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**RADIANT**  
**REALITY**

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MAKE THINGS  
*Easy* FOR PEOPLE  
*Allah* WILL MAKE  
THINGS  
EASY FOR YOU

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# RADIANT REALITY

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

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# Question Answer

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## Question

Whilst fasting, if the nose begins to bleed, will the fast break?

## Answer

The fast will not break by mere nose bleeding. If the blood flowed down the nasal passage and entered the throat then it will be seen whether the blood was more than the saliva or less than it. If the blood was more than the saliva or equal to it then the fast will break. If the blood was less than the saliva then the fast will not break. (Ahsanul Fataawa vol.4 pg.436, Fataawa Raheemiyah vol.7 pg.258, Bahishti Zewar vol.3 pg.13)

*Mufti Zakaria*

## Question

Whilst fasting, if the gums begin to bleed and the blood flows down the throat will the fast break? If so will both Qadha and Kaffarah be Waajib or only Qadha?

## Answer

If the blood which was swallowed with the saliva was more than the saliva or equal to it then the fast will break and only qadha will be waajib. If the blood was less than the saliva then the fast will not break. (Ahsanul Fataawa vol.4 pg.436, Fataawa Raheemiyah vol.7 pg.258, Bahishti Zewar vol.3 pg.13)

*Mufti Zakaria*

## Question

If whilst fasting, water goes down the throat when gargling the mouth or rinsing the nose in Wudhu or Ghusl will the fast break?

## Answer

If one was aware that he was fasting at the time the water seeped down the throat or nostril the fast will break. If one was unaware of him being in the state of fasting the fast will not break.

*Mufti Zakaria*

## Question

Is it permissible for a person to take an injection whilst fasting and will the fast be nullified?

## Answer

It is permissible for a person to take an injection whilst fasting. The injection does not nullify the fast. However, in the case where the injection is directly injected into the stomach or brain the fast will be nullified. (Fataawa Mahmoodiyyah vol.15 pg.180/181, Ahsanul Fataawa vol.4 pg.432, Fataawa Raheemiyah vol.7 pg.257,263)

*Mufti Zakaria*

## Question

If a person forgetfully eats whilst fasting does his fast break?

## Answer

The fast will not break by forgetfully eating or drinking. (Bahishti Zewar vol.3 pg.10/11)

*Mufti Zakaria*

## Question

If Zaid's flight/trip is scheduled at 8AM, can he forgo the fast?

## Answer

A Musaafir (traveller) is excused from fasting if he initiates his Safr (travel) before the Subah Saadiq time (true dawn) commences. (Ahsanul Fataawa 4/447) Hence, if a Musaafir (traveller) intends to initiate his Safr (travel) after the Subah Saadiq time (true dawn) commences i.e. 8AM, he will not be excused from fasting.

However, if he initiates his Safr (travel) before the Subah Saadiq time (true dawn) commences for e.g. 8PM, he will be excused from fasting as a Musaafir (traveller).

Note: If a person did not fast due to being a Musaafir (traveller), he will have to make up (Qadha) the fast at a late stage i.e. after Ramadhaan etc. Also, it is more rewarding for a Musaafir (traveller) to fast on Safr (travel) if fasting does not cause undue hardship to him.

*Mufti Ismaeel*

### Question

I have a 3 month old baby who I am breastfeeding. The month of Ramadaan is approaching and I want to know whether I should fast? I am not sure whether I will be able to manage keeping the fasts.

### Answer

If you can manage to keep the fast as well as breastfeed the child, then you should do so. If you cannot manage to keep the fast, then you should make up for the missed fast after the month of Ramadhaan.

*Mufti Zakaria*

### Question

Due to my mother's old age, she cannot fast. Can she give Fidyah for all the fasts that she cannot keep before Ramadhaan starts? Can She give it to non-Muslims

### Answer

If your mother is unable to fast due to old age or ill health, she will be excused from fasting in the month of Ramadhaan. On the other

hand, if she recovers or she regains her health and strength to fast, it will be obligatory on her to fast and make up (Qadha) of any missed fasts of Ramadhaan. However, if there is no hope of her recovering, then she is obligated to make up for it by giving the Fidyah amount per fast to poor and needy Muslims. The Fidyah amount has to be got confirmed from the concerned before paying.

The Fidyah amount cannot be discharged before the commencement of Ramadhaan. The Fidyah amount may only be discharged after the commencement of Ramadhaan. (Khairul Fataawa 4/89)

The recipients of Fidyah are the same as the recipients of Zakaat. Hence, all the conditions related to the discharging of Zakaat to Zakaat recipients also apply to the recipients of Fidyah, for e.g. the Fidyah amount has to be given to poor and needy Muslims and not non-Muslims. (Shaami 2/369)

*Mufti Ismaeel*

### Question

What is the shari ruling regarding the last time one is allowed to eat sehri? Are you supposed to stop as soon as the time finishes or can you finish the food you were eating during or after the Azaan.

### Answer

Sehri time ends with subh-e-saadiQuestion Once subh-e-saadiq has come in it is not permissible to eat or drink anything. If the Fajr azaan was called out a while after subh-e-saadiq had entered, and one continued eating after subh-e-saadiq had entered, then the fast of that day will not be vaild.

*Mufti Ebrahim*

### Question

My father is old and last year he fell unconscious during the Taraweeh Salaah. He became conscious the following evening after Maghrib Salaah. My father had an intention to fast the

following day but he was unconscious the entire day. Does he have to make Qadha of the fast in which he remained unconscious?

### Answer

In principle, the time to make an intention for the fast of Ramadhaan is from Maghrib time until the time of Duha (a period before mid-day). Hence, in the enquired situation, the fast of your father has been observed even though he was unconscious the following day as he had an intention to fast the following day. Therefore, there is no Qadha of the fast in this situation. More so, being in a state of unconsciousness does not invalidate ones fast. (Haashiyatut-Tahtaawi Ala-Maraaqil-Falaah 2/293)

*Mufti Ismaeel*

### Question

I was told that the applying of vicks whilst fasting breaks the fast as it enters the head and brain by using it. And if anything enters the stomach, head and brain whilst fasting, it will break the fast? Is this correct?

### Answer

In principle, if the things that breaks ones fast reaches ones brain or stomach through the main channels of the body i.e. the mouth, nose, front or back passage it will nullify ones fast.

In the enquired case, by applying vicks on the head, the actual vicks does not reach the brain. The vicks merely has an effect on the brain. As such, if a person applies vicks on the head and it has an effect of the brain, the fast will not be nullified. (Badaai' -us-Sanaai' 2/93)

*Mufti Ismaeel*

### Question

Is it compulsory for a Musaaafir to fast whilst on a journey?

### Answer

It is not compulsory for a Musaaafir to fast whilst on a journey. Sharee'at has granted him

a concession not to fast and to make up for the missed fast upon returning home after the month of Ramadhaan. However, if the Musaa-fir is able to fast during his journey then this is more rewarding.

*Mufti Zakaria*

### Question

Is there any difference between Kaffarah and Fidyah?

### Answer

There is a difference between Kaffarah and Fidyah.

