things like the speaker could have been more passionate and engaging or provided more knowledge or evidence. However, if we feel we could have given a better speech instead and think of running the speaker down, then a problem arises. Although the act of seeking knowledge may have started with a good motive, Shaytan will sneak in and encourage us to tell others that we could have done a better job. The problem is not one of sharing knowledge with others, for to continue discussion of the lecture topic can be extremely beneficial. It is rather when a person wants to be on the center stage, in the spotlight, in front of thousands of people that the problem of *riya’* (or showing off) arises.

This tendency also arises when a person acquires some knowledge about Islam or any other topic and begins conversations in order to appear intelligent to others – this obviously constitutes showing off. Another example is if a lecturer makes a small mistake and a person rushes to correct the lecturer primarily for the sake of attracting attention. You should always ask yourself, “Would I be equally satisfied if someone

else corrects the speaker or does it have to be me who corrects him?” It’s a good sign if someone else can correct the speaker and you don’t have a problem with that. But if you feel compelled to correct the speaker, particularly in front of others, then you should be concerned to check your intentions for Shaytan is sneaky. This is not to say that if you see something wrong that you do not offer a correction, but be careful you are not picking on things that are not matters of Islamic law and ethical teaching, as in that case your criticism may merely be a means of appearing better than the person you’re criticizing.

There was an incident that involved the two grandsons of the Prophet (saws), Hasan and Husayn, and an elderly man. One time, Hasan and Husayn saw an old man who was not making his wudu’ properly. The two brothers decided they would approach the old man to correct him. However, when they approached him, they said they were discussing who made the better wudu’ and that they wanted him to judge between them. They both performed wudu’ in front of him and then the old man turned to them, smiled, and said that they both did wudu’ better than him. The two boys neither mocked the old man nor tried to prove they were better at performing wudu’ even though they were younger than him. Rather, they created a situation that allowed the man to be taught without embarrassing him. The old man recognized this and was very grateful.

Another problem with showing off is our desire to be famous or popular. It’s not wrong to be sociable or to have friends, of course, but when we like being well-known we have to be careful that we don’t become preoccupied with the desire to be closer to people instead of getting closer to Allah. We pretend to possess qualities that make people respect and think highly of us, and we try to conceal the flaws in our character instead of trying to cure them. Remember the price of fame. As the saying goes, “don’t sell your soul to the devil,” for the sake of popularity and fame.

## Appeal

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