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RADIANT REALITY

Published from Srinagar, June 2015, Volume 16, Issue 06.

BE LIKE THE
flower
THAT GIVES ITS
FRAGRANCE
TO EVEN THE
HAND THAT
CRUSHES IT

(Sayyidna Ali ibn Abi Talib (RA))

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RADIANT REALITY

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EDITORIAL

All thanks for Almighty, the most Merciful and Exalted

Faith in the Hereafter: A Revolutionary Belief

The belief in the Hereafter, among Islamic doctrines, is the one whose role in history has been what is nowadays described as revolutionary, for it began with transmuting the morals and manners of the followers of the Holy Qur'an, and gradually gave them a place of distinction and eminence even in the political history of mankind. The reason is obvious. Consider the case of those who believe that life in the physical world is the only life, its joys the only joys and its pains the only pains, whose only goal is to seek the pleasures of the senses and the fulfilment of physical or emotional needs, and who stubbornly refuse to believe in the life of the Hereafter, in the Day of Judgement and the assessment of everyone's deeds, and in the requital of the deeds in the other world. When such people find the distinction between truth and falsehood, between the permissible and the forbidden, interfering with the hunt for the gratification of their desires, such differentiations naturally become intolerable to them.

Now, who or what can effectively prevent them from committing crimes? The penal laws made by the state or by any other human authority can never serve either as real deterrents to crime or as agents of moral reform. Habitual criminals soon grow used to the penalties. A man, milder or gentler of temperament or just timid, may agree to forego the satisfaction

of his desires for fear of punishment, but he would do so only to the extent that he is in danger of being caught. But in his privacy where the laws of the state cannot encroach upon his freedom of action, who can force him to renounce his pleasures and accept the yoke of restraints? It is the belief in the Hereafter and the fear of Allah, and that alone, which can bring man's private behaviour in line with his public behaviour, and establish a harmony between the inner state and the outer. For the God-fearing man knows for certain that even in the secrecy of a well-guarded and sealed room and in the darkness of night somebody is watching him, and somebody is writing down the smallest thing he does. Herein lies the secret of the clean and pure society which arose in the early days of Islam when the mere sight of a Muslim, of his manners and morals, was enough to make non-believers literally fall in love with Islam. For true Faith in the Hereafter, certitude must follow Oral Affirmation.

Before we proceed, we may point out that in speaking of faith in the hereafter as one of the qualities of the God-fearing, the Holy Qur'an does not use the word *yu'minun* (believe) but the word *yuqinun* (have complete certitude), for the opposite of belief is denial, and that of certitude is doubt and hesitation. Thus, we find a subtle suggestion here that in order to attain

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Question Answer

Question.

We have a canteen at our work place that sells fresh fruits as well as alcohol. Will it be okay for us as Muslims to purchase the fresh fruits from the canteen?

Answer.

If there is no contamination of the fruits and alcohol at the canteen, then it will be permissible to purchase the fruits from the canteen. However, if there is a fear of contamination, then abstention is advised.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Can I purchase items on Gumtree or OLX classifieds or is it necessary for me to physically see the item before I purchase it online?

Answer.

To physically see an item before purchasing, whether online or offline, is not a requirement for the validity of a transaction. Hence, such a transaction is valid.

Note: We assume that the other requirements are present, for e.g. the seller having ownership and possession of the item at the time of the sale.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

I have been married for the last twenty-five years now and I have had

many issues in my marriage. The character and approach of my husband towards me has totally changed in the last five years. Since then, my husband has not been intimate with me. Does this have any effect on my marriage?

Answer.

The mere separation of husband and wife or the lack of intimacy in a marriage for any period of time does not affect the validity or subsistence of a marriage in any way. Hence, your marriage remains valid and intact. (Shaami)

However we advise you to resolve the issues in your marriage as soon as possible. Marriage counselling may be beneficial.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Is a Talaq via sms, whatsapp, etc. valid?

Answer.

A Talaq (divorce) issued verbally or in writing is valid. (Shaami)

Accordingly, a Talaq (divorce) via sms, whatsapp etc. is also valid as it is considered to be a written Talaq (divorce).

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Is there any significance for a wom-

an passing away in her menses?

Answer.

A woman who passes away during her menses is no different than a woman who passes away when she is not in her menses. We have not come across any virtue or significance for a woman who passes away during her menses.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

What is the status of a levirate marriage in Islam?

Answer.

A levirate marriage is a type of marriage in which the brother of a deceased man is obliged to marry his brother's widow, and the widow is obliged to marry her deceased husband's brother.

The concept of a levirate marriage is not permissible in Islam. A person cannot be forced to marry another in Islam. Allah mentions in the Quran:

“O you who believe, it is not lawful for you to inherit women by compulsion.” (Nisaa’)

A person may marry his brother's widow by mutual consent.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

What is the ruling on broadcasting messages on whatsapp, bbm, twitter etc.?

Answer.

There is no compulsion to broadcast or forward messages on whatsapp, bbm, etc.. If you are satisfied that the message is genuine or authentic, then you may forward it as forwarding beneficial information is praiseworthy.

If you are uncertain of the authenticity of a message, then you should refrain from

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broadcasting it. The Hadith cautions us, “It is sufficient for a person to be a liar when he states everything he hears.” (Muslim)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Do we have to reply to or keep silent whilst a recorded Azaan is playing on an alarm clock, cell phone, Ipad, computer or Radio station?

Answer.

It is not necessary to reply to the recorded Azaan of a Muazzin on an alarm clock etc. or keep silent during its duration, as it is not a live Azaan of a Muazzin but a recorded Azaan. (Muheet)

The recorded Azaans of Muazzins on various technological devices serves as a remainder for Salaah. If one keeps silent during its duration, then this is an expression of ones honour and reverence to the name and remembrance of Allah which is praiseworthy.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Is Wudhu and Ghusal with contact lenses valid?

Answer.

The washing of the eyeball is not a requirement in Wudhu and Ghusal. Accordingly, the Wudhu and Ghusl performed with contact lenses is valid. (Tahtaawi)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Is fortune telling allowed in Islam? Are we allowed to seek guidance from fortune-tellers?

Answer.

Fortune telling is a major sin and is

totally Haraam in Islam. It is prohibited to seek guidance from fortune-tellers.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

My brother gifted his flat to me in his lifetime. I was also staying in the flat. I only transferred the flat onto my name after my brother's demise. Does the flat belong to me or does it form part of his estate?

Answer.

If

- (a) your brother gifted his flat to you,
 - (b) you accepted such a gift,
 - (c) you had complete control over the entire flat,
 - (d) you were solely responsible in respect of all liabilities related to the flat, and
 - (e) you were given the free will to do with the flat as you wished,
- then you are considered the owner of the flat. (Shaami)

Accordingly, the flat did not form part of your brother's estate. The fact that the formal transfer of the flat onto your name only took place after your brother's demise will not affect your ownership of the flat.

We strongly advise that in future such matters be written down and witnessed so as not to create confusion and disputes.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

My question is regarding an application on mobile phone which is called pact. It is basically an application which motivates and helps you to exercise regularly, stay healthy and log your daily food. We have a choice to decide how many

days we want to exercise, how many fruits and vegetables we have to eat daily and how many days we will track our food intake and we can make a commitment for a week to achieving those fitness goals with the app. And if you keep your goals.

The pact rewards you an average of .10 cents per activity...so depending upon your activities you may earn 1-6 dollars a week. And if you couldn't achieve your goals they deduct for each missed activity which is really motivating to work out and eat healthy as you don't want to lose money. But the app allows you to let them know if you had a problem or a medical condition which didn't allow you to achieve your goals. So they don't charge such cases.

Question.

Is it permissible to use this app?

Answer.

Pact is a smartphone application that assists its users to meet their fitness goals by ensuring that they complete their exercises and workouts along with a two-fold commitment. If the user successfully accomplishes a certain "pact" (goal), he/she will be given a monetary reward. On the other hand, if the user fails to meet his/her goal, a monetary fine will be deducted from his/her account.

For example, a user must set a goal in advance to accomplish (gym visits, etc.) for the upcoming week and agree to a fine of their choice (\$5-\$50, the default is \$5) for every number of goals they fail to complete. At the end of the week, those that succeed in carrying out their "pact" will receive a certain amount of money ranging

from approximately 30 cents to \$5 per week as a reward for their commitment of days and completion of fitness goals.

This set of money is from the pool of money from those users who failed to accomplish their "pact". Furthermore, the user may withdraw his/her monetary reward once they have earned \$10.

The structure of the smartphone application "Pact" contains elements of qimār (gambling) which is prohibited in Sharī'ah. Qimār is an act in which there lies a possibility for each of the parties to gain or lose.

Therefore, it is impermissible to use this specific smartphone application.

M. Fahad Abdul Wahab

Question.

I would like to know more about what our Prophet Mohammed PBUH sunnah foods were...from which vegetables, fruits, meats, drinks, etc.

Answer.

Below is a listing of some foods that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is reported to have eaten or recommended to others.

A more comprehensive list along with further details is mentioned in the 1st volume of Shamail-e-Kubra (written in Urdu) by Mufti Muhammad Irshad Ahmad Qasimi from which the following list was compiled. An English translation of the above is titled: The Sublime Conduct of Nabi (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) – Volume MEAT:

Camel, chicken, rabbit, antelope, mountain goat, fish, partridge and hubara (this is a bird but there is difference of

opinion regarding what type of bird it is. Some have defined it as quail, others as a type of goose, and yet others have described it as a brownish bird that flies very fast).

As for beef, there is no conclusive evidence states that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) ate beef.

However, it is proven that he (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) did slaughter a cow and beef was placed on his' (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) tablecloth as stated by Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanvi (ra) in Bawadir un Nawadir, pg. 356.

VEGETABLES:

Pumpkin, beetroot, taro (shahmah al-ard - this is a common vegetable in India and Pakistan known alternatively as arvi or arbi), cucumber with salt, and cooked onions.

FRUIT:

Dates (either by themselves or in combination with another food or drink such as: water, milk, butter, bread, cucumber, muskmelon or watermelon).

Kabath (fruit of the arak tree). This is the miswak tree. Allamah Ayni (may Allah have mercy on him) states that this was in the initial days of Islam when poverty was rife. He (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) did not eat it after the Muslims become affluent.

Other fruits that have been reported as being eaten by Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) include: grapes, raisins, mulberry, quince and pomegranate.

Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) also recommended consuming olive oil and once he (Sallallahu Alaihi

Wasallam) was brought Jummar (palm-pith of a date tree).

DRINKS:

Among the drinks that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is reported to have consumed are: Water, honey water (honey mixed in water), milk, milk and water (this mixing is allowed for personal consumption and water is mixed because in hot climates it serves to cool the milk).

Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) also drank nabidh (raisins or dry dates soaked in water until the water becomes sweet – but no so long that it ferments). When made in the morning it was consumed in the evening and when made in the evening it was consumed in the morning.

GENERAL FOODS & DISHES:

Sweetmeats (halwah), honey, Harisah (made from meat and pounded wheat – resembles haleem, the popular stew), Hays (a dessert made of dates, paneer (fresh cheese) and clarified butter – sometimes flour is used instead of cheese), Khazirah (meat cooked in water to which flour or bran is added), Khabis (a dessert made of dates, wheat and clarified butter), Sawiq (a mush/porridge made of barley or wheat), Dashishah (a dish made of meat or dates that are mixed with wheat and cooked) [ii], Tharid (a dish where pieces of bread are soaked in meat and cooked with gravy), Pumpkin with Tharid, cheese, vinegar, barley-flour bread, and wheat-flour bread.

Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has also recommended Talbinah (a dish made of barley flour or with bran with honey optional), saying “Talbinah

soothes the heart of the sick person, and it takes away some of the grief.”

M. Sohail ibn Arif

Question

I was given some money as fees to pass on to the fees collector of a madrasah. The people had entrusted me with it. Whilst it was with me, I was at a shop once and realised at the till that I had left my money at home and only had this fees. With the niyyat to put it back later I opened the envelope and used some money. At the time I thought it was okay But later when I thought about it, it didn't feel right. I feel bad about this and I feel like I did khiyaanat. Am I sinful and is my shopping haraam- I have replaced the money. I know I will never do this again Inshaa-Allah and I have done tawbah. Do I have to tell the madrasah about this incident or the person? Either way I feel like I will be disclosing a fault of mine and bringing shame upon myself. I am really embarrassed by what I have done and have done tawbah and will do more too inshaa-Allah. Please tell me if my shopping is haraam and whether I have to inform them? And if this is really khiyaanat because I did intend to replace it?