The term Kaffarah refers to the penalty upon a person who intentionally breaks his fast for no valid Shari' reason by either eating, drinking or engaging in conjugal relations during the fast of Ramadaan. In the case of Kaffarah becoming obligatory on a person, a person will have to fast for 60 days consecutively. If a person cannot fast for 60 days consecutively due to a valid Shari' reason, for e.g., old age or a chronic illness, then he would have to feed 60 poor people two full meals a day, or feed one poor person two full meals a day for 60 days. The average type of a meal is 1.6kg of wheat or flour or its value. (Maraaqil Falaah 1/250/1)

The term Fidyah refers to the compensation paid by a person who is terminally unable to fast due to chronic ill health or old age in lieu of the fast of Ramadaan. If there is hope of recovering the missed fasts in the future, then Fidyah may not be given and Qadha is obligatory. If there is no hope of recovering the missed fasts in the future, Fidyah will be paid for every fast of Ramadaan.

The Fidyah amount per fast is 1.6kgs of wheat or flour or its value. The Fidyah amount has to be got confirmed from the concerned before paying.

Fidyah per each individual fast or the entire month of Ramadaan may only be given after the commencement of Ramadaan. It may be given to a poor Muslim over a period of thirty days;

or to thirty Muslims in one day; or the entire amount may also be given to one Muslim in one day. (Shaami 2/74)

*Mufti Ismaeel*

### Question

Is it permissible for a person have conjugal relations with his wife before Sehri and take a bath after Sehri?

### Answer

It is permissible for husband and wife to engage in conjugal relations from sunset until Subah Sadiq (true-dawn). Hence, it will be permissible for husband and wife to engage in conjugal relations before Subah Sadiq (true-dawn) and take a Ghusal after Subah Sadiq (true-dawn). However, one should take a Ghusal as soon as possible so that Fajr in the Masjid is not missed. (Al-Bahrur-Raa'iq 2/293)

*Mufti Ismaeel*

### Question

Can I fast while I am on my periods?

### Answer

A woman in Haidh (menstruation) is exempted from fasting during the month of Ramadaan. If a woman experiences Haidh during a fast/s of Ramadaan, it is compulsory upon her to make Qadha of the fasts in which she experienced Haidh. Hence, she cannot fast whilst in the state of Haidh. (Badaai'-us-Sanaai' 2/94).

However, even though she cannot fast in the state of Haidh, she should not eat or drink openly in observing the sanctity of the month of Ramadaan. (Shaami 1/253).

*Mufti Ismaeel*

### Question

Can we make a single niyyat for 20 rakaats of taraweeh salaah or do we need to make a niyyat at the beginning of every two rakaats taraweeh ?

### Answer

It is not necessary to make an intention of Taraweeh Salaah for every two Rakaats of Taraweeh Salaah. The intention at the beginning of the Taraweeh Salaah to perform twenty Rakaats of Taraweeh Salaah is sufficient. (Al-Bahrur-Raa'iq 1/294)

This applies to both, males and females.

*Mufti Ismaeel*

### Question

I will not be able to sit for Sunnah I'tikaf from the 20th night of Ramadaan. Can I start my Sunnah I'tikaf from the 21st night of Ramadaan?

### Answer

The time to observe the last ten nights of Sunnah I'tikaaf commences from the 20th night of Ramadaan i.e. from Maghrib time and terminates on the sighting of the moon of Eid. Hence, in order for a person to complete the Sunnah I'tikaaf of the last ten nights of Ramadaan, a person will have to avail himself at the Masjid on the 20th of Ramadaan prior to Maghrib time. If however, a person availed himself on the 20th of Ramadaan at the Masjid after Maghrib time (21st of Ramadaan), a person will not be able to observe the Sunnah I'tikaaf of the last ten nights of Ramadaan. However, a person may make an intention for Nafl I'tikaaf. Therefore, in the enquired case, if you wish to commence your Sunnah I'tikaaf of the last ten nights of Ramadaan on the 21st night of Ramadaan, it will not be a valid Sunnah I'tikaaf of ten nights and you will have to commence on the 20th night of Ramadaan for it to be valid. (Al-Bahrur-Raa'iq 2/329)

Note: The 20th of Ramadaan will be on Sunday, the 26th of June 2016. All brothers that wish to observe the Sunnah I'tikaaf should avail themselves at their respective Masjids prior to the Maghrib time of the 20th of Ramadaan.

*Mufti Ismaeel*

### Question

Is there Qadha of Taraweeh once the time

passes?

### Answer

Once the time passes, one cannot make qadha of the taraweeh salaah.

*Mufti Ebrahim*

### Question

Does vomiting break the fast?

### Answer

Generally, a person vomits due to sickness, nausea or an upset stomach. This type of vomiting does not break the fast.

The only vomiting that will break the fast is induced vomiting. Induced vomiting is when a person forces him/herself to vomit, for example by putting a finger in one's throat. An additional condition to this, is that the vomit that comes out must equal a mouthful for the fast to break. If the amount of vomit from induced vomiting is less than a mouthful, the fast will not break. (Hindiyyah)

The definition of "mouthful" is that amount which one cannot hold back in one's mouth without difficulty.

*Mufti Ismaeel*

### Question

Is sadaqatul fitr waajib on a person who has debts?

### Answer

If after deducting his debts, his wealth equals the nisaab of zakaat then sadaqatul fitr will be waajib on him.

*Mufti Zakaria*

### Question

Is it necessary for a wealthy person to discharge the sadaqatul fitr on behalf of his minor children?

### Answer

It is necessary for a wealthy person to dis-

charge the sadaqatul fitr on behalf of his minor children.

*Mufti Zakaria*

### Question

Who is eligible for sadaqatul fitr?

### Answer

Those people who are eligible for zakaat are eligible for sadaqatul fitr.

*Mufti Zakaria*

### Question

Last night in Taraweeh Salaah, the Imaam made a serious mistake that invalidated the Taraweeh Salaah and the two Rakaats of Taraweeh Salaah was repeated. My question is, if the Imaam corrected the serious mistake in the second Rakaat that was made in the first Rakaat, would the Salaah be valid? Or is it still necessary to repeat the Taraweeh Salaah?

### Answer

If the Imaam makes a mistake in his recitation of Quran that changes and alters the meaning of the verse so drastically that it would render the Salaah null and void, then by the Imaam rectifying the verse, whether immediately thereafter or in the same Rakaat (first Rakaat) or second Rakaat, the Salaah will become valid. (Hindiyyah 1/82)

This rule is general and applies to all Salaah.

*Mufti Ismaeel*

### Question

Is sadaqatul fitr only waajib on those who fasted in Ramadhaan?

### Answer

Sadaqatul fitr is waajib on those who fasted in the month of Ramadhaan as well as on those who did not fast e.g. Women in the state of nifaas, the sick, the traveller etc.

*Mufti Zakaria*

# Taubah Nusuh

*O those who believe, turn to Allah with a faithful repentance. It is hoped from your Lord that he will write off your faults, and will admit you to the gardens beneath which rivers flow. (66:8)*

The word taubah, literally, means 'to turn' or 'to return', in the sense of turning or withdrawing from sins. In the terminology of the Qur'an and Sunnah, it signifies 'to regret committing sins in the past and to firmly resolve abstaining from them in future'. Taubah is qualified in the verse by the word *nasuh*. If it is taken as the infinitive of *nasahal nasihah*, it signifies 'to make pure and sincere'; and if it be derived from *nasahah*, it signifies 'to repair clothes by sewing'. In terms of the first meaning, the expression *nasuh* signifies sincere/faithful [repentance], free from pretence and hypocrisy. In this interpretation, a sinner is required to regret the sins he has committed and give them up purely for the pleasure of Allah and for fear of Divine chastisement. In terms of the second meaning, *nasuh* would signify that 'the sinner is required to repair the torn clothes of righteous deeds'. Sayyidna Hasan Basri (ra) says that *taubatan nasuha* signifies that a person should regret his past evil actions, and make a firm resolve never to repeat them. Kalbi says the phrase *taubatan nasuha* signifies that a person should pray for pardon with his tongue, regret in his heart, and should prevent the limbs of his body from committing sins in the future.

Sayyidna 'Ali (RA) was asked as to what is 'taubah' and he replied that it consists of six elements: [1] to regret one's past evil deeds; [2] to carry out Divine duties that were missed; [3] to

restore the rights that were usurped; [4] to ask forgiveness of a person who has been wronged by him physically or verbally; [5] to make a firm resolve of avoiding the sin in future; and [6] to consume one's self in obedience of Allah as one thus far consumed one's self in His disobedience. [Mazhari]. In fact, all of the conditions of 'taubah' put forward by Sayyidna 'Ali Radhi-Allahun 'Anhu: Allah be pleased with him are recognized by all the scholars. However, some have described them concisely and others in details.

The verb 'asa means 'it is hoped'. In this context, it purports to mean 'promise', but the expression of 'hope' is used to indicate that taubah or any other righteous deeds are not the just and equal price for the Paradise or the divine forgiveness. In fact, one compensation for man's good deeds has already been given to him in this world in the form of worldly blessings. Therefore, as regards the law of equality, it is not necessary that he is further compensated by the Jannah. It entirely depends on Divine grace and favour as is mentioned in a Hadith which says: 'Your actions alone cannot salvage you.' The Companions inquired: 'O Messenger of Allah, not even you?' He replied: 'No, not even me unless the Divine grace and mercy covers me.' [Bukhari and Muslim as quoted by Mazhari]

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



# Lessons from Sahih Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

## Chapter 47 : Putting the right foot first when entering the mosque and other places.

Ibn Umar put his right foot first (when he entered), and when he left he put out his left foot first.

### Purpose of Tarjmatul Baab

It is recommended to execute virtuous deeds or acts from the right hand side. Therefore, one should - out of honour and respect to a mosque - put his right foot first when entering it. In order to substantiate his statement, Imam Bukhari has quoted the practice of Ibn Umar in the title of this chapter.

### Hadith No. 415

#### Narrated Aisha

*The Prophet used to start every thing from the right (for good things) whenever it was possible in all his affairs; for example: in washing, combing or wearing shoes.*

### Comments

According to Sayyida Aisha, Rasulallah (SAWS) liked it to start all good deeds and actions from the right hand side; for example putting the shoes on, combing the hair, performing wudu or gusul etc.

As per the learned scholars, it was only a habit not a matter of Ibaadah that Rasulallah

(SAWS) would do an act from the right; that is why the jurists consider it 'Mustahab' and not sunnah.

### Following Rasulallah (SAWS) even in trivial matters

Since Rasulallah (SAWS) was divinely guided, it is better to follow him even in matters trivial in nature than to follow a self considered 'good approach'. Sheikh Abdul Gani Mujaddidi says:

“Our scholars say that following the Sunnah, even in matters trivial in nature like putting left foot first when entering a toilet, is better than a Bid'at-i-Hasana' like establishment a Madrasah that may be of great significance”.

### Following the Sunnah enlightens the heart

One should remember what Allah says in the Qur'an:

*There is indeed a good model for you in the Messenger of Allah (33:21)*

Imam Shaaf'ee (ra) said, “The first of manners which should be followed is that which the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) did. (al-Adab' by al-Bayhaqi, Tawjee al-Muqtasid]

Abul Abbas bin 'Atta said, “Whoever adheres to the manners of the Sunnah then Allah enlightens his heart with the light of knowing his (SAWS) Sunnah. There is no station/

status more noble than following the beloved (SAWS) in his commands, actions, his manners and in following his manners in statements and actions and intentions.” (Zuhud al-Kabeer, Tawjee al-Muqtasid)

Shaykh ul-Islaam Ibn Taymeeyah said, “Know that it is obligatory upon every mature, intelligent person from mankind and the Jinn to testify that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah, and that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger.

Allah sent him with the guidance and the religion of the truth to make it uppermost above all religions, and Allah is sufficient as a witness. Allah sent him to all of creation, mankind and Jinn, the Arabs and the non-Arabs, the Persians and the Indians, the Barbarians and the Romans, and all the different types of non-Arabs, black and white. What is meant by non-Arabs is those who do not have the Arab language, amongst all their different languages.

So Muhammad (SAWS) was sent for every single person from the humans and the Jinn, whether they are from those who follow a revealed Book or not. He was sent for every single person in relation to his Deen, from the inward matters and outward ones, regarding his beliefs, realities, methods and his legislations.

So there is no ‘Aqeeda/belief except the Messenger’s (SAWS) ‘Aqeeda, and there is no reality except his reality, and there is no method except his method, and there is no legislation/Sharia’ except his Sharia’/legislation.

No one from the creation can reach to Allah, and to His pleasure, and His Paradise, and to His Generosity, and His Guardianship except by following the Messenger (SAWS) inwardly and outwardly, and in sayings and actions inwardly and outwardly, in statements of the heart and its beliefs, and the conditions of the heart and its realities, and the statements of the tongue and the actions of the limbs. (Majmoo Fatawa)

### **Chapter 48 : Is it permitted to dig up the graves of idolaters from the time of Jahiliyya and to use the place as a Masjid, taking note of the saying of the Prophet, “Allah cursed the Jews who took the graves of their Prophets as Masaajid.” What is disliked concerning praying where there are graves.**

Umar saw Anas ibn Maalik offering Salaah where there was a grave and said, “The grave! The grave!” But he did not order him to repeat it.

### **Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab**

Here Imam Bukhari wants to discuss a well debated issue viz., the construction of a mosque over a graveyard of idolaters, in case of an exigency. Here the question arises whether the mosque may be constructed on the graves itself or dug them out prior to the construction. Imam Bukhari holds that the graves be dug out and then take up the construction. He quotes a hadith of the Prophet (SAWS) which reads, “Allah cursed the Jews who took the graves of their Prophets as mosques”. Here the learned scholars have widely debated Imam Bukhari’s selection of quoting this hadith here, and also its relation with this chapter’s title. There are two possibilities for which the Jews have been cursed, one - the worship and high respect they paid to the graves of their prophets, second - the construction of mosque they made over the graves of the prophets which amounted to their (prophets’) disrespect. The second possibility, however, seems unlikely, and it is probably the first because of which they were cursed. Another thing mentioned in the Tarjamatul Baab is the direction of Sayyiduna Umar to Anas Bin Maalik with regard to abstention of offering salaah near a grave. By quoting this incident, Imam Bukhari wants to convey the Islamic view vis-à-vis the offering of Salaah near a grave. The issue is that practice of offering Salaah a grave is undesirable, but the Salaah, in principle, shall be valid.