Answer

The money given to you was a trust. By opening the envelope and using it elsewhere, you did not honor the trust and indeed committed an act of khiyanah. In such situations, it is necessary for one to compensate the owner of the money and make abundant tawbah for committing such a deed. Since you replaced the money, it will not be necessary to inform the madrasah and your shopping will be halal.

In the future, you should make sure to fear Allah, honor such trusts, and exercise precaution in such matters.

M. Bilal Mohammad

Question.

I had my period. Is it permissible for me, after the period ends, to put on the clothes that I was wearing during my period or must I purify them again?.

Answer.

There is nothing wrong with a woman whose period has ended putting on the clothes that she was wearing whilst menstruating, so long as they are still clean and pure and none of the menstrual blood got on them.

But if some of the menstrual blood got onto the clothes, then the place where it is must be washed before praying in them. A woman came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and said: Menstrual blood may get onto the clothes of any one of us; what should she do with it? He said: "She should scratch it, then rub it with water, then wash it, then pray in it." (Bukhaari and Muslim).

So the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) enjoined purifying the clothes before praying in them.

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Question.

What are the things that make faith decrease?

Answer.

The things that make faith decrease are as follows:

1. Ignorance of the names and

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attributes of Allaah makes a decrease in faith inevitable, because if a man is lacking in knowledge of the names and attributes of Allaah, he will be lacking in faith.

2. Neglecting to think about the signs of Allaah in the universe and the signs of sharee'ah (i.e., verses of the Qur'aan and miracles of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), etc.). This causes a decrease in faith or at the very least it causes it to stagnate and not grow.

3. Committing sins, because sin has a profound effect on the heart and on faith. Hence the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "The adulterer at the time when he is committing adultery is not a believer."

4. Neglecting to do acts of worship, because neglecting to do acts of worship causes a decrease in faith. But if the act of worship is obligatory and a person neglects it with no excuse, then he is to be blamed and deserves punishment. If the act of worship is not obligatory, or it is obligatory but a person does not do it for a valid reason, then he is lacking but is not to be blamed. Hence the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) described women as lacking in reason and in religion, and he explained their lacking in religion as being because of the fact that when they menstruate, they do not pray or fast. But they are not to be blamed for not praying or fasting during their menstruation; rather they are commanded not to do these things at that time. But because they miss out on doing some of the things that men do, they are regarded as lacking in this regard.

Lesson From The Qur'an

“It is He Who created you from a single human self, and made from it its mate, so that he (inclining with love towards his mate) may find rest in her. And so, when he has covered her, she conceives a light burden, and continues to bear it. Then, when she grows heavy (with child), both (feel the need to) turn to God, their Lord, with prayer: “If You indeed grant us a righteous child, we will most certainly be among the thankful.” Then when He grants the couple a righteous child, they begin to associate partners with God in respect of what He has granted them. Infinitely is He exalted above their association of partners with Him and whatever they associate with Him as partners.” (Al-A’rāf 7:189–190)

It is a fact that although they do not do so as clearly as polytheists do, people of faith can also commit the sin of “associating partners with God.” As mentioned in the verse under discussion, excessive love of child is one of the different ways of “associating partners with God.” Today, instead of considering our children as God’s trust to and gifts or bounties on us, we think and behave as if we were the true owners of our children and grandchildren. Moreover, we can sometimes neglect our prescribed Prayers for the sake of them. It is as if our love for them was greater than our love of God. While we must consider them as trust to us and love them in the name of God and for His sake, we are attached to them so deeply without thinking of God that we are probably involved in implicit association of partners with God Almighty. Therefore, we must

behave according to the principle, “There cannot be two genuine loves in a heart,” and have a firm stand against association of partners with God. I admit that it is easy to say, but it is extremely difficult to put it into practice. Even so, we should strive to purify ourselves of “associating partners with God” and keep distant from the cases which include even a slight sign of it. Added to these efforts, the following prayer of God’s Messenger may be considered as a prescription: “My God! I take refuge in You from being involved in any kind of associating partners with You knowingly, and I ask for Your forgiveness for the things that I do unknowingly.”

Love for children can be approached from another perspective: Human beings may not be accountable for their uncontrollable emotions. However, they are charged with balancing their natu-

ral feelings with religious principles and attitudes. For instance, people may feel the desire of over-eating and drinking, or they may desire an aristocratic lifestyle. Even becoming so passionate, they may behave without thinking of the end. Human beings are created stingy, hasty, and addicted to their desires. In other words, these characteristics exist in human nature. In addition, other contrasting characteristics such as vengeance, hatred, and enmity as well as love, affection, and humanity exist in human nature as well. These two kinds of feelings and tendencies are two different hallways leading to goodness and evil. Therefore, human beings should close the doors to the evil in their nature and control their evil thoughts and passions through religious thoughts and feelings so that they are able to attain the perfection for which they are created in accordance with their endowed capacity or potential to attain it. This is called "attaining the second nature" in religious terminology. In other words, human beings can direct their nature—which is potentially capable of being the lowest of the low—towards having a towering character (or a second nature) with all the good characteristics and thus have closer relationship with God.

To turn to the topic of love of children, this, too, exists in human nature. Parents cannot look after and bring up their children without this love; the result of such is that countries and humanity cannot progress. Indeed, there are many rebellious children around us, yet their parents still take care of them. If there was not this natural love and affection in parents'

hearts, the streets would be full of abandoned people. However, this natural love and affection, like other feelings, need to be amended with love of God, so that righteousness may be attained. Unless life is lived according to the principles laid by God and in connection with Him, deviation is inevitable. Because of this, love of God should develop and be rooted in every heart, primarily. This is dependent on practice. If a person says, "O God, I am sacrificing my property and children in Your cause," without feeling it in their heart after spiritual education and experience, this can sometimes be hypocrisy or even a lie. All evil habits should be removed from the soul and all good characteristics should be repeatedly experienced so that Islam may be deeply rooted in our personality and becomes a part of our nature and so that our behavior may become natural. Otherwise, it will be impossible for us to get rid of dual thinking and dual living.

The verse under discussion shifts from Adam in person to the children of Adam (humankind), extending through time as individuals and communities. Being many in one, and having as much meaning and value as all beings, humanity has the potential to move past angels with respect to doing good deeds, on one hand, and to cause even Satan the accursed to regret his existence when it comes to destruction, on the other. Thus, the verse tells about one of the links of the chain of humanity in a style that describes the whole of humanity. When this point is understood, it becomes meaningless to ask which couple or family the verse refers to.

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Lesson From Sahih al-Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

The Book of Tayammum

Chapter 1 : (Without Tarjamatul Baab)

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

It is essential to perform Wudu with water. If water is not available then one is supposed to perform Tayammum in place of Wudu or Gusul and that is why Imam Bukhari (RA) has got the book of Tayammum after that of Wudu and Gusul.

As per Imam Bukhari's habit, he has started this book also with the verse of Qur'an.

Hadith No. 326

Narrated 'Aisha (RA)

(The wife of the Prophet) We set out with Allah's Apostle on one of his journeys till we reached Al-Baida' or Dhatul-Jaish, a necklace of mine was broken (and lost). Allah's Apostle stayed there to search for it, and so did the people along with him. There was no water at that place, so the people went to Abu- Bakr As-Siddiq and said, "Don't you see what 'Aisha has done? She has made Allah's Apostle and the people stay where there is no water and they have no water with them." Abu

Bakr came while Allah's Apostle was sleeping with his head on my thigh, He said, to me: "You have detained Allah's Apostle and the people where there is no water and they have no water with them".

So he admonished me and said what Allah wished him to say and hit me on my flank with his hand. Nothing prevented me from moving (because of pain) but the position of Allah's Apostle on my thigh. Allah's Apostle got up when dawn broke and there was no water. So Allah revealed the Divine Verses of Tayammum. So they all performed Tayammum. Usaid bin Hudair said, "O the family of Abu Bakr! This is not the first blessing of yours." Then the camel on which I was riding was caused to move from its place and the necklace was found beneath it.

Comments

What is Tayammum?

The rubbing of face and hands including forearms after striking both the hands on clean clay with the intention of attaining ritual cleanliness (Tahaarah) at a

time when water is not available or cannot be used for any other reason is called as Tayammum.

For Tayammum, it is necessary to make Niyyah according to all jurists whereas they differ in opinion whether to make intention for performing Wudu is a must or not.

Sayyida Aisha (RA) says that in one of the journeys with Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), the Sahaaba and Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) stopped at a place called Baidha. The night was very dark and it was a place where there was no water. The Sahaaba were told to move ahead as the time of Salaah was near and since there was no water available for ablution. Sayyida Aisha (RA) says that when Sahaaba started moving, she found that her necklace was missing. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) told some Sahaaba to look around for the lost necklace and this delayed the departure of Sahaaba which made them perturbed as the Salaah time was almost near and they had no water for Wudu. The Sahaaba went to Sayyidna Abu Bakr Siddiq (RA) and complained that all this was happening because of his daughter i.e., Sayyida Aisha (RA).

Sayyida Aisha (RA) says that Abu Bakr came to her with full anger and slapped her at the back of her head but she made no movement as Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was sleeping in her lap. It was at this time the verses of Tayammum were revealed to Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and the Sahaaba felt quite relieved. Sayyidna Usaid bin Hudair (RA) told Sayyidna Abu Bakr

(RA) that this Ummah has got many good things because of his (Sayyidna Abu Bakr's) family and that it was not the first one.

Tayammum is a unique feature of this Ummah as it was not bestowed to any earlier Ummah. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said in a Hadith:

"The whole earth has been made as Musjid and ritually clean for me (Taahir)".

Sayyida Aisha (RA) lost her necklace in two separate incidents

There are two incidents wherein it has been reported that Sayyida Aisha (RA) lost her necklace. One incident has been already quoted above and the second incident took place when Sayyida Aisha (RA) went for attending the call of nature and found that she had lost her necklace somewhere. In this incident Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and Sahaaba had left the place where they were staying, but in the incident quoted in the above Hadith, Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) asked the Sahaaba to search for the lost necklace and they did not leave the place till it was found.

Hadith No. 327

Narrated Jabir bin 'Abdullah (RA)

The Prophet said, "I have been given five things which were not given to any one else before me.

1. *Allah made me victorious by awe (by putting fright in my enemies) as far a distance of a month's journey.*
2. *The earth has been made for me (and for my followers) a place for praying and a thing to perform Tayammum, therefore anyone of my followers can pray wherever*

the time of a prayer is due.

3. The booty has been made Halal (lawful) for me yet it was not lawful for anyone else before me.

4. I have been given the right of intercession (on the Day of Resurrection).

5. Every Prophet used to be sent to his nation only but I have been sent to all mankind.

Comments

Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said that he has been given five unique things which were not given to any one else before him.

1. Domineering Influence

Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) says that: *“He has been aided with domineering influence that extends up to the distance of one month’s journey”.*

Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was guarded and helped by Divine forces like angels. Allah says in Qur’an:

“And Allah will protect you from the people”. (5:67)

Anybody, howsoever strong at heart, felt subdued and weak in front of Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and this was because of his spiritual power and domineering personality. This feeling of weakness in the hearts was not only felt by those who were present in front of Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), but by those as well who were at a distance of one month’s journey.

2. Whole land a mosque

“The whole earth has been made as Masjid and ritually clean for me”.

This was another unique excellence of Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi

Wasallam) that the whole earth was decreed a Masjid for him and his Ummah i.e., this Ummah can offer Salaah at any place on the face of earth. The earlier people were supposed to offer Salaah at fixed worship places and not everywhere. The earth has been made ritually clean for Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) means that the Tayammum was bestowed upon this Ummah as an alternative for attaining ritual cleanliness in case water is not available or cannot be used for any reason.

3. Booty

“And the booty has been made lawful and permissible for me”

The third unique thing given to Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was that the war booty was made lawful for him i.e., he was allowed to use it as compared to earlier Ummahs, who were supposed to collect all the booty in an open space and wait for a fire which would come from the skies and burn the whole booty. If it so happened then booty was thought to have been accepted by Allah if not then it was thought that Allah did not accept it and in this case some treason was then suspected.

4. Intercession

“And I have been given (great) intercession”.

On the day of judgment all the people of this Ummah as well as earlier people will come to Rasulallah and request him to intercede before Allah for their salvation. This is known as “Ash-Shafa’atu Kubra” - “Greatest Intercession”. This status will not be given to any other prophet.

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The Sub-Atomic World and Creation

Ali Unal

In 1905, Albert Einstein published his paper "On a Heuristic Point of View Concerning the Production and Transformation of light," which stated explicitly the quantum hypothesis for electromagnetic radiation. Another of his papers, "On the Movement of Small Particles Suspended in Stationary Liquids Required by the Molecular-Kinetic Theory of Heat," developed the theory that led to the establishment of matter's sub-atomic nature.