## **Hadith No. 416**

### **Narrated Aisha**

Umm Habiba and Umm Salmah mentioned about a church they had seen in Ethiopia in which there were pictures. They told the Prophet about it, on which he said, “If any religious man dies amongst those people they would build a place of worship at his grave and make his pictures in it. They will be the worst creature in the sight of Allah on the Day of Resurrection.”

### **Comments**

Umm Habeeba and Umm Salmah had migrated to Habsha along with their husbands Abdullah bin Jahesh and Abu Salmah respectively. When Abdullah bin Jahash died while in Habsha, Najashi—the ruler of Habsha, got Umm Habeeba married to Rasulullah (SAWS) and even paid her Mahr (dower). Umm Salmah also married Rasulullah (SAWS) later when her husband Abu Salmah died in Madinah after their return from Habsha. These two ladies had stayed in Habsha for some time and seen some churches there. Once they described one of the churches of Habsha to Rasulullah (SAWS) wherein they had seen some pictures and statues. Rasulullah (SAWS) informed them that in ancient times when a famous person would die, people would keep his picture or statue in a mosque to show reverence. Rasulullah (SAWS) added that as the time passed the beliefs of the people got deviated and they started worshipping these pictures and statues.

Rasulullah (SAWS) further said that these people would be the worst creatures in the sight of Allah on the day of Qiyaamah for the reason that they had innovated an evil and pervert practice in the world by converting the graves of their prophets into the places of worship.

### **Lessons from the hadith**

1. This is one of the last statements made by Rasulullah (SAWS) during his final days, so

there is no chance of interpreting it in any other way. It is strictly prohibited in Islam to decorate or convert the graves of the prophets or men of Allah (Waliullah) into worship places.

2. It is strictly prohibited to make caricatures or keep pictures and photographs of living creatures.

## **Hadith No. 417**

### **Narrated Anas**

*When the Prophet arrived Medina he dismounted at 'Awali-i-Medina amongst a tribe called Banu Amr bin Auf. He stayed there for fourteen nights. Then he sent for Bani An-Najjar and they came armed with their swords. As if I am looking (just now) as the Prophet was sitting over his Rahila (Mount) with Abu Bakr riding behind him and all Banu An-Najjar around him till he dismounted at the courtyard of Abu Aiyub's house. The Prophet loved to pray wherever the time for the prayer was due even at sheep-folds. Later on he ordered that a mosque should be built and sent for some people of Banu-An-Najjar and said, "O Banu An-Najjar! Suggest to me the price of this (walled) piece of land of yours." They replied, "No! By Allah! We do not demand its price except from Allah." Anas added: There were graves of pagans in it and some of it was unlevelled and there were some date-palm trees in it. The Prophet ordered that the graves of the pagans be dug out and the unlevelled land be levelled and the date-palm trees be cut down. (So all that was done). They aligned these cut date-palm trees towards the Qibla of the mosque (as a wall) and they also built two stone side-walls (of the mosque). His companions brought the stones while reciting some poetic verses. The Prophet was with them and he kept on saying, "There is no goodness except that of the Hereafter, O Allah! So please forgive the Ansars and the emigrants. "*

## Comments

Arrival at Quba during Hijrah (migration) from Makkah

During the migration from Makkah al-Mukarramah, Rasulullah (SAWS) on his arrival to Madinah first stayed few kilometres away from Madinah at a place called Quba which was inhabited by the people of Banu Amru-bin-Auf tribe. According to some narrations Rasulullah (SAWS) stayed there for 24 days, however, as per some other narrations the stay lasted for 14 days. It is at this place that the first ever Masjid—the Masjid-i-Quba was constructed. Rasulullah (SAWS) in his later years would visit this mosque on Saturdays after the Fajr Salaah, and offer two rak'ats optional (nafl) salaah there. It is narrated that Rasulullah (SAWS) arrived at Quba on Monday the 8th of Rabee-ul-Awal.

## Arrival at Madinah

The clan of Banu-Najjar living in Madinah were related to Rasulullah (SAWS) through his mother's side. On sending a word to them, the leaders of Banu Najjar came to him hanging their swords down - the sign considered a mark of reverence. They took Rasulullah (SAWS) along with Abu Bakr Siddiq to Madinah mounted on a she-camel, while the leaders of Banu Najjar accompanied them on foot. There, every tribe invited Rasulullah (SAWS) to stay with them, but he told that that he would stay where his she-camel, who was to act under the divine inspiration, would halt. It stopped near the house of Abu Ayub Ansari and he got the honour to host Rasulullah (SAWS). It is also narrated that the she-camel got up from that place and went to the place where Masjid-i-Nabawi was later constructed, then returned back and again sat in front of Abu Ayub Ansari's house.

## Historical background of Abu Ayub Ansari's house

The author of 'Eidhahul Bukhari' has written that one thousand years before Rasu-

lullah (SAWS), a king from Yeman called Tubba' Awwal along with four hundred scholars came to Makkah al-Mukarrama where he raised the Gilaaf (covering) over the Ka'ba, and then moved to Madinah. These four hundred scholars sought the permission of Tubba Awwal to stay at Madinah. Asking them the reason, they informed him that as per their knowledge what they had read, the last prophet by the name of Muhammad would be raised from Madinah. The king Tubba' Awwal not only allowed them to stay but himself also stayed for some time. He constructed a house for each scholar, gave them lot of money, and also constructed a house for the last Prophet (SAWS) and instructed them to make him stay in that house when he comes. He also left a letter for Rasulullah (SAWS) acknowledging his faith in him and handed it over to one of the grand scholars with the instruction to hand it over to Rasulullah (SAWS) whenever on his arrival. He also instructed the grand scholar, if the Prophet (SAWS) didn't turn up during his (Tubba' Awwal's) lifetime, then he should handover the letter to his children with the instructions. Abu Ayub Ansari belonged to the progeny of the same grand scholar and he had inherited that letter from his father which he presented to Rasulullah (SAWS). This house of Abu Ayub Ansari was the same house which was constructed by king Tubba' Awwal for Rasulullah (SAWS). These four hundred scholars were the grand forefathers of the clans of Oas and Khadhraj living in Madinah.

## Construction of Masjid-i-Nabawi

For six month, after coming to Madinah, Rasulullah (SAWS) offered Salaah anywhere, sometimes even inside camel pens. After six months, he decided to construct a mosque, and for this purpose the same place was selected where his she-camel had moved to from the house of Abu Ayub Ansari. This piece of land belonged to two orphans namely Sahl and

*Cont'd on page 18*

# A Pathetic State of Existence

*Syed Iqbal Zaheer*

*While the moral condition – and, thereby, the socio-economic condition – deteriorates by the day all over the globe, the East looks relatively more stable than the Western world, which, as is said in common parlance, is all but going to the dogs.*

Starting 9/11, an event more and more Americans suspect was a home-enacted ghastly drama, life on the planet is turning anarchic at an alarming rate. As the public sensitivities get blunted to higher and higher degrees, especially in the West, apathy to zombie style occurrences and events get more and more scary, and a sense of resignation seems to settle down, leading to the implosion of individual personalities. Although the worsening situation seems to be getting worse all over the globe, today, the East sounds more stable, than the West, which, as they say in common language, seems to be going to dogs.

Is this anti-West, anti-American rant? Well, read what a (presumably American commentator has to say about the present situation in USA:

“Watching the bizarre spectacle of the State of the Onion was difficult. I changed the word union because America is better described as an onion, a vegetable which brings tears to your eyes and has many layers all of which bring tears. As you peel layer after layer off America you don’t strike gold but dross and death. Yeah,

that’s something they are good at: killing largely defenseless people and destroying their infrastructure.”

Those interested may read more of such love letters at: [www.dangerouscreation.com/](http://www.dangerouscreation.com/)]; or any site where intellectuals hub together.

All decency in public and private life, in business and politics, in arts and culture, in war and peace, in religion and literature, seems to have been packed in an urn and sunk in the deep sea of shamelessness. From priest to atheist, from the professor to the bootlegger, from criminals to dignitaries, all seem to be in a free fall. Talk of principles, honor, self-respect? Blah! “Talk of money. Talk of sex. Talk of stone-age in the M.E.”, and now you sound interesting.

Talk of 55,000 photographs of 11,000 estimated Muslims starved to skeletons, and killed without a bullet fired, in the prisons of the butchers ruling Syria, and it doesn’t ruffle anyone’s hair in the diplomatic, organizational and charitable circles of the West. Talk of a man beaten in Kiev, Ukraine, and their earlobes stand upright, like those of a rabbit trying to pick the noise of a creeping predator. Read on a report:

“The bloodied appearance of a badly maimed opposition protester on Ukraine television has sent shock waves through the international diplomatic community. At issue was the high visibility case of badly injured Dmytro Bulatov, an activist who said that his captors kept him in a dark room and partly cut off his ear. ‘I am particularly appalled by the cruel treatment and torture of Dmytro Bulatov and reports that there are attempts to arrest him from his hospital bed,’ said one politician. ‘This is completely unacceptable and must stop immediately.’”

How sickening the reaction! The naked bodies of thousands of Muslims in Syria carried by the media during these very days, of skeletons with twisted faces, huge marks of axes rained on them, bodies gored deep with steel instruments, all so harrowing that the scene can turn the devils away in disgust; but, for whom do the Western leaders shed their bucket of tears: it is for some(one) injured during clashes in Ukraine.

The media sunk down the news of 55,000 photos with news widely discussing stories of the North Korean concentration camps. How many could be there in those camps exactly? Perhaps a couple of hundreds. The inmates suffer a variety of punishments for whatever the state says is a crime. But what about the 11,000 tortured to death by the Syrian soldiers in prison, whose guards accept chocolates from a woman, and hand over her son’s corpse to her, while chewing the gifted chocolates? And they laugh. And the Western media laughs.

But the Western politician does not laugh. He is crying, albeit for a different reason. He moans:

“The international community must act on evidence that crimes against humanity are being committed in North Korea, says a long-awaited UN report. A panel of experts mandated by the UN’s Human Rights Council said North Koreans had suffered ‘unspeakable atrocities,’ and that those responsible, including leader, Kim Jong-un, must face justice. Michael Kirby,

chairman of the independent Commission of Inquiry, said the report ‘calls for attention from the international community.’”

So, holding a couple of hundreds in concentration camps is a “crime against humanity.” But torture-killing tens of thousands in prisons is not a “crime against humanity.” The leader of the regime in North Korea registers a crime for imprisoning and torturing a couple of hundreds of detainees in the concentration camps and so, “must face justice,” but the leader of the regime in Syria, who, even as the bucket-full of tears are shed, holds tens of thousands of Muslims in detention centers, from which only the dead can escape out, “may not face justice.” Many wonder, is the beastly regime in Syria more rotten at the core, or the free, democratic, developed regimes of the advanced nations?

Although the West’s incurable hatred of Islam and Muslims, which can be traced back to 1500 years ago, is not news to us, yet, until it happened, we would never believe that the champions of human rights, free will, participation of the masses in political processes, would stoop so low – lower than the beastly regime – is an alarming phenomenon to us.

Even as the tiny minority (of the Nusayris) promoted to power and preferred over the 95% Sunnis, by the British, back in the course of its mandatory role in Syria during the last century, which happens to be the seed of the tree of immense suffering at the hands of this tiny minority, is paying its dividends, haven’t the values and principles of civilized life developed a little after they left the Middle-east, taken any root in Britain and rest of the West?

The answer is a straight no. The high sounding slogans about democracy, will of the people, rights of the individual, and the rest of it all, is, in truth, garbage. A single injured Kiev man on the TV, a few stories of malnourished former detainees of detention centers in North Korea, deserve international attention, but the 55,000 genuine photos of corpses with torture marks

all over their bodies, calls for no international attention.

What can then be the consequences of such grotesque mentality, such outrageous policies, such deep-rooted hatred regarding those who “differ from them” but to give birth in their own masses, psychological sicknesses of new-est kinds, with little hope of cure during their life-times? Reports, for example, released by several organizations in the USA had predicted a steep rise in mental and social disorders resulting from climate change-related events in the coming years, including depression and anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, suicide and widespread outbreaks of violence. Has the prediction come true? Yes indeed, true to every punctuation of the predictions. But if millions of American should suffer emotional fallout, and mental abnormalities in consequence of mere climate-related happenings, and the new generation of Americans are so easily susceptible to psychological disorders, then, could they fall victim to psychological and psychiatric disorders owing to their apathy to the sufferings of their own kind – but in other lands?

Referring to the natural disasters in USA, a report says, “The scientific data show that what lies ahead will be bigger, more frequent, and more extreme than we have ever known.” If natural disasters can lead to such consequences, then, what about those sufferings which are the result of their policies put into place decades ago, and their present lack of concern to immense sufferings of tens of thousands, either at their hands, or at the hands of their proxies?

Said a spokesperson of the institutions that conducted the survey: “Many people will experience an inordinate risk and their minds will be changed because of it.” Will not what is predicted with reference to natural calamities, come true with reference to the attitude of the people towards victims of unspeakable suffering?

Observe how sensibilities are blunted. Says

a recent report, “The UN has denounced the Vatican for ‘systematically’ adopting policies allowing priests to sexually abuse thousands of children.” The UN watchdog for children’s rights said the Holy See must “immediately remove” all clergy who are known or suspected child-abusers. It heavily criticized the Vatican’s attitudes towards homosexuality, contraception and abortion. But what is the reaction? It is sweet smiles by the clergy. This report tell us but that when you commit crimes against humanity, either openly, or from behind the scenes, and take satisfaction in your achievements, then, you too can commit, and then become immune to crimes amongst yourselves, crimes as odious as sexual abuse of thousands of angelic children, by those very people who promise to take them to Paradise.

One may read on, keep watching and hearing appalling news one after another: E.g.,

“More than 1,200 people are under investigation for a US military recruitment fraud during the Iraq war, officials say. Two generals and dozens of colonels are implicated in the alleged scheme, in which referral fees were illegally collected for recruiting soldiers. The fraud is said to have cost the US government at least \$29m.”

Said a spokesman:

“We’re talking about one of the largest criminal investigations in the history of the Army. High school principals and guidance counselors were said to have accepted money for recruiting students who they knew were already planning to join the US military.”

Claire McCaskill told USA Today, “This is discouraging and depressing,” she added. “[It] is just a mess from top to bottom.”

Read on:

“Eight people, including three diplomats, are facing charges in Greece in connection with an alleged fraud involving an anti-landmine charity. The former head of the unnamed charity and his wife are among those involved in the long-running inquiry which relate to 9m Euros

(\$12m; £7m) given to the NGO between 2000 and 2004 by the Greek foreign ministry.”