Following classical Newtonian physics and under the spell of scientific progress, nineteenth-century physicists claimed that they could explain every phenomenon in the universe. At an 1880 meeting held in memory of Leibniz at the Prussian Academy E. Dubois Reymond was a bit humbler:

There have remained seven enigmas in the universe, three of which we are unable to solve yet: The essential nature of matter and force, the essence and origin of movement, and the nature of consciousness. The three of the rest that we can solve although with great difficulties are: The origin of life, the order in the universe and the apparent purpose for it, and the origin of thought and language. As for the seventh, we can say nothing about it. It is the individual free will.

The sub-atomic world threw scientists into confusion. This world and the "quantum cosmology" that it introduces is not an assemblage of concrete things; rather, it is made up of five elements: the electron's mass in the field in which an action occurs (M); the proton's mass (m); the electrical charge carried by these two elements; the energy quanta (h), defined as the amount of energy remaining during the action's occurrence; and light's unchanging speed (c). These five elements, and even the universe itself, can be reduced even further—to action or energy waves traveling through space in tiny packets or quanta. Since the quanta required for an action are unique to it and exist independently of the quanta required for the previous action, the universe's exact state cannot be predicted. If the universe is in t_1 state now, it cannot be predicted that it will be the same in t_2 state. Paul Renteln, an assistant professor of physics at California State University, writes:

Modern physicists live in two different worlds. In one world we can predict the future position and momentum of a particle if we know its present position and momentum. This is the world of classical physics, including the physics described by Ein-

stein's theory of gravity, the general theory of relativity. In the second world it is impossible to predict the exact position and momentum of a particle. This is the probabilistic, sub-atomic world of quantum mechanics. General relativity and quantum mechanics are the two great pillars that form the foundation of 20th-century physics, and yet their precepts assume two different kinds of universe.

The real nature of this sub-atomic world and what happens within it, neither of which can be observed, make it impossible to construct any descriptive theory. In an attempt to propose his theory of quantum gravity to reconcile the two different worlds of classical and quantum physics, Renteln writes the following:

[T]he events take place at a scale far smaller than any realm yet explored by experimental physics. It is only when particles approach to within about 10^{-35} meters that their gravitational interactions have to be described in the same quantum-mechanical terms that we adopt to understand the other forces of nature. This distance is 1024 times smaller than the diameter of an atom—which means that the characteristic scale of quantum gravity bears the same relation to the size of an atom as an atom bears to the size of the solar system. To probe such small distances would require a particle accelerator 10¹⁵ times more powerful than the proposed Superconducting Supercollider.

At the outset of this century, electrons surrounding the nucleus of an atom were thought to orbit the nucleus like planets in a miniature solar system. However, later researches modified that view. The electron is now understood to be more of an energy field cloud fluctuating around a nu-

cleus.

The nucleus itself seemed to be composed of two smaller constituents—protons and neutrons. However, in the 1960s, physicists Murray Gell-Mann and George Zweig confirmed by experiments that protons and neutrons were made up of even more elementary particles, which Gell-Mann called “quarks.” Quarks cannot be seen, not just because they are too small but also because they do not seem to be quite “all there.”

Quarks are better described as swirls of dynamic energy, which means that solid matter is not, at its fundamental level, solid at all. Anything you hold in your hand and which seems solid is really a quivering, shimmering, lacy lattice of energy, pulsating millions of times every second as billions of fundamental particles gyrate and spin in an eternal dance. At its most fundamental level, everything is energy held together by forces of incredible power.

This is not all that makes us unable to predict even the nearest future of the universe. According to Werner Heisenberg's theories, at just the time when we can know either where a particle is or how fast it is travelling, we cannot know both. This is because the very act of measuring the particle alters its behaviour. Measuring the particle's speed changes its position, and measuring its position changes its speed. However, the unpredictability in the sub-atomic world does not change anything in our everyday predictable world. Everything works according to the basic laws of classical Newtonian physics.

Why is this so, and how should we view our world and the events that occur in it?

Scientists who believe in God's Ex-

istence and His creation of the universe suggest that God did not create the universe as a single act and then leave it to operate according to the laws He established. Rather, creation is a continuous act (*creatio continua*). In other words, existence continuously comes from, returns to, and perishes in God in a way that is very similar to the movement of energy or electricity and its illumination of our world through light bulbs. By manifesting all of His Names, God continuously creates, annihilates, and recreates the universe. Such Muslim scholar-saints as Muhiy al-Din ibn al-Arabi and Mawlana Jalal al-Din al-Rumi called these pairs of acts “the continuous cycle of coming into existence and dying.” Due to this cycle’s incredible speed, the universe appears to be uniform and continuous. Rumi likens this to the rapid spinning of a staff that has a light on one of its ends. When spun at a high speed, that light appears to be a circle of light.

Unable to explain the extreme complexity of existence and the events taking place, some scientists assert that everything is in chaos and attribute the universe’s formation to chance. According to them, other universes could have—but did not—formed, and so there is no reason why the universe assumed the form that it now has. As it is impossible for even three or more randomly moving unconscious things to come together by themselves to form the simplest entity, it is highly questionable whether a rational person can accept that the universe’s wonderful order, according to which we can direct our lives, can be explained without attributing it to a supernatural intellect. Morrison writes:

The proverbial penny may turn up heads ten times running and the chance of an eleventh is not expected but is still one in two, but the chance of a run of ten heads is very small. Suppose you have a bag containing one hundred marbles, ninety-nine black and one white. Shake the bag and let out one. The chance that the first marble out is the white one is exactly one in one hundred. Now put the marbles back and start over again. The chance of the white coming out is still one in a hundred, but the chance of the white coming out first twice in succession is one in ten thousand.

Now try a third time, and the chance of the white coming out three times in succession is one hundred times ten thousand or one in a billion. Try another time or two and the figures become astronomical.

The results of chance are as closely bound by law as the fact that two and two make four.

All the nearly exact requirements of life could not be brought about on one planet at one time by chance. The size of the earth, the distance from the sun, the thickness of the earth’s crust, the quantity of water, the amount of carbon dioxide, the volume of nitrogen, the emergence of man and his survival— all point to order out of chaos, to design and purpose, and to the fact that, according to the inexorable laws of mathematics, all these could not occur by chance simultaneously on one planet once in a billion times. It could so occur, but it did not so occur.

Attributing the impossible to chance is a trick of the human mind, an indication of the stubborn resistance that causes it to confuse a theoretical possibility with an

actual feet. For example, it is possible that the Pacific Ocean has now changed into milk, but actually it has not. A building cannot be built on a flowing stream. In the same way, God Almighty spread the veil of rapid movement over the sub-atomic world's unpredictability and made the universe dependent on what we call laws. This is why everything in the outer face of nature obeys the basic laws of classical Newtonian physics. However, the two schools of the Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jama'a argue about whether the universe's continuous existence is due to the existence of established laws, which means that things have perpetual properties, or if God continuously creates the universe and orders each of its components do what He wants it to do at every moment.

Followers of the Maturidi School assert that God established laws for the operation of the universe and the lives of things and beings, and gave things qualities and properties essential to each. For example, fire burns because God gave it the quality of burning. Sometimes and on certain occasions He may temporarily take away these qualities, as in the case of Abraham, who was not burned by the fire after he was thrown into it. We call such events miracles.

Followers of the Ash'ari School, however, maintain that the universe has no perpetual, established existence and reality, and that things have no essential qualities in and of themselves. Thus God creates the universe anew each "moment" and continuously directs it by ordering each thing to do what it must do. For example, fire does not have the essential

quality of burning; rather, fire burns because God orders it to do so. Since He has ordered this event so many times, we think that burning is fire's essential quality.

As we simultaneously accept the "relative" truth of Newtonian and quantum physics, we also can accept the truth of the views held by the Maturidi and Ash'ari schools. As a matter of belief, and as life at the most fundamental (sub-atomic) level of existence points out, God continuously creates, annihilates, recreates, and directs the universe. On the practical level, life becomes impossible if we do not accept or assume the uniform continuity or stability of existence. How can we order our lives if we do not know that the sun will rise tomorrow morning or that we might die one second from now? Both events are theoretically possible, but we can-not order our lives around them.



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5. Messenger to whole mankind

"And I have been sent (as Messenger) towards all mankind".

The earlier prophets were sent towards the particular places and people but Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was sent as the Messenger towards all the people of the whole world for all times to come as he is the last prophet and the seal of prophethood. So anybody who needs salvation has only one door open through which he can attain it and that is the door of the last and final prophet—Hadhrat Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

The Ansar and Us

U. Anjum

The name of Anṣār never fails to evoke undertones of sacrifice, submission, and love of Allah and His Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and warm sentiments of appreciation in our hearts. There is much for us to learn from their lives. Is there something common between the Anṣār of Madinah and us today? I suggest: There is something fundamental. Let us look at the story of the Anṣār and reflect on our commonality.

The Ansar: Allah's Gift to Islam

The Anṣār, literally the supporters, of Madinah, were a gift of Allah to Islam. Their sacrifices were immense and their faith stunning. They believed in Islam as soon as they heard Muṣ'ab ibn 'Umayr recite the words of Allah to them, and finally invited the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) to move to their township.

Poor and war-torn Yathrib, the house of grief, was an apt name for what is now Madinah. But Allah has distinguished its people with hearts that are pure and beautiful, and even today the generous manners of the people of Madinah remind us of their hospitality to the Beloved Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Inviting the Muslims to their land, and giving them protection, was tantamount to declaring war against all the

Arabs, particularly the most influential of them, the Quraysh. The Prophet's loving but so-far non-Muslim uncle, 'Abbās, warned the Madinans: You should know what you are getting yourself into...you better not take my nephew from my protection and then abandon him. The Anṣār, of course, knew this well. Their faith-filled answer was: Even of the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) leads us into the sea, we will follow him. We will not say what the children of Israel said to Mousa: Fight you and your Lord, O Mousa, and we are sitting right here.

Their Sacrifices for Islam

The Anṣār knew how to keep their word. They surpassed any estimations of human sacrifice the world had known by how readily they embraced their penniless refugee brothers—the Muhâjirûn—and shared with them all their wealth and property. When the rebellious tribe of Banu Al-Naḍir was expelled from Madinah without a fight, the Prophet of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) distributed the spoils to the poor Muhâjirûn. The Anṣār submitted to the decision with their characteristic faith.

The sacrifice of the Anṣār and their preference for their immigrant brothers at their own expense won them applause even from the Lord of seven heavens, and

Allah said in Sûrat Al-Ḥashr: But those who before them, had homes (in Madinah) and had adopted the faith, show their affection to those who came to them for refuge, and entertain no desire in their hearts for things given to the (Muhâjirûn), but give them preference over themselves, even though poverty was their own lot. And those saved from the covetousness of their own souls are the ones that achieve (eternal) prosperity. [Sûrat Al-Ḥashr 59:9]

They Passed the Ultimate Test

However, the strongest test of the Anṣâr was yet to come. The conquest of Makkah brought a large number of Mak-kans and other Arab tribes into Islam. Among them were honorable chiefs and influential leaders who likely felt they had lost the battle against Islam even though they had embraced Islam. When the battle of Ḥunayn followed and more spoils of war were secured, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) sought to attract and soften the hearts of these new-Muslims by giving them the majority of the spoils, while some went to the poor Muhâjirûn, but nothing to the Anṣâr.

The Anṣâr were hurt. Did this mean that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was now going to forget them, now that he has regained his own city, and was he going to turn his back to them? Why were they deprived of their share of the spoils? Rumors started to go around. Ḥassân ibn Thâbit, the poet of the Anṣâr, recited lines of poetry that mean: "Go to the Prophet and say you are the best among all human beings. Why should you invite Sulaim tribe to take a share of war

spoils although they are mere Muhâjirûn while you deprived the Anṣâr, who gave shelter, support and help to Muhâjirûn."

We will let Abû Sa'îd Al-Khudri, an Anṣâri, give the account, as reported by Ibn Ishâq: The leader of the Anṣâr, Sa'd ibn 'Ubâdah, went immediately to the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and said: "O Messenger of Allah, this group of the Anṣâr are displeased with what you did with the spoils of war. You have distributed war booty among your people, and have given generous portions to the Arab tribes, but you did not give the Anṣâr anything." The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) asked him, "What is your opinion about it?" Sa'd answered with the same bluntness, "I am but one of my people." The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) asked him to gather the Anṣâr.

The Anṣâr were gathered, and no one else but them was allowed in the meeting. The Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "O Anṣâr, I heard that an incident that happened recently made you feel ill at ease. Now, did I not find you ignorant and guided you to the way of Allah? Did I not find you poor and Allah enriched you of His bounty? Did I not find you enemies and Allah joined your hearts together?"

They answered, "Indeed, Allah and His Prophet are far more generous and better."

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) then said, "Don't you have anything to say, O Anṣâr?" They answered, "There is nothing to be said but that Allah and His Prophet have the grace and bounty."

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) then said, "By Allah, you could have said – and if you did, you would have been truthful and acknowledged – 'we believed in you at a time when all called you a liar. We supported you at a time when you were frustrated. We gave you our money at a time when you were poor and we even sheltered you at a time when you were homeless.' O Anṣâr, are you upset for a thing so trivial and worldly that I gave to some people so as to join their hearts to Islam and left you out of it, believing that your Islam sufficed you? Is it not enough for you that the rest of the people will go home with a sheep or a camel, whereas you will return with the Messenger of Allah? By Allah in whose hands is Muhammad's soul, you return with a better thing than they went home with. If not for the migration, I would rather have been one of the Anṣâr. If the people moved in one way, and the Anṣâr moved the other way, I would choose the way of the Anṣâr. O Allah, do have mercy on the Anṣâr, their children, and their children's children.

By the time the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) concluded his words, their beards were wet with tears, for the words of the beloved Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) filled their hearts with tranquility and enriched their souls. All of them cried out, "It is enough for us to have the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) as our reward!"

This is precisely what is common between the Anṣâr and us: "It is enough for us to have the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) as our reward!" As Muslims, we are oppressed,

suspected and harassed in the world; we have inherited none of the glorious riches or powerful empires of early Islam. We get no booty for being Muslims, no worldly glory, and no advantages. Still, we are to struggle in the path of Allah, sacrifice in His way, trusting that "He never fails His promise," while nothing is on our side... except Allah and His Messenger

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There is some scholarly difference of opinion as to the soundness of such ahaadeeth. There is no saheeh hadeeth concerning the virtue of the night of the fifteenth of Shaaban, especially as it relates to Allah descending to forgive sins. For such hadiths, the isnaads (chain of narrations) are not free of some weakness, and some of them are very weak. Many other scholars have attributed this hadith to be as weak because of the weakness of the chain of narrators.

The scholars have maintained that Allah's descending to the first heaven does not only happen on the night of the fifteenth of Shaaban, rather it is proven in al-Saheehayn and elsewhere that Allah descends to the first heaven every night, in the last third of the night. The night of the fifteenth of Shaaban is included in this general meaning.

Hence, when 'Abd-Allaah ibn al-Mubaarak was asked about the descent of Allah on the night of the fifteenth of Shaaban, he said to the one who asked him: "... The night of the fifteenth?! He descends every night!" (Narrated by Abu 'Uthmaan al-Saabooni in I'tiqaad Ahl al-Sunnah)

Courtesy: iqrasense

Misconceptions and the Month of Shaaban

There are many practices related to the month of Shaaban common amongst Muslims that are not supported by any authentic hadith of the prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). This post summarizes some of those mistakenly held beliefs. Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali said: "Concerning the virtue of the night of the fifteenth of Shaaban there are numerous ahaadeeth, concerning which the scholars differed, but most of them classed those ahadeeth of the prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) as da'eef (weak), and Ibn Hibbaan classed some of them as saheeh. (Lataa'if al-Ma'aazif, 261.)

Similar to other matters, care should be taken to verify those ahadeeth, even though some of those ahadeeth mention a chain of narrators. As Muslims, we have been cautioned to not attribute anything to the prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) that he (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) did not say. It makes no difference whether such an attribution is intended for good or for evil intentions. We see that in the stern warning contained in the words of the prophet (s.a.w.) in which he said: "Whoever tells a lie about me deliberately, let him take his place in Hell." (Narrated by Al-Bukhaari, 10; Muslim, 4.) (Source: islamqa.info).

Here is an explanation of some of

those mistakenly held beliefs and the various explanations of the known scholars of Ahl-us-Sunnah (followers of the Sunnah of the prophet.)

No special virtues for middle of Shaaban

One of the very common but mistaken beliefs has to do with attributing special virtues to the 15th of the month of Shaaban. The reality, however, is that the hadith literature lacks the evidence of any authentic hadiths related to this topic. Shaykh Ibn Jibreen states the following:

There is no saheeh marfoo' report (A Hadith that traces a statement directly to the Noble Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) without any break in the chain of reporters) that speaks of the virtue of the middle of Sha'baan that may be followed, not even in the chapters on al-Fadaa'il (chapters on virtues in books of hadeeth etc.). Some maqtoo' reports (reports whose chain of narrations do not go back further than the time of Taabi'een) have been narrated from some of the Taabi'een, and there are some ahaadeeth, the best of which are mawdoo' (fabricated) or da'eef jiddan (very weak). These (weak) reports suggest that people's lifespans are written on that day or that it is decided on that day who is to die in the coming year. On this basis (lack of any authentic hadith), it is not prescribed

to spend this night in prayer or to fast on this day, or to single it out for certain acts of worship. One should not be deceived by (such ignorance)... And Allah knows best.

Singling out the Middle of Shaaban for special worship is not allowed

Based on the above, therefore, the middle of the month of Shaaban should not be singled out for special worship. In this context, the scholars have stated the following:

... if a person wants to pray qiyaam on this night as he does on other nights – without doing anything extra or singling this night out for anything – then that is fine. The same applies if he fasts the day of the fifteenth of Shaaban because it happens to be one of the ayyaam al-beed, along with the fourteenth and thirteenth of the month, or because it happens to be a Monday or Thursday. If the fifteenth (of Shaaban) coincides with a Monday or Thursday, there is nothing wrong with that (fasting on that day), so long as he is not seeking extra reward that has not been proven (in the saheeh hadith texts).”

Fasting on the last day of Shaaban is not allowed

The third issue has to do with fasting on the last day of Shaaban, which is also referred to as the “day of doubt.” It is so called because at times it is not possible to ascertain whether that day is the start of Ramadan or not. There are a number of hadiths and scholarly opinions on this issue some of which are as follows:

‘Ammaar ibn Yaasir said: “Whoever fasts on the day concerning which there is doubt has disobeyed Abu’l-Qaasim (peace and

blessings of Allah be upon him).” This was narrated by al-Tirmidhi and classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Tirmidhi, 553.

Al-Haafiz ibn Hajar said: “It was understood from this that it is haraam to fast the day of doubt, because the Sahaabah would not say such a thing based on personal opinion, so a report such as this has the same status as a marfoo’ hadeeth.

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: “Do not anticipate Ramadaan by fasting one or two days before it begins, but if a man habitually fasts, then let him fast.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1914; Muslim, 1082. So if a person is used to fasting on Mondays, for example, and that coincides with the last day of Sha’baan, then it is permissible for him to observe that as a voluntary fast and it is not forbidden for him to do so.

The scholars have stated concerning the day of doubt, “The Sunnah indicates that it is haraam to fast this day (last day of Shaaban).” (Fataawa al-Lajnah, 10/117).

Weakness of the Hadith Related to Forgiveness on the 15th of Shaaban

A weak hadith that is circulated on this issue states that it was narrated from Abu Moosa al-Ash’ari that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Allah looks down on the night of the fifteenth of Shaaban and forgives all his creation except a mushrik or one who harbors hatred against the Muslims.” Narrated by Ibn Maajah, 1390. (The “one who harbors hatred against the Muslims” means one who has enmity towards a Muslim brother.)

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Healthy, Dead and Sick Heart

Imam Ghazali (ra)

Just as the heart may be described in terms of being alive or dead, it may also be regarded as belonging to one of the following three types:

The Healthy Heart

On the Day of Resurrection, only those who come to God with a healthy heart will be saved. God says:

"The Day on which neither wealth nor sons will be of any use, except for whoever brings to God a sound heart." [26:88-89]

In defining the healthy heart, the following has been said: "It is a heart cleansed from any passion that challenges what God commands, or disputes what He forbids. It is free from any impulses which contradict His good. As a result, it is safeguarded against the worship of anything other than Him, and seeks the judgment of no other except that of His Messenger (S). Its services are exclusively reserved for God, willingly and lovingly, with total reliance, relating all matters to Him, in fear, hope, and sincere dedication. When it loves, its love is in the way of God. If it detests, it detests in the light of what He detests. When it gives, it gives for God. If it withholds, it withholds for God. Nevertheless, all this will not suffice for its salvation

until it is free from following, or taking as its guide, anyone other than His Messenger (S). A servant with a healthy heart must dedicate it to its journey's end and not base his actions and speech on those of any other person except God's Messenger (S). He must not give any precedence to any other faith, words or deeds over those of God and His Messenger. God says:

"O you who have attained to faith! Do not put yourselves forward in the presence of [what] God and His Apostle [may have ordained], but remain conscious of God: for, verily, God is all-hearing, all-knowing!" [49:1]

The Dead Heart

This is the opposite of the healthy heart. It does not know its Lord and does not worship Him as He commands, in the way which He likes, and with which He is pleased. It clings instead to its lust and desires, even if these are likely to incur God's displeasure and wrath. It worships things other than God, and its love and its hatreds, and its giving and its withholding, arise from its whims, which are of paramount importance to it and preferred above the pleasure of God. Its whims are its imam. Its lust is its guide. Its ignorance

is its leader. Its crude impulses are its impetus. It is immersed in its concern with worldly objectives. It is drunk with its own fancies and its love for hasty, fleeting pleasures. It is called to God and the akhira [day of judgment] from a distance but it does not respond to advice, and instead it follows any scheming, cunning Shaytan [Satan]. Life angers and pleases it, and passion makes it deaf and blind to anything except what is evil. To associate and keep company with the owner of such a heart is to tempt illness, living with him is like taking poison, and befriending him means utter destruction.

The Sick Heart

This is a heart with life in it as well as illness. The former sustains it at one moment, the latter at another, and it follows whichever one of the two manages to dominate it. It has love for God, faith in Him, sincerity towards Him, and reliance upon Him, and these are what give it life. It also has a craving for lust and pleasure, and prefers them and strives to experience them. It is full of self-admiration, which can lead to its own destruction. It listens to two callers: one calling it to God and His Prophet (S) and the Hereafter; and the other calling it to the fleeting pleasures of this world. It responds to whichever one of the two happens to have most influence over it at the time. The first heart is alive, submitted to God, humble, sensitive, and aware; the second is brittle and dead; the third wavers between either its safety or its ruin.

*Excerpted from: "Purification of the Soul"
by Imam Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali*

Conversation of Love

On one occasion, while Zun-noon Misri (ra) was performing tawaaq, he heard a voice full of grief and sorrow. When he turned, he saw a woman clinging to the cloth of the Ka'bah saying:

*"O my Beloved, You alone know who my beloved
is*

*My frail body and my tears are exposing my secret
My Beloved, I have concealed my love for a very
long time, now my heart cannot contain it any-
more"*

He says: "On hearing these words, my heart was deeply affected and I burst out crying. Thereafter I heard her say: 'O my Master! Out of the love that You have for me, forgive my sins.' When I heard these words, I could not contain myself and said: 'O woman, is your love for Allah not sufficient that you had to ask Him to forgive you due to His love for you.' She retorted: 'Move away, do you not know that there are such people on this earth whom Allah loves before they even love Him. Did you not hear of the verse:

*Soon Allah will bring about a nation who He
will love them and they will love Him.*

See! In this verse Allah's love for them is mentioned first."

(Aa'yaanul Hujjaaj, pg. 170)

Lessons:

1. Love is a two way thing. When we develop a little love for Allah Ta'ala and live our lives according to the dictates of that love, Allah will reciprocate it with such love, contentment and tranquillity that no price can be attached to it.

2. The love of Allah is not something which is exclusive to men. Often a woman can out do a man in the love of Allah. The basic condition is to turn completely towards Him.

Get Ready to Welcome a Dear Friend

Javaid Siddiqi

Alhamdulillah, Allah has blessed us to witness and reach another Ramadan. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has called this month – a blessed month and a great month. In this article we will focus on “How can we fully benefit from this season of blessings”.

The Huge Responsibility Requires Big Commitment

Allah says in Sura Al-Baqara:

“And thus we have made you a just community that you will be witnesses over the people ...” [2:143]

The responsibility of being witnesses over the people is what is at stake here. The higher the goal, the more difficult and rigorous is the training. To become a navy seal, you are required to go through extremely difficult training. To enter into space an astronaut goes through a long and hard physical and mental training before being qualified to take up the responsibility. Similarly, to be a witness over the people, one has to reach a level of piety, maturity and love for Allah and his prophet, which is no small task. You are being prepared to be able to withstand physical, mental and emotional challenges. For this assignment you are required to exhibit

amazing levels of selflessness, sacrifice of time and wealth and will be required to endure great hardship. All this only for the pleasure of Allah and attainment of eternal life in Paradise.