Here is another report,

“According to the EU’s Home Affairs Commissioner, corruption in EU costs ‘120bn Euros’ and warns of staggering levels of corruption in member countries.”

Here is another charmer: “EU rate-rigging are ‘appalling examples of misconduct.’” The Commission vice-president, Joaquin Almunia, said, “It was shocking that banks supposed to be in competition were colluding with each other.”

Such are institutional criminal records. Look up for the conduct at high places:

“Spain’s Princess Cristina is being questioned in court in connection with a corruption scandal involving the business dealings of her husband. It is the first time in history that a member of Spain’s royal family has appeared in court as the subject of a criminal investigation. Her husband, Inaki Urdangarin, is alleged to have defrauded regional governments of millions of Euros of public money.”

It says, “It is the first time in history...” But will it be the last time? Will this humble beginning have an end?

Such are the news at the corporate and group level. Watching the news at the individual level has the function of depressing you further. Here is just one, “Woman posts photo of her breastfeeding dog.” She claims it was to save the life of her pup. She said that:

“...the little fella, named Tubbs, wouldn’t eat from a bottle or take K-9 formula. He just wasn’t taking it. I didn’t know what else to do, I was desperate and I just couldn’t bear sitting there watching it die. Literally what clicked in my head was like, ‘put him on you, just pray to God he will take something and not die.’”

Her breast swells in sympathy of a pup, who could be fed in ten other ways, but, with the sympathy lost over dogs, the Western public is left with no sympathy for a million Muslims forced out of Syria because their government

has flattened entire towns.

55,000 photos of estimated 11,000 men, starved, stabbed, speared and gored, would have provoked hue and cry for months and years in media and general public. Whisper the words, “These are Muslims,” and hear them say, “How sad,” and change the conversation.

Yes, sad. How sad, that the blind international communities open the doors for other similar catastrophes.

YMD Mar-14

## **Importance of Istighfaar**

Ibnu ‘Umar (RA) has reported that Nabi (SAWS) would recite istighfaar seventy times in each majlis (sitting).

(Through this we understand the importance of istighfaar and how necessary it is for us to make istighfaar. Despite Allah stating in the Qur’an with regards to Nabi (SAWS):

Allah has forgiven all your past and future shortcomings. (Surah Fath, v2)

and him being sinless, yet Nabi (SAWS) would still make so much of istighfaar in each sitting. Hence, how much more should we endeavour in making istighfaar due to our countless shortcomings.)

(Malfoozaat of Faqeehul Ummat, vol. 1, pg. 410)



# The No-Dread Ramadan

Ramadan is upon us and the Internet is almost overflowing with excitement. But some of us feel a sense of anxiety mixed with our enthusiasm for Ramadan – maybe even dread.

Sure, we know what a blessing Ramadan is. It's a chance to be forgiven, to get a much-needed boost in spirituality and practice. It's a golden opportunity for us to rid ourselves of bad habits and reorient our purpose towards our Maker. It's a pillar of Islam.

But on the flip side, especially if you've had difficulty fasting in the past, you might feel stressed out and worried. You can't help but run down the obstacles you know you will face: your whole schedule will be turned upside down, you'll be faced with fatigue and weakness, unable to sleep a full night, and the usual daily responsibilities will remain unchanged. This year, if you live in the northern hemisphere, the fast can last 16-21 hours or even more.

Perhaps you don't feel totally healthy and strong. You may fear juggling a strenuous work schedule, prayers and the strain of fasting. Maybe you're afraid of going all day without coffee. Whatever it is that causes your anxiety about Ramadan, it's not too late to tackle those fears once and for all.

Below are some tried and true, and most importantly – simple – pointers to help get your mind, body and soul in harmony so that

you can make the most of the best month of the year.

## **To Fast or Not to Fast**

First, you should establish that it is safe for you to fast. Not everyone is required to. Those who are travelling, sick, or some women who are pregnant or nursing can forgo fasting and make up the days when their condition permits. People with chronic illness or severe weakness can feed the needy one meal per day without having to make up the days. If you aren't able to fast this year, the following tips can still be helpful. Read on.

## **Mind Over Matter: The Power of Optimism**

Research shows that when you have a positive frame of mind, you are more likely to see positive results in life. The positive thinking that typically comes with optimism is a key part of effective stress management. (Mayo Clinic) Managing stress effectively produces numerous health benefits, like improved immune health.

If you tend to be pessimistic about Ramadan, don't despair — you can learn positive thinking skills that can help you ease into Ramadan and truly get the most out of it.

Thinking optimistically about Ramadan doesn't mean ignoring its challenges, or pretending it's going to be a piece of cake. It just means that you will approach those challenges

in a more productive way: Imagine the best is going to happen, instead of the worst.

For example, instead of thinking, “It’s going to be hard getting up so early for suhur, then working all day, then praying at night – I won’t get anywhere near enough sleep!” A more positive way to think about that scenario is this: “I know I will be sleeping less at night, and that working during Ramadan will be a challenge, but I’m sure I can find a solution.” Then, find ways to take a good nap after work, or after Fajr. Don’t be stubborn!

### Your Body is an Amana

We need to understand that Allah has given us these bodies to carry us through this life. They’ve been given to us as a trust (amana), and how we care for them is a matter of fulfilling that trust. On the Day of Judgment, you don’t want to feel regretful for having trashed the vessel Allah gave you. Here are some simple ways to care for your fasting body properly:

### Sleep

It’s just a matter of fact: Your schedule will need alteration in Ramadan. I detest sleeping during the day, but for me, napping when the days are long, is a must. For mothers and others with highly demanding jobs, it may sound impossible, but remember – think positively! Try speaking openly with your spouse, or other family members and friends to ask for a little help so that you can get some sleep.

### You Are What You Eat

Are you a UFO – an Unidentified Fried Object? Yuck! We live in a time overrun with processed, fried and low-nutrition food. Obesity and cancer are reaching epidemic levels. Being more conscious of what we consume and how it affects our overall health can cure much of our illness and lethargy insha’Allah. This Ramadan, follow these simple guidelines:

**(1) Hydrate.** Allah said,

*We made every living thing from water. [21:30]*

Our bodies are over 70% water. Therefore, staying hydrated is crucial to staying healthy and makes fasting easier. For Iftar, drink water – avoid sugary drinks and shakes. I’ve found that water with the juice of ¼ lemon is perfectly refreshing. Think about how much water you would need to drink on a normal day and realize you will need to consume that much water overnight in Ramadan. Dehydration can be dangerous. Make water your first priority.

**(2) Eat Suhur.** I once thought eating suhur was like cheating. I was wrong. Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) said,

*Eat suhur; indeed, there is a blessing in suhur.*

*[Bukhari and Muslim]*

Need I say more?

**(3) Nutrition.** You have less time to eat, so you’ve got to make it count. Every bit of food you put into your body should have a purpose other than pleasing your taste buds. If it’s not going to boost your energy and provide essential nourishment, skip it.

Ramadan is about self-control. It makes absolutely no sense to control yourself so well all day, only to go crazy eating empty calories and unhealthy junk all night.

I’ve found a simple way to ensure I’m eating what’s best for my body: eating simple, whole foods: fresh fruits, raw or simply prepared vegetables, grilled meats, soups, and simple grains. The Prophet (SAWS) said,

*How excellent are dates for the believer’s suhur.*

*(Abu Dawud)*

Dates are a great source of nutrition and also help maintain hydration, and they require no preparation! So keep it simple this Ramadan and be sure to eat healthier choices first.

**(4) Eat Less.** Do you over-compensate for not eating all day by eating a huge iftar meal? Don’t! Studies have shown that some Muslims eat more calories, fat, carbs and protein causing significant increase in body weight despite reduced meal frequency in Ramadan. (Pub Med)

Manage your portions and stop before you feel full. This is in line with the prophetic approach of eating less overall while fasting.

**(5) Vitamins.** For those of us with health issues, incorporating vitamins into our daily routine can help us feel healthier and more energetic. I've found a combination of vitamins that I take regularly during Ramadan helps me stay stronger all month long.

## Soul Food

*Fasting has been prescribed for you, as it was before you so that you may attain taqwa.*  
[2:183]

This month, strive for consciousness of Allah in all you do. We don't want to be the ones who get nothing from our fasts other than hunger and thirst, but that is exactly what we risk when we allow our lives, and the unnecessary stress we feel about Ramadan to overwhelm us and distract us from remembrance of Allah.

Although fasting is physical, its significance lies largely in displaying gratitude to our Lord for having guided us. Take advantage of His providence and read, absorb and ponder over the Quran –plenty– this month.

While your stomach is growling, remember the One who provides you with every morsel of food, every drop of water. Without the sustenance Allah provides so graciously — even when we're ungrateful, even when we forget Him — How fragile and pathetic we are!

*Tell me, if all your water were to disappear in the depths of the earth, who then, will bring you pure running water? [67:30]*

## No Need to Stress

Allah said,  
*The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for mankind, and clear proofs of the guidance, and the Criterion (of right and wrong) ... Allah intends ease for you; He does not desire hardship for you; and wants you to complete the period, and that you*

*magnify Allah for having guided you, and that perhaps you may be thankful. [2:185]*

Our Lord wants ease for us, and He wants us to succeed, to return to Him pleased and happy. Ramadan is not a burden or an affliction. It's no less than a blessing –a much needed opportunity for us to improve ourselves and advance in this test of life.

Overcome your fears and anxiety by taking my advice: think positively, take extra care of your body, connect with the Quran, be grateful and aware of Allah. And don't forget to make dua'!

*There are three people whose dua's are not rejected: the fasting person until he breaks the fast, the just ruler and the duca' of the oppressed. (Tirmidhi)*

The Almighty is able to help you. Fast with sincere intent and call upon Him throughout the days and nights. By Allah's permission, you might just have the best Ramadan ever. Then insha'Allah next year, instead of fearing the approach of Ramadan, you'll be with the ones saying, "Oh Allah let us reach Ramadan!"

*Danielle Loduca  
Coutesy: al-Jumuah*

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*Cont'd from page 11*

Suhail from Banu Najjar clan, who were under the supervision of either Asad bin Dhurarah or Maudh bin Ufra. Rasulullah (SAWS) asked the leader of Banu Najjar to suggest a price of the land. They first refused to take money against it and instead expressed their wish to donate it but Rasulullah (SAWS) did not agree. He asked Abu Bakr to pay them the price of the land. It is said that Abu Bakr paid them ten Dhirhams. There were graves of infidels and some date-palm trees in it. The graves were dug out, the uneven portion of the land was levelled and the date-palm trees were cut down and aligned as a wall towards the Qibla of the Masjid.

# Making Time Count

*A. Abdullah*

If you ever left a project to the last second or begun studying only the night before a big exam in school, then you know the desperate feelings that can accompany procrastination. Even those who claim to work well under pressure usually realize that they could have done a much better job by pacing themselves and taking more time to complete their studies or project. But when it's already 3 a.m., and your term paper is due in another five hours, there is little time to think about what you should have done—it is already too late.

From day to day, the pressure of deadlines, and the consequences of missing them, force us to perform. For example, if we don't pay our bills, we know that we will be without water and electricity the next month. Failing to maintain the car properly can have disastrous results on the road. And showing up late for an interview almost guarantees that we won't get the job.

By making it a habit to delay important tasks, we often just scrape by and never give our best. In school, it's often all about the marks we get. But can we feel satisfied with a passing grade knowing that we haven't put forth much effort?

The way we deal with life's deadlines is closely related to our treatment of the bigger one we all have in common: the moment of one's death, the time known only to Allah. Since the time we are in the womb, Allah sets this deadline for us; and our greatest test in life revolve around how we decide to use the time we've been allotted.

**Avoid the Soldiers of Satan**

Ibn Al-Jawzi, one of the early scholars said, Beware of procrastinating. It is the greatest of the soldiers of Satan.

Indeed, procrastination eats away our time, making us neglect our duties and postpone good deeds. It can damage relationships and lead to laziness in all aspects of life. It is no surprise, then, that many procrastinators have difficulty establishing regular acts of worship, such as salah, either delaying prayers until their time has almost expired, or failing to pray altogether.

Viewed as the enemy it is, it is easy to see why we have to fight procrastination with everything we have, learning to use our time wisely and to engage in the activities that will benefit the Ummah and strengthen our ties with Allah.

## **Getting Organized**

Taking lessons from experts in project management, we can learn to manage our time effectively by setting goals and breaking large jobs into smaller phases. This way, we avoid vague statements such as "Someday, I will start reading Qur'an." Instead, we can commit to reading at least one page per day at a specified time, thereby establishing a good habit that is easy to keep up with and which enriches our lives.

Handled in the same manner, writing a twenty-page term paper is no longer a daunting task and can be completed in twenty days or even less. You see, once we get started with something, it often becomes impossible to put it down or stop working on it. Procrastination affects us by making the start of a project seem

unbearable, but this unpleasant sensation is often just an illusion.

We can see this clearly when it is time to wake up for fajr prayer. Without faith, determination and a clear presence of mind, it can be a terrible struggle to abandon a warm cozy bed for ablution and Prayer. But once we actually do it, everything changes, and we feel relief at having begun our day under Allah's protection.

Writing down the things we need to accomplish every day can help us respect time and use it appropriately, whether it is for household work and chores, acts of worship or anything else. Regarding salah, one girl striving to manage her time better describes the daily Prayers as "appointments" with Allah that cannot be missed. Taking one appointment at a time has helped her in conquering her desire to sleep through fajr and to make it on time for the rest of her prayers as well.

### Getting Busy

It is an interesting fact of life that busy people tend to get more things done than do people who have fewer responsibilities. Busy people know that their time is limited; therefore they do not feel at liberty to waste it.

According to the nature of Islam, Muslims are by definition busy people. So long as there are problems such as hunger, ignorance, poverty, oppression and war, the Muslim cannot and should not relax. So long as there are children to be raised, friends to be comforted, relationships to be nurtured and communities to be built, Muslims have to stay active. Our lives can be used in a number of useful and important ways, but we have to be willing to take the first steps and make some sacrifices for our cause.

Allah tells us:

*And whoever desires the Hereafter and exerts the effort due to it while being a believer – those are the ones whose effort is appreciated [by Allah]. [17:19]*

In this verse, we see that it requires both faith

and hard work to earn Allah's pleasure. As we don't know what tomorrow will bring, we have to take advantage of our youth, good health and freedom to do as much as we can in the time we have available. What's more, our good deeds are magnified during these periods of relative ease, when it is more difficult to give up the pleasures of this life.