It is from the mercy of Allah that opportunities to train for this great task are presented to the believer during their life over and over again. The fact that the believer stands to gain so much from this season, makes the preparation for this ever more important.

What we must understand as we prepare for this season

In the Quran Allah presents some of the most beautiful metaphors and parables which gives us great insight on how to prepare for this blessed season. In Surat Al-Hajj, Allah says:

“... And you see the earth barren, but when We send down upon it rain, it quivers and swells and grows [something] of every beautiful kind” [22:5]

These verses from Surat Al-Hajj and several others use the metaphor of rain, which when falls on the right piece of land produces vegetation of trees, flowers and fruits that benefit everyone. Through this metaphor Allah is inviting the believers

to prepare the land (their hearts and soul) for this rain (guidance) that has been sent to them in this blessed month of Ramadan. The month of Ramadan is analogous to the season of spring. In this month, a believer prepares the garden by removing the weeds, seeding the soil and watering the ground in hopes of beautiful flowers and tasty fruits later in the year.

The same goes for the heart of a believer. The more prepared the heart is, the better it is able to receive and retain this divine guidance. A deep understanding of this aspect of purification of the heart goes a long way in attaining our goals during the blessed month of Ramadan.

Now, let us focus on how to achieve this purification and what simple steps can we take to reach our goals. Br. Khurram Murad has presented the following 10 actions in his famous booklet "*Ramadan Kaisay Guzareen*". The following 10 tips can be helpful in reaching this goal.

Intention & Determination – Intention creates the desire, the consciousness and the determination; which in turn produces the required efforts for a task or goal. At the start of this Ramadan, make the intention of attaining the piety (*Taqwa*) which is the goal of the month of fasting. Have the intention of reaching this level of piety through your fasting, worship (*Ibadat*) and all the planned special activities during this month. To achieve, this goal, it may be beneficial to dedicate some private time before the first day or on the first day of Ramadan and make *Hamd & Istighfar* to Allah. Send salutations on the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and ask Allah

to assist you in this endeavor. Making *Du-aa* with focus and concentration can help you attain the proper mindset.

Relationship with Quran – Make special arrangements during this month for recitation, listening, understanding and pondering on the verses of Quran. Spend as much time as possible in the company of Quran. Attending *Taraweeh* regularly is a great opportunity to complete listening to the Quran at least once during Ramadan. If you don't understand the Arabic language, you should make every effort to understand a set portion with translation and tafseer. If following the translation for an entire *Juz* is not possible, dedicate time to follow some portion of a *Juz*. Alternatively, you can plan to complete the reading with translation within one year and before the next Ramadan. In our day and age, the Internet has opened an unlimited number of opportunities for learning and understanding of Quran from the comfort of our homes.

Stay Away from Sin – Make a special effort to stay away from any and all types of sins. In this month, believers are given special protection from the devil (*Shaytan*), which we should take advantage of by promoting and increasing our closeness to Allah. The farther we are from sin, the closer we get to Allah. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) reminded us in his famous Hadith that "Fasting acts as a shield from sins, so use it as a shield. The fasting person should not curse anyone, yell and badmouth anyone. If someone curses him or fights with him, he should move away by saying, "I am fasting. I can't be part of bad deeds" –

related by Bukhari and Muslim. We can gradually and consciously correct our bad habits – for example, we can decide to consciously lower our voice and avoid yelling, screaming or fighting during this Ramadan. Also we should avoid mentioning negative things about people in their absence. Make a special effort to guard your tongue during this month. Make a habit every night to assess your day before going to sleep. Make immediate *Istighfar* and repent if you have committed a sin during your day.

Seek Good Deeds – A believer should always be seeking opportunities to perform and engage in good deeds. During the month of Ramadan the reward for every good deed (*Nawafil*) rises to the level of the reward of obligatory acts (*Faraidh*). We should seek all such opportunities in worship (*Ibaadat*) and relationships (*Muamalat*). When a believer goes beyond the obligatory acts (*Faraidh*) and hastens to perform the optional (*Nawafil*) it shows his eagerness to please Allah. These are the believer about whom Allah relates in the Hadith Qudsi related by Abu Hurayrah (RA) that such people become so dear to Allah that Allah becomes the eyes through which they see; He becomes the ears through which they hear; He becomes the feet through which they walk, and the tongue through which they speak. In this Ramadan decide on any three (3) or more good deeds that you will consistently perform to attain this special nearness to Allah.

Qiyam al-layl – To stand the night in prayer and recite from the Book of Allah is one of the most effective methods of at-

taining the consciousness of Allah (*Taqwa*). Allah praises these believers in Surat Al-Dharyat:

“And in the hours before dawn they would ask forgiveness” [51:18]

Taraweeh is considered to be part of Qiyam al-layl. Believers are also encouraged to wake up and pray during the second part or the 3rd part of the night right before dawn. We can be among those who are mentioned in the above verse of Quran by simply waking up 15-20 minutes before *Suhoor* and performing two *rakaat Nafil* prayers. Abu Hurairah (RA) narrated that Allah’s Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: ‘In the last third of every night Allah descends to the lowermost heaven and says; “Who is calling Me, so that I may answer him? Who is asking Me so that may I grant him? Who is seeking forgiveness from Me so that I may forgive him?”’ [Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith Qudsi]. This and many of the following verses are a great inspiration for the believers to stand in prayer during the night.

“Is one who worships devoutly during the hours of night prostrating himself or standing [in adoration] and who places his hope in the mercy of His Lord – [like one who does not]? Say: ‘Are those equal – those who know and those who do not know?’ It is those who are endowed with understanding that receive admonition.” [39:9]

Zikr and Duaa – Remembrance of Allah is important throughout our lives, but is even more important during the month of Ramadan. Making a special effort to keep the remembrance of Allah, especially with your tongue is a source of great reward. This act keeps Allah in your thoughts con-

stantly. A constant *Zikr* of Allah and his praise (*Tahmeed & Tahleel*) are one of the best of ways of reaping rewards during this month. As we make *Duaa* to Allah, we perfect our conviction and belief – that He is the only one who can fulfill our needs, wants and desires. Extending our hands in complete devotion any time of the day or night and at specific times such as the time of breaking of fast (*Iftar*) would be a source of Allah's mercy and acceptance. Make a special effort to memorize some of the *Azkar and Adiyah* and frequently repeat them throughout the day.

Night Vigil on the Night of Power (*Laylatul Qadr*) & *Itikaf* – In this night Quran was revealed. The status of this night was clearly stated in the famous verses of Surat Al-Qadar

“The Night of Decree (a.k.a. The Night of Power) is better than a thousand months” [97:3]

In this night Allah forgives those who seek forgiveness and stand the night in prayer. This night is the most important and blessed night of the year. According to the hadiths, this night is one of the odd nights of the last ten (10) days of Ramadan and believers are commanded to seek this night and ask for forgiveness and the expiation from the Hell fire in this night. This night was given to the Ummah of Mohammad as a special gift which allows them to gain mountains of reward in a short amount of time. Make special arrangements for yourself and your family to earn the rewards of this special night to its fullest. Spend all these nights or parts of it in prayer, recitation of Quran and *Zikar*. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)

taught his wife, Aisha (RA) a short and concise *Duaa* which we should recite during this night.

“O Allah, You are The Forgiver, You love to forgive, so forgive me”

Similarly, if you have the ability to perform *Itikaf*, do so during the last 10 days of Ramadan. If you can't, try doing it for a shorter period. The act of *Itikaf* gives you an opportunity to remove yourself from the engagements of daily life and dedicate yourself to the remembrance of Allah and acts of worship for a set period of time. This time gives you the ability to reflect deeply on Allah's creation and His signs and blessings. It is one of the best ways of seeking nearness to Allah. If you are unable to spend ten or few days in the Masjid at least make the intention of *Itikat* every-time you attend prayers at the Masjid.

Spend for the Pleasure of Allah (*Charity*) – Charity is considered the second most important act of worship after prayers. Spending with the pure intention of pleasing Allah from one's wealth is one of the most noble acts liked by Allah. Allah promises the recompense of seven hundred times of what a believer spends for His sake. *Infaq* has been described as a key characteristic of *Muttaqeen*. In this month, open your heart and your wallet. Give for the sake of Allah without any fear of poverty. Give to your relatives, the orphans and poor to the best of your ability. Give without any desire of recompense or worldly reward as described by Allah in Surat Al-Dahr:

“We feed you only for the countenance of Allah. We wish not from you reward or gratitude.” [76:9]

Cinnamon

Reduces Blood Sugar

Just half a teaspoon of cinnamon a day significantly reduces blood sugar levels in diabetics, a new study has found. The effect, which can be produced even by soaking a cinnamon stick in your tea, could also benefit millions of non-diabetics who have blood sugar problem but are unaware of it.

The discovery was initially made by accident, by Richard Anderson at the US Department of Agriculture's Human Nutrition Research Center in Beltsville, Maryland.

"We were looking at the effects of common foods on blood sugar," he told *New Scientist*. One was the American favorite, apple pie, which is usually spiced with cinnamon. "We expected it to be bad. But it helped," he says.

Sugars and starches in food are broken down into glucose, which then circulates in the blood. The hormone insulin makes cells take in the glucose, to be used for energy or made into fat.

But people with Type 1 diabetes do not produce enough insulin. Those with Type 2 diabetes produce it, but have lost sensitivity to it. Even apparently healthy people, especially if they are overweight, sedentary or over 25, lose sensitivity to insulin. Having too much glucose in the

blood can cause serious long-term damage to eyes, kidneys, nerves and other organs.

Molecular mimic

The active ingredient in cinnamon turned out to be a water-soluble polyphenol compound called MHCP. In test tube experiments, MHCP mimics insulin, activates its receptor, and works synergistically with insulin in cells.

To see if it would work in people, Alam Khan, who was a postdoctoral fellow in Anderson's lab, organised a study in Pakistan. Volunteers with Type 2 diabetes were given one, three or six grams of cinnamon powder a day, in capsules after meals.

All responded within weeks, with blood sugar levels that were on average 20 per cent lower than a control group. Some even achieved normal blood sugar levels. Tellingly, blood sugar started creeping up again after the diabetics stopped taking cinnamon.

The cinnamon has additional benefits. In the volunteers, it lowered blood levels of fats and "bad" cholesterol, which are also partly controlled by insulin. And in test tube experiments it neutralised free radicals, damaging chemicals which are ele-

vated in diabetics.

Buns and pies

"I don't recommend eating more cinnamon buns, or even more apple pie - there's too much fat and sugar," says Anderson. "The key is to add cinnamon to what you would eat normally."

The active ingredient is not in cinnamon oils. But powdered spice can be added to toast, cereal, juice or coffee.

Anderson's team were awarded

patents related to MHCP in 2002. But the chemical is easily obtained. He notes that one of his colleagues tried soaking a cinnamon stick in tea. "He isn't diabetic - but it lowered his blood sugar," Anderson says.

The group now plans to test even lower doses of cinnamon in the US, and also look at long-term blood sugar management with the spice.

Journal reference: Diabetes Care (vol 26, p 3125)

Source: NewScientist.com

Cont'd from page 10

Humankind was created from a "self" that can be considered human nature and from which "its mate" was also created. Therefore, all human beings descended from a pair of "selves" identical to each other in terms of being human in character, contents, capacity, and value. In other words, the pairs were formed from the same elements, which compose the very substance of humankind. The Creator created the pairs as the two sides of a single entity that are in need of each other, complete each other, attain peace and contentment by means of each other, and feel and understand each other as they share the same life. Therefore, He returns the "seemingly plural" to the "singular" in content; thus, He reminds us of the principle of tawhīd (God's Unity and unity in existence coming from It). Furthermore, reminding us of our creation, He prompts the feeling of gratitude in our consciousness, at the same time as He excites our minds with gratitude as well.

Cont'd from page 2

the perfection of 'Iman it is not enough to affirm the hereafter orally, but one must have a complete certitude which leaves no room for doubt - the kind of certitude which comes when one has seen a thing with one's own eyes. It is an essential quality of the God-fearing that they always have present before their eyes the whole picture of how people will have to present themselves for judgment before Allah in the hereafter, how their deeds will be assessed and how they will receive reward or punishment according to what they have been doing in this world. A man who amasses wealth by usurping what rightfully belongs to others, or who gains petty material ends by adopting unlawful means forbidden by Allah, may declare his faith in the hereafter a thousand times and the Shari'ah may accept him as a Muslim in the context of worldly concerns, but he does not possess the certitude which the Holy Qur'an demands of him. And it is this certitude alone which transforms human life, and which brings in its wake as a reward the guidance and triumph promised in the Holy Qur'an.

History of the Qur'an

The Compilation of the Qur'an

Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah

Muslims historians state that whenever a revelation was received, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) summoned one of his literate Companions and dictated the text to him. Immediately, after dictation he would ask the scribe to read out what he had taken down. The idea was to ensure perfect accuracy. This, then was the beginning of the compilation of the Qur'an. It was the custom of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) that immediately after dictating he would ask his Companions to memorizer the text, and repeat it daily during the two prayers – at that time only two prayers were ordained. It was only after the Ascension (Miraj) that five prayers became obligatory and people began to repeat the verses of the Quran five times during their daily prayers. A practical benefit that accrued from this was that a man with a weak memory, who was likely to forget the verses reciting them only twice, would preserve them in his memory, reciting them five times a day.

Indeed, it was the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) who, for the first time commanded that the Qur'an be memorized as well as be committed to writing. Before him, we do not come across a similar example in the entire his-

tory of the chain of the Prophets. He took care of even a more serious problem. Suppose for a moment that we have a manuscript which, for some reason, has some textual mistakes. Our memorized version would also carry the same errors. How, then, do we set about to correct the mistakes. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) attended to this problem also. He ordered that every Muslim should learn the Quran from a reliable teacher. And who could be more reliable than the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) himself?

Every Muslim was asked therefore, to learn to read the Quran from the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). If he had a manuscript he was required to read from it in the presence of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). When he had certified that the manuscript was correct it was committed to memory. When the number of Muslims increased it was obviously not possible for one person to teach all the people. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), therefore directed a few companions in whose knowledge of the subject he had full confidence, to help him in his task.

This was a group of teacher whose

ability to impart the requisite knowledge was personally verified by the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). This process continues unabated. If someone learns to read the Quran from a teacher the diploma that he gets after the completion of his studies, contains the following certificate from the teacher. "I have taught so and so, the reading of the words of the Holy Quran in accordance with the rules of its recitation followed faithfully by my own teacher who assured me that his teacher had also taught him in the same way. The last link in the chain is the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) himself and the rules set by him are still followed in the world of Islam.

Except for the Islamic tradition no nation in the world has ever devised such stringent principles for the preservation of their scriptures. Principles of compilation of the Holy Qur'an were evolved during the time of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). But this is not all. Another requirement had to be fulfilled from the very beginning. Before I dilate on it, let me tell you something about the written texts of the Holy Quran.

It was probably the fifth year of prophet-hood when Umar (RA) embraced Islam. At that time he was known to be a mortal enemy of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). He left his house, one day fully determined to assassinate him. On the way he came across one of his relatives who had secretly embraced Islam. He asked Umar (RA) where he was going fully armed. Since he was a relative Umar (RA) took him into confidence and disclosed that he was going (God forbid) to

finish Mohammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) off who he said had created confusion in the ranks of the community. The relative warned that before plunging his tribe into a war with Banu Hashim Umar (RA) should go back home and deal with his own sister Fatimah and her husband who had already embraced Islam. Before setting out to reform the world said the relative your better start with your own house. Umar (RA) was taken completely by surprise. He went straight to the house of his sister. Near the door he heard a voice as if someone was singing or reciting something melodiously. He knocked violently at the door. The harsh exchange he had with his sister and brother-in-law is well known. In brief, Umar (RA) prevailed upon them to show him the text they were reading. This comprised a few verses of the Quran Umar (RA) was overwhelmed as he read them. He embraced Islam.

I mention this incident to suggest that at least a few chapters from the Qur'an were already preserved in writing as early as the fifth year of prophethood, and this was well before migration to Madinah. After this we come across another written text. This incident probably relates to the second covenant of Aqabah. A few people came from Madinah and embraced Islam at the hands of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Of these, historian have explicitly written about a member of the tribe of Banu Zurayq, to whom the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) gave a complete copy of the Quran revealed until then. The companion, after returning to Madinah, used to recite it in a loud voice to his tribesmen in the local

mosque. This is the second reference to the compilation of the Quran in the form of a written text, which has been narrated in detail by historians.

Compilation of the Qur'an in the Prophet's time

The first step taken by the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) for the preservation of the Qur'an was the directive he issued that the Quran should be learned from an authorized teacher the second was to preserve it in writing so that one could refresh one's memory in case one forget; and the third was to commit the Quran to memory. A difficulty arose in carrying out the three directives in that the entire Quran as we have already pointed out was not revealed at one time. And the prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) did not compile it mechanically in the chronological order of revelation. It was compiled under the direction of revelation and Prophetic wisdom. The first five verses of the surah al-Alaq (surah 96) are the first in order of revelation but they appear in the ninety sixth chapter (the total number of the Qur'anic chapters being 114) The chapters which appear in the beginning of the Qur'an were revealed in Madinah after the Migration. In other words, the Quran was not compiled in chronological order but followed another pattern.

A few difficulties could arise on this score. For example, a chapter which is revealed today is assigned a particular place by the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Another is revealed the next day and the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) directs that it should be written

before or after a particular chapter.

It was necessary, therefore, to conduct periodical checks on this account. We come across instances of correction and revision of personal manuscripts after the Migration. There is a tradition that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) used to repeat aloud the whole Quran (i.e., revealed till that year), during the month of Ramadan. The companions who could read and write would bring along their personal manuscripts and would compare them with the recited version of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) so that they could correct the mistake in the text, if any and check the proper order of the chapters. This practice was called *ardah*, which means presentation. Historians (Imam Bukhari for example) have clearly recorded that in the last year of his life, a few months before his death, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) read out the complete text of the Quran twice during the month of Ramadan. He declared that his end was approaching and that he had been directed by Gabriel to recite the Qur'an twice so that people could correct the mistake of writing, if any. This is how the last Divine message given to the last Prophet ((Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was preserved for posterity. This is how Providence provided us with the authentic text of the Holy Quran.

(O Mubammad [sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam] inform your Ummah) If you love Allah, follow me (i.e. Mubammad [sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam]), Allah will love you and forgive your sins. Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful." (Qur'an)

Words to My Muslim Sister

My Dear Sister,

Know, my dear Muslim sister, that you are man's sister and half of humanity. You are a mother, wife, daughter, sister, aunt, grand daughter or grand mother. The Prophet said, what translated means, Women are, indeed, men's partners. [Abu Dawud]

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

Your ancestors, great women of Islam, were one of the main reasons for this great nation to take this great place among all nations. Allah, Who granted Islam to this nation, made a high place for Muslim women, and decreed that they share in the responsibilities of enjoining truth, forbidding evil and raising the flag of Islam. He said, what translated means, *"The believers, men and women, are loyalists of one another, they enjoin righteousness and forbid evil, they offer their pray-*

ers perfectly and give the Zakat, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah will leave His Mercy on them. Surely Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise." [Noble Quran 9:71]

Allah has given Muslim women what they can bare of orders and duties. He is the God Who knows His creation, *"Should He not know what He created? And He is the Most Kind, All-Aware (of everything)." [Noble Quran 67:14]*

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

What Do Your Enemies Want From You?

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

First: They distract you from what Allah created you to perform of worship, belief and Da'wah (propagating Islam). They use this worldly life as their bate: Jewelry stores, fashions that originate in non-Muslim countries, new models all the time, desires raised, hunger that can never be satisfied, pleasures and competition for

them and endless ways for joy. Allah did not create us for this. Indulging in these matters is usually accompanied by wasting time and money and igniting enmity and competition between the rich and the poor.

Second: They ignite enmity between you and man. To those sinners, you are a daughter that is put down, a humiliated mother, an abused wife and an oppressed sister! Men are always unjust, hypocrites, dictators, freedom- preventers and suppressers, according to them. There is a fabricated war that those evil ones are starting for no reason other than to direct you to rebel against your father, be arrogant with your brother and disobedient to your husband. They do not call for justice, mercy and unity. They call for hatred, arrogance and destruction.

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

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

goals.

My Dear Sister,

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

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

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

Advice For My Sister In Islam

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

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

Imam Muslim.

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

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

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

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

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

My Dear Sister,

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

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

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

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

Source: Muslim Creed

Quotable Quotes

A man's deeds come to an end, except: A continuous charity, knowledge by which people derive benefit, pious son who prays for him. (Muslim)

He who enters the grave without provisions (good deeds) has as if he started swimming across the ocean without a vessel. Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (RA)

"With the ink of your tears, write your expectations from He who is capable of fulfilling them..." ibn al Jawz'ee (ra)

"Ask Allah for help against your evil whims and desires just as you ask him for help against your enemies." Sayyiduna Umar (RA)

"The life of this world is the wine of shaytan, & whoever is intoxicated by it only wakes up once he is dead" Yahya Ibn Muadh (ra)

"When you're concerned about rectifying your own condition, you become less concerned with judging others." M. Ashraf Ali Thanvi (ra)

"Depression & despondency will not be found in that person who adopts tafwidh (complete reliance in Allah)"

—Mawлана Yunus Patel

"The disease of constantly judging other people is rooted in not judging & taking account of yourself enough." M. Ashraf Ali Thanvi (ra)

"Let the tears you shed in the darkness of the night be your intercessors for when you make mistakes." - Ibn Al Jawz'ee (ra)

A true believer does not taunt or curse or abuse or talk indecently. (Tirmidhi)

Riba, Usury, Interest and Qur'anic Ethics

There is a sea of difference between saying what the Riba of the Jahiliyyah was, and, in contrast, what the Riba of Islam is, or should be. As for what the Riba of Islam is, the Qur'an had explained it in unequivocal terms. It was interest of every kind: simple, compound or any other. Hadith clarifies Riba as that extra amount that the lender charges on loans, no matter how little, writes SYED IQBAL ZAHEER.

The caption above is the title of a book that we have been asked by several people to review. But for this fact, we might not have reviewed it because browsing done a few months earlier, had not invited a full reading.

Published in Bangalore (India), the caption hides a message: the content will differentiate between Riba, usury, and interest to show that the three are not the same. But, Islamically, the three are, of course, the same, i.e. all three are prohibited. Further, true to the title, and despite the objective stated inside as 'start of a debate,' the true intent appears to be to remove any qualm in the Muslim heart and straightaway plunge into interest-bearing transactions. The last part of the title, 'Qur'anic Ethics,' has another message that slips through if the reader is unsuspecting: Qur'anic injunctions in this regard are not mandatory, but are merely ethical considerations, (towards which the Muslim attitude can safely be what it is towards other ethical values, namely, ignore them until a week before death).

At all events, one gets the feeling that the effort behind the seminar, which was held, ostensibly, to discuss the issue of bank-interest, appears to have been run in order to find a way to legalize Riba by giving it a new definition.

What it would be like to conduct a seminar on medical issues, without a single doctor present? That's what this seminar on the declared objectives would have looked like when held in March 2013. There was not a single scholar's shadow present there. What prevented the organizers from inviting, say Mawlana Ashraf Ali of the town – the head of the Imaarat-e-Shar'iah, and a Mufti proper? And, if there is a good distance between traditional scholars, who do not know English, and the modern-day Islamic activists, whose main qualification is that they know English, then at least the Ameer of the Jama'at-e-Islami could have been invited. But, perhaps, with their obnoxious presence, the debate would not have gone on lines drawn.

Two million activists, journalists,

BBC correspondents, Mutawallis, retired expatriates, custom officers – you name as many professions as you wish – and increase their numbers from two million to twenty million, yet, they are not equal to one Mufti, just as 20 million university graduates are not equal to a single doctor.

What gave birth to the idea of a seminar on interest-bearing banking was a question sent to a Muslim news magazine. The seminar idea moved the hearts. The question was: "Is interest accruing from a savings bank account haraam if the rate of inflation exceeds the rate of interest?" (shortened).

In response to the simple and innocent question, (which could have been deflected to Deoband or Madinah), it appears that the seminar couldn't produce but some verbiage. Maybe the participations were yawning too much. Boredom could be the reason why nobody asked:

"Fair enough. What happens if the rate of interest is say 7%, but the rate of inflation is 15%, which happens to be so often, in so many countries? Should the banks not increase the rate of interest owed to their depositors to 15%? In fact, during economic crisis, inflation shoots up to 50%. Should we not take a procession out in the streets tomorrow morning against the banks for mischievously fixing up the rate of interest on deposits as low as 7%? Surely, even non-Muslims would join us? Should the banks not link the rate of interest to the rate of inflation?"

Yawning could have been another reason why none of the English-speaking participants raised another question:

"What happens when interest rate is higher than the inflation rate? That is, if the inter-

est rate is say 7%, and inflation only 3%, then shouldn't the depositors receive the interest at 3%? That is, if the banks promptly paid 7% interest at the end of the year, shouldn't the depositors as promptly return 4% of the interest amount received?"

Ennui can close the minds, otherwise someone could have also asked,

"What happens when there is deflation? That is, the economy is on a free fall, and so, in general, the prices are going down and down? Shouldn't interest rates be brought down too? And, in particular, what happens when prices plunge to the bottom, such as of real estates, shares, gold, coffee, leather, spices, or the like, whose prices so often crash down because of local or foreign factors. Should then the banks allow no outflow of interest money to the depositors, but instead, charge them a certain percentage for enjoying an increase in the worth of their savings?"

To explain, let us assume the real estate price is 2000 per sq. foot. A man has his savings in the bank amounting to 100,000. With that amount, he purchases 50 sq. feet of land. Then, over some time, the land prices plunge to say 1000 per sq. foot. The man can now buy 100 sq. feet instead of 50. Should the bank now charge him interest, (instead of paying interest)? After all, what right has the man to multiply the worth of his money by 100% to be able to buy the 100 sq. feet of land, instead of 50 sq. feet? Is he not sucking the land-owner's wealth?

If the participants were not bored enough to be awake they could have asked many more questions of the class about which an Arabic proverb says,

“*Laadarar, walaadirar,*” meaning, in common parlance, “no harm done, no harm received.” In English they say, “back-to-back liability” although, of course, in connection with the subject in discussion, the financial market accepts neither the Arabic proverb nor the English equivalent. If asked concerning linkage of interest rates with inflation, they could respond, with scrutinizing eyes, “Say that again.”

Since such questions do not seem to have been asked, it seems proper to assume that it was right on target that those concerned should be given a book consisting of the ‘not so interesting’ proceedings of the seminar, but ‘very interesting’ two articles, giving the answer that was, perhaps, determined before the seminar began. Why tax the people’s minds, when the answer is ready?

With the linkage idea so unceremoniously dismissed by the financial market, we can now look into the long article by Fazlur Rahman (1919-1988): a scholar produced by the West, employed by the West, and designated ‘an Islamic scholar’ by the West. His dissertation at Oxford was on Ibn Sina, taught Persian language, Islamic philosophy (the version rejected by Imam Ghazali), Near Eastern Studies, (concerning everything except invasion by the West and theft of its resources), and then chose to write (perhaps what converted him from ‘unknown’ to ‘well-known’) on economy. But, possibly, he found the discipline vast, so chose a single topic: Riba and Interest – redefining the earlier, recommending the latter.

The wisdom in giving place to this article occupying one-third of the book is

detectable. It has nothing to do with the issue for which the debate was called, i.e., Riba vs. inflation. There is not a word about this issue in this article. In fact, the term ‘inflation’ does not occur once in the book.

Technically, the article is a poor product. It follows Western style of research adopted by their social scientists, but which is abhorred by their physical scientists. Science would have never progressed had they adopted the research methods of the social scientists. (Freud’s well-researched works were rejected by his own students after his death). Islamically, the article is unworthy of serious consideration. So why was the 50-year old article pulled out from the grave and reproduced in this book? The reason that can be assumed is that first, it crusades for Riba, and second, it fights hard to show that the Riba that the Qur’an declared unlawful is the “doubled, redoubled” type – not simple interest. The basis of the argument is a single Qur’anic verse which says (3:130): “Muslims! Do not devour usury doubled and redoubled (*ad’aafan mudaa’afa*). Fear Allah, haply you may prosper.”

The author has no other verse supporting his personal view, no hadith, no statement of a Companion, none of the Tabi’iyyun, nor any of the Mujtahideen who appeared during the last 1400 years. Writes the Kuwaiti Encyclopedia:

“Riba (of all kinds) is prohibited by the Qur’an, by the Sunnah, and by consensus of the Ummah. It is one of the major sins. Anyone who declared it lawful may be allowed to repent. If he refused, he should

be killed.”

Indeed, there has been such consensus over the issue that of the dozens of deviated sects that appeared during the last 1400 years, who differed over many issues and parted ways with the mainstream Ummah, none ever differed over usury, to declare any kind of it lawful. Thus, anyone who says that the understanding of the Ummah-scholars stands rejected, is at war with Allah and with the Ummah, as are those who agree with him.

Fazlur Rahman quotes two Tabi`iyyun – Zayd b. Aslam and Mujahid – by which non-Arabic speaking readers are led to a wrong meaning. He explains that the two were defining Riba. But that was not their intention. The two explained what Riba of the pre-Islamic times was, namely, compound interest. They do not explain what the prohibited Riba of Islam is.

That is, there is a sea of difference between saying what the Riba of the Jahiliyyah was, and, in contrast, what the Riba of Islam is, or should be. Zayd b. Aslam and Mujahid explained what the Riba of the Jahiliyy days used to be. As for what the Riba of Islam is, they did not have to explain it because the Qur’an had explained it in unequivocal terms. It was interest of every kind: simple, compound or any other. Hadith clarifies Riba as that extra amount that the lender charges on loans, no matter how little.

The Qur’an said (2: 35), “Those who deal in usury (Riba) shall not rise (on Judgment Day) except as he rises whom the Devil has driven to madness by (his) touch.” (A point of note is that all the verses in the Qur’an concerning Riba were re-

vealed after the verse containing the words “doubled and redoubled.”). This particular verse did not say, “Those who deal in doubled, redoubled usury.” It said, “Those who deal in usury.”

The Qur’an also did not specify doubled and redoubled usury in another statement of the same verse. It said, “*Allah has made trading lawful and usury forbidden.*”

Similarly, Allah said in the next verse, “*Allah destroys usury (Riba) and cultivates charity.*” He did not say He destroys usury of the “*ad`aafan mud`aafa*” kind alone. He followed up the topic by saying in the next verse (278), “*Believers! Fear Allah and give up any outstanding interest – if you have submitted.*” There are several other verses where Riba was not qualified with any adjective.

As a final measure, Allah firmly shut the door of every effort to play with His words by saying, “*Believers! Fear Allah and give up any outstanding interest if you are believers. But if you do not, then take notice of war from Allah and His Messenger. However, if you repent, then you may have your principal.*” (2: 278-79). In these verses, He did not specify “doubled and redoubled interest,” but rather, He used the words “any outstanding interest.” “Any” is, of course, “any” – nothing specific. Another possible window for a man trying to squeeze himself out of a religious obligation was closed by the words, “*However, if you repent, then you may have your principal.*” Now, the money lenders of the pre-Islamic times possessed two kinds of wealth: (a) principal investment money, and (b) the interests that were earned on

that principal. The money earned through interest was itself of two kinds: (i) earned as 'simple interest' and (ii) earned as 'compound interest.'

If the interest earned through 'compound interest' (or the doubled and redoubled kind) was alone prohibited by the Qur'an and not the simple type, then, why did Allah not say, "You may have your principal and the money earned as simple interest?" Why did He allow them keep back only the principal, and not the simple interest money also, if it was halal?

Thus, the Qur'an, as it always does, defeated the efforts of the deviants.

When dealing with Halal and Haram, Islam takes care to leave no excuse for those studying the texts in particular depth to find a pretext to escape from its obligations. Accordingly, the Prophet clarified the issue. He said, "Whoever took extra, indulged in interest." At the fall of Makkah, he announced that he was quashing every Riba of the past. Naming his own uncle, he announced publicly, "I write off hereby the interests due to my uncle `Abbas." He did not say, "I am writing off 'the compound interest' due to `Abbas but not 'the simple interest that he had earned in the past.'" Similarly, when he wrote to the people of Najran that they will not be allowed to conduct any interest-bearing transactions, he did not specify that they could continue with simple interest banking.

So, how should one understand the words "*ad`aafan mudaa`afa*" of the verse 130 of Aal `Imraan? To repeat, "*Muslims! Do not devour usury doubled and redoubled. Fear Allah, haply you may prosper.*"

The answer is that there are two requirements to understand Qur'anic purposes: (i) know the Arabic language, (ii) know its idiomatic usage. The words 'doubled and redoubled' do not mean you can consume simple interest but not compound interest. But rather, it is the worst of its kind that has been mentioned for emphasis. For example you say, 'Do not speak foul language inside a mosque.' But it does not mean you can speak foul language outside the mosques. In a second example, Allah said (17:31), "*Do not kill your children fearing poverty,*" which does not mean, "You can kill them if you do not fear poverty." Or, Allah said speaking about the consecrated months (ash-harul hurum) in verse 36 of Surah Tawbah, "*Do not wrong yourself therein,*" which does not mean, "You can wrong yourself in other months, but not during the consecrated months." Or, Allah said about the wealth of the orphans (4:6), "*Consume it not wastefully and hastily in fear that they will grow up,*" which definitely does not give the license to consume the property if there is no fear that they will grow up and ask for accounts. Again, Allah said (24:33), "*Do not force your slave-girls to adultery, if they wish chastity.*" It does not mean that if the slave-girls do not care for chastity, they can be used as prostitutes; but rather, it means forcing them to prostitution is all the more hateful a crime if the girls wish to remain chaste. The compeller will earn two-fold sins: one, for using them for prostitution, and two, compelling those who love to be chaste. Similarly, when Allah said, "Do not devour usury doubled and redoubled," He did not mean, "you could devour

usury if it is not doubled and redoubled.” What is meant is that charging doubled and redoubled interest is a crime more revolting.

Regretfully, there are other portions in the article, which, at one end of the extreme can be called intellectual gimmicks, while, at the other end, they can be labelled as *“kalimatu al-haqqi, urida bihi al-batil,”* meaning, true words quoted with the intent to prove the untrue as true. As an example of gimmicks, the author brings in a long passage of Ibn al-Qayyim to create the impression that Ibn al-Qayyim is also of the opinion that Riba is only that which is doubled and redoubled. In actual fact, Ibn al-Qayyim is speaking of an unrelated issue.

Either he was unaware, or deliberately ignored Ibn al-Qayyim’s statement in his commentary on Sunan Abi Da’ud, where he states that inability to identify the true intent of a sentence, leads a man to wrong meanings. He proceeds to cite examples from the Qur’an which can lead to wrong understanding if one does not understand the intents and purposes contained in a sentence. Interestingly, he cites the very verse 130 of Surah Aal `Imran on which the author based his contention, viz., *“Muslims! Do not devour usury doubled and redoubled.”* He cites another example from the Qur’an to show how the apparent meaning cannot be possibly taken. Allah said (24:33), *“As for those you own as slaves, if they seek a contract (for freedom), then contract with them, if you know any good in them.”* This does not mean, says Ibn al-Qayyim, that the slaves may be freed only if some good is found in them,

and not when not found; but rather, the intent is that it is a greater obligation to free them if you find goodness in them.

When a person’s belief is no more than declaration of faith in certain doctrines, then, his reasoning is reversed towards benefits of the earthly nature. He looks for a pretext to treat a haram as halal. But he whose belief is connected with the love of his Lord, his reasoning takes the higher sublime turn towards His Lord. He asks himself, “What could possibly distance me away from Allah?” He needs a pretext to treat halal as haram. Unsurprisingly, we have `Umar saying, “The Prophet died before he could elaborate on Riba...” Now, he whose belief in this world is greater than his faith in the Next, ignores the rest of `Umar’s words and jumps (and makes jump many) to the conclusion that the Riba as defined by the Fuqaha’ needs redefinition. “After all,” he says, “Even the Companions did not know what exactly Riba was.” The words of `Umar he ignores to read are, to quote in full, “The Prophet died before he could elaborate on Riba. Therefore, shun Riba, and what smacks of Riba.”

`Umar saw Riba in every advantageous dealing. Was it Riba to draw advantage of a brother Muslim through a commercial dealing? For example, as Muhammad Asad (the Jew-turned-Muslim) explained to (the Muslims-turned-Jews), that `Umar wondered whether drawing high profits, say more than a small percentage, was also Riba. `Umar in fact was so worried about the possibility of Riba creeping into ordinary commercial dealings that he used to announce, “Those who do

not know the laws of commercial dealings may not enter our markets. It is feared that they would unknowingly indulge in Riba-transactions.”

When a man speaks a lie to others and repeats it over, he himself falls a victim to it. That is what happened to the Western educated class of this Ummah. They propagated – not on the basis of financial expertise, of which they knew not the ABC, but because they wished to promote interest-based economy – that the material development of the West was largely aided by the banks. The banks gave loans – on interest – to entrepreneurs to help them set up industries with big capital lay out. Without that, they assumed, the industrial development of the West would have been impaired. This piece of fiction was repeated so many times that the perpetrators began to believe in it.

At heart, this fiction seems to be the concern of those who have been knocking at the doors of Fiqh, seeking removal of Islamic embargo on interest-bearing transactions. They do not seem to know that interest-bearing loans by banks were not the main factor in the industrialization of the West, and not the main factor in its material development. There were many factors which helped the West achieve material progress during the last two centuries. This discussion, however, will occupy several pages, and so we shall postpone it for another occasion.

In sum, and said regretfully, the article of Fazlur Rahman – which is at the core of all other arguments contained in the book, Riba, Usury, Interest and Qur’anic Ethics – fails quite badly when examined from Islamic legal point of view. Several other arguments that are constructed in this article are beautiful balloons for the Islamically uneducated public, but ugly, disjointed, useless pieces of rubber when punctured by scholars.

The Aakhirah is a Reality

Once ‘Abdullah bin Rawaabah (RA) was resting with his head on his wife’s lap. Suddenly he began crying. Seeing this, his wife also began to cry. When he asked her the reason for crying, she replied, ‘When I saw the manner in which you were crying, it made me cry as well.’ ‘Abdullah bin Rawaabah (RA) explained the reason for his crying saying, ‘I remembered the verse: ‘There is none among you except that he will come to it (Jahannam)’ and I do not know whether I will be granted salvation from the fire or not.’ (Tafseer Ibni Katheer vol. 3, pg. 136)

Lesson: The Sabaabah (RAA) had such conviction in the verses of the Quraan Majeed and the occurrences of the Hereafter, that it made them cry even in their moments of pleasure. On the other hand, we have become so oblivious of the realities after death, that we fantasize the worst of things even when our heads are in prostration before our Beloved Creator. We need to enhance our conviction in the Hereafter to such an extent that it becomes a reality before our eyes.

The Effect of Iman

The effect of imaan in the life of a person is such that it prompts him towards showing kindness and compassion to the creation, forgiving and overlooking their weaknesses and adopting courage and bravery at the time of difficulties. As a result of not possessing Imaan, these qualities are not seen in the kuffaar.

Shaikh M. Ashraf Ali Thanvi (ra)

The Qur'an, Text of Life

Amer Haleem

One of the handiest blessings of the Quran as divine revelation is that it sets out clearly for us the character “types” and roles that people cast themselves as and in, in life. Then it gives us—and at the precise script prompts—the “lines” they inevitably deliver from the scenes they have chosen to act in.

In my early experience with the Quran, I couldn't readily discern this connection. I would read the Quran's commands, “Say,” or “Say to them,” and “they shall say,” and would miss the correspondence between the account of the Quran and the scripted responses of contemporaries playing out their roles. My ear, rather my heart, wasn't yet properly tuned to the divine dialogue.

There are reasons for this common lack. The most important of them are sufficient immersion in the Arabic Quran as the Speech of Allah, and learning how to hear the Quran's meaning unfiltered by the various catechisms to which all of us have been massively and incessantly exposed. This also relates to developing a proper sense of the Quran's Arabic.

The first training of our senses requires a serious commitment of time. The Quran must be read and heard, read and heard, read and heard on a consistent agenda and persistent basis that must be

overriding. This should be undertaken each time with a mortal consciousness, by which I mean an imminent sense of life-and-death—namely, that one is being urgently instructed, and that this instruction is coming directly from the true and only God.

By “read,” I mean this to include both its internalized and externalized intellectual and mechanical means. One is illumination. The other is measured recital. In fact, this kind of reading is a necessary reflection of the sense of which I have just spoken. Allah states:

Those to whom We have given the [Quran as a revealed] Book—who recite it with its due recitation—it is these who truly believe in it. And whoever disbelieves in it, then it is such as these who are the losers.

(2:121)

In other words, belief in the Quran, that it comes from the sole Creator through a chosen, final human messenger, dictates that we will read it this way. Then, it will open—and become—our senses. And we will be able to see, hear, taste, smell, and feel through it.

This is all I wanted to say.

But let me give you an example of my meaning. Recall the Quran's famed account in Sûrat Al-Kahf of the two men, one of whom God had granted great

wealth in the form of two plentiful gardens and numerous children (18:32-44). He enters his fruit-laden, river-watered gardens with his impoverished friend, and at that moment his soul is overcome by his tremendous fortune and the centrality and power which this opulence has given him in relation to a huge retinue around him.

His sense of personal fortune and authority cause him to doubt the existence of God. In any case, God's existence seems irrelevant to him because of the riches and dominion he thinks he is the cause of and sovereign over. It is all about him, isn't it?

Thus, of his own will, he casts himself into an available character and faithfully utters his lines in this, his chosen script of life:

So he said to his friend while he was conversing with him: I am greater than you in wealth and mightier in kinsmen. ... I do not think that this flourishing garden will ever perish. Nor do I think the Hour of Doom will ever come. Yet even if I am to be returned to my Lord, most surely, I shall find far better than this as my destiny. (18:34)

You know his outcome (and if not, you know where to find it). But these character types and scripts remain all around us, if we can hear.

Recently, former New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg, the business media mogul whose \$33 billion net worth makes him the eleventh richest person in America and sixteenth in the world, expressed uncertainty that God exists, but had this to say about his destiny on the Day of Judgment and in the Afterlife:

"I am telling you, if there is a God, when I get to heaven I'm not stopping to be interviewed. I'm heading straight in. I have earned my place in Heaven."

Can you not hear it now, the very lines of the character-type the Quran has set forth for us. If only Mr. Bloomberg could.

Over my Dead Body!

After the demise of Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam), his beloved daughter Faatimah (ra) fell ill. The illness lasted for six months and finally lead to her death. During this illness, she said to Asmaa' bintu Umais (ra): "There is something which is aggravating my sickness. I am worried that after my death, when I am wrapped in my kafan (burial cloth), the shape of my body will be exposed to men". Asmaa' (ra) comforted her saying that she had observed in Abyssinia that they used a wooden frame (bier) draped with cloth. Faatimah (ra) requested her to show her how it is made. When she saw it, she was elated. In fact, this was the only occasion she smiled in the six months she lived after the demise of Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam).

(Haakim vol. 3, pg. 162 & Al-Istee'aab vol. 4, pg. 451)

Lesson: *She lived a life of complete modesty and wished to die with complete modesty as well. Together with having the wooden frame, she insisted that her burial take place at night, so that the gaze of any strange man may not fall on her dead body. May Allah shower His choicest mercies on her and bless us with even a small fraction of her modesty.*

Are Muslims Being Tried?

Eqram Haque

If you think Muslims are being tried, you have company. Millions of Muslims are thinking likewise. In fact, even non-Muslims are wondering about the downward spiral of the once-dominant Islamic civilization.

No doubt we are in a prolonged period of trial, prolonged from our standard, as Allah's measurement of time is different. The Quran says:

He arranges (every) matter from the heavens to the earth, then it (the matter) will go up to Him, in one Day, the space whereof is a thousand years of your reckoning.

[32:5]

It is clear from the Quran that a couple of centuries of our suffering translate to less than a day for the Creator of time. Yet, our hasty nature makes us complain. Many of us just cannot fathom why people with the best Book of Guidance, the Quran, should be in the worst situation. From the Middle East to Central Asia and Africa to Asia, Muslim lands are ruled, with few exceptions, by tyrants who are enemies of spiritual, material, and technological progress.

Muslim lives in general are caught up in an ongoing cycle of violence, fear, stagnation and despair. A United Nations

report on the Arab world a few years ago highlighted the shocking backwardness of the Arab societies. For example, it said that for all the books published in the Arab world in a year, Spain alone published more! It's hard to imagine a worse tribute for Muslims whose religion began with word "iqra," read! Through the tyranny of Muslim leaders and decadence of our societies we are being tried, and there seems to be no end in sight.

Who Is To Blame?

People often take trials to be a bad thing. Yes, trials can be a form of punishment from Allah for our transgressions, but they may also be a means of cleansing our sins and elevating our status in Paradise, provided we patiently endure them. One thing is certain: there is no escaping the trials. In some of the most lucid verses of the Quran, Allah says:

And certainly, We shall test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits, but give glad tidings to the patient ones, who, when afflicted with calamity, say: "Truly! To Allah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return." They are those on whom are the blessings from their Lord, and (they are the ones who) receive His

Mercy, and it is they who are guided.

[2:155-157]

A ḥadīth of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) further elaborates these verses. He said:

The affairs of a believer are amazing. If he is in good times he thanks Allah, and that is good for him. If he is afflicted with trial, he is patient, and that is good for him.

(Muslim)

The same message is reiterated in the following two ḥadīth:

Hardships continue to befall a believing man and woman in their body, family and property, until they meet Allah burdened with no sins.” (Bukhāri)

And:

Whenever Allah intends good for a person, He subjects him to adversity. (Aḥmad)

In fact when a person has everything good going for him—robust health, obedient and successful children, and plenty of wealth—that may become a bigger trial, as he may forget to thank Allah for His bounties. But whether good times or bad, all are part of Allah’s decree. Our life, in essence, is a combination of easy and difficult times for a Divine purpose.

When Muslims suffered big losses in the Battle of Uḥud, Allah reminded them in these words:

If a wound (and killing) has touched you, be sure a similar wound (and killing) has touched the others. And so are the days (good and not so good), We give to men by turns, that Allah may test those who believe, and that He may take martyrs from among you. [3:140]

And in another ayah, Allah challenges the believers:

Do you think that you will enter Paradise before Allah tests those of you who fought (in His Cause) and (also) those who are patient? [3:142]

Looking around today we find that a lot of Muslims are mishandling the bad events of our time; they are complaining and blaming others. Faced with the turmoil in their societies, some of them are selling and betraying fellow-Muslims for power, money or to save themselves and their families from harm. In some cases they have become enemies of their brethren, raiding mosques, arresting scholars or killing them for taking a stand for the truth.

All of this seems utterly senseless, and the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) had prophesied about this in words similar to these:

There will come a time when the killer will not know why he killed and the one killed will not know why he was killed. (Muslim)

Sound familiar in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria?

The Muslim disunity and betrayal of each other is a big part of our current trial. It’s not just others who are bent upon our destruction; our own actions are aiding and abetting the enemy.

What Is To Be Done?

Firstly, we should unite and persevere in the path of Truth no matter how intense the trials are.

If we think that the persecution of Muslims by their own hands and the draconian laws being devised against them around the world are water over the bridge, we are mistaken. Other nations have been tested more intensely, as the

Quran records:

Do you think that you will enter Paradise without such (trials) as came to those who passed away before you? They were afflicted with severe poverty and ailments and were so shaken that even the Messenger and those who believed along with him said, "When (will come) the help of Allah?" "Yes! Certainly, the help of Allah is near! [2:214]

This was the reason why the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) became upset when a Companion came complaining to him about the severity of persecution in Makkah. He told him about the hardships the followers of other prophets underwent.

Muslims enjoyed centuries of progress and prosperity, but when they forsook the Straight Path and began building palaces and going after desires they debased themselves and invited the same fate as befell others before them. Allah had warned them:

And be not like those who forgot Allah and He caused them to forget their own selves. [59:19]

Allah called such people rebels against Him and made clear that the punishment is directly linked to our own wrong doing as He wills no injustice to the worlds. [3:108]

However, there is a timeless promise from Him, a promise of victory for those who honor their covenant with Allah, as recorded in the Quran:

Allah has promised those among you who believe, and do righteous good deeds, that He will certainly grant them succession to (the present rulers) in the earth, as He

granted it to those before them, and that He will grant them the authority to practice their religion, that which He has chosen for them (i.e. Islam). And he will surely give them in exchange a safe security after their fear. [24:55]

Secondly, realizing that Muslims are being tried is a good start. It honestly reflects the reality of our situation. The next logical step is to examine its causes and make amends. Trials are from Allah's decree, and our actions are a part of that decree. More than anything else, trials are a cleansing process, an expiation of our sins, and a factor behind the raising of our status, only if we understand and persevere through them patiently.

However, despite the inherent benefits of trials, we should never stop working to reform ourselves. In so doing we will not contradict the decree of Allah. Muslims should remember and firmly believe that Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change what is within them.

While the ordinary Muslims struggle, there is a big responsibility on the observant Muslims to move beyond personal piety and become muṣliḥūn (reformers of their societies).

Even though the picture of the Muslim Ummah seems all too gloomy today, we need to seek solace in Allah's promise that with every difficulty there is ease. [94:6]

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