Allah says in the Quran:

*Be quick in the race for forgiveness from your Lord... [3:133]*

He also says:

*So strive as in a race in all virtues... [5:48]  
And He describes the believers as those "who hasten in every good work." [23:61]*

All of this reminds us that procrastination prevents us from living up to our potential and is not a characteristic of the believing Muslim, who aspires to make use of his or her time in the best possible manner.

*"The intelligent one is he who suppresses his desires and practises for what is after death, and the foolish one is he who makes his nafs follow its desires, and places (baseless) hope on Allah."  
(Tirmizi)*

# A Time for Thought, Action, and Change!

*Taha Ghayyur & Taha Gaznavi*

“Fasting in Ramadan develops in a person the real spirit of social belonging, of unity and brotherhood, and of equality before God. This spirit is the natural product of the fact that when people fast they feel that they are joining the whole Muslim society (which makes up more than one fifth of world’s population) in observing the same duty, in the same manner, at the same time, for the same motives, and for the same end. No sociologist or historian can say that there has been at any period of history anything comparable to this powerful institution of Islam: Fasting in the month of Ramadan. People have been crying throughout the ages for acceptable ‘belonging’, for unity, for brotherhood, for equality, but how echoless their voices have been, and how very little success they have met...” says Hammudah Abdalati, in *Islam in Focus*.

“What is fasting?” “How does the fasting of Muslims in Ramadan differ from the fasting of other faiths?” “Why should one ‘torture’ one’s body in the first place?” “What do you really gain from fasting in the end?”...These are a few questions that a number of non-Muslim friends and colleagues often ask us, usually out of fascination with this spiritually-uplifting practice of Islamic faith, and at times out of pity and sympathy for us, thinking, why should anyone suffer from hunger and thirst like Muslims? I wouldn’t

be surprised if many of us shared the same negative perception of Fasting.

It is important to note that Fasting in Arabic is called, “Sawm”, which literally means ‘to be at rest’. Fasting in the month of Ramadan (the 9th month of the Islamic lunar calendar) is one of the Five Pillars upon which the “house” of Islam is built. During this month, every able-bodied Muslim, is required to fast, everyday from dawn until dusk

## **Reasons To Fast!**

1. Fasting is an institution for the improvement of moral and spiritual character of human being. The purpose of the fast is to help develop self-restraint, self-purification, God-consciousness, compassion, the spirit of caring and sharing, the love of humanity and the love of God. Fasting is a universal custom and is advocated by all the religions of the world, with more restrictions in some than in others. The Islamic Fast, as opposed to mere starvation or self-denial, is an act of worship and obedience to God, thanksgiving, forgiveness, spiritual training, and self-examination.

2. Ramadan gives us a break and provides us with a rare opportunity to think about our own selves, our future, and our families. It is a time to give our selves a mental break and to temporarily forget about the hundreds of worries and

stresses we are constantly bombarded with. In hectic times, such as ours, and in places like the West, this valuable time to think about our lives, on individual basis, is a luxury and is desperately needed! It is a unique month of self-analysis, and of taking stock of one's moral and spiritual 'assets and liabilities'.

3. Fasting indoctrinates us in patience, unselfishness, and gratitude. When we fast we feel the pains of deprivation and hunger, and learn how to endure it patiently. The meaning of this powerful experience in a social and humanitarian context is that we are much quicker than anybody else in sympathizing with the oppressed and needy around the world, and responding to their needs. "It is the month to visit the poor, the sick, and the needy to share their sorrows. It is the month where the food, sustenance and the earnings of a believing Muslim increases and they are blessed," says the Final Prophet of God, Muhammad (peace be upon him), a man who was known for his noble humanitarian causes, for social justice, and for being the first to respond to other's needs, despite the fact that he himself lived a very simple and humble life. It is only during such a trying time as Ramadan that we can reflect on the condition of those in this world who may not be as fortunate as us.

4. Fasting in Ramadan enables us to master the art of mature adaptability and Time-Management. We can easily understand this point when we realize that fasting makes people change the entire course of their daily life. When they make the change, they naturally adapt themselves to a new system and schedule, and move along to satisfy the rules. This, in the long run, develops in them a wise sense of adaptability and self-created power to overcome the unpredictable hardships of life! A person who values constructive adaptability, time-management, and courage will appreciate the effects of Fasting in this respect as well.

5. It cultivates in us the principle of sincere Love, because when we observe Fasting, we do

it out of deep love for God. And a person, who loves God, truly is a person who knows what love is and why everyone on this Earth should be loved and treated justly, for the sake of God.

6. Fasting elevates the human spirit and increases our awareness of God. It strengthens our will-power as we learn to rise above our lower desires. The institution of fasting is both unique and a shared experience in human history. From the very beginning of time, humans have struggled to master their physical and psychological selves: their bodies and their emotions. Hunger is one the most powerful urges that we experience. Many, through over- or under-eating or consumption of unhealthy foods, abuse this urge. Thus, when a person purposefully denies something to their own self that it craves, they are elevating their mind above their body, and their reason and will above their carnal passions. "A fasting person empties his stomach of all the material things: to fill his soul with peace and blessings, to fill his heart with love and sympathy, to fill his spirit with piety and Faith, to fill his mind with wisdom and resolution," says H. Abdalati in *Islam in Focus*. The person who can rule their desires and make them work, as they like, has attained true moral excellence.

7. With the clarity of mind and absence of distractions, also comes a greater focus. As students, the period of fasting, especially early during the day, serves as a tool to focus our minds on our academics. In the month of Ramadan, many Muslims try to avoid watching TV, listening to music, and some other leisure activities, which spares them more time and energy to be spent on more productive activities such as academics, intense study of Islam, voluntary prayers, social and humanitarian causes, and a quality time with the family, to name a few. It is a reminder of our duty to God, our purpose and higher values in life, as God Himself describes the purpose of fasting as follows, "O you who Believe! Fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that

you may develop consciousness of God” (Quran 2:183).

8. Fasting has numerous, scientifically proven, benefits for our physical health and mental well-being. The time, length and nature of the Islamic Fast all contribute to its overall positive effect. One of the medical benefits is a much-needed rest to the digestive system. The reduced food intake during the day allows the body to concentrate on getting rid of harmful dietary toxins accumulated as natural by-products of food digestion throughout the year. The length of the Islamic Fast itself (around 12-14 hours) is in sync with the ‘transit time’ of food from the mouth to the colon of the large intestine, ensuring that no stimulus reaches the stomach or digestive system while it remains in homeostasis. Therefore, for the vast majority of healthy individuals fasting poses no medical risks but in fact provides many health benefits, such as: an increase in serum Magnesium, essential for cardio-vascular health and prevention of heart complications; improvement in the quality and depth of sleep; improvement in memory and slower skin aging over time; increased production of growth hormone, etc. Also, as a general note, it has been observed that underfed animals live longer than their heavily fed counterparts and suffer fewer illnesses during their lives.

9. The month of Ramadan provides us with a sort of “Boot camp.” It is a month of intense moral training. Since we know that Fasting is a special duty prescribed by God, we learn that any sins may spoil our record of fasting with God, so we go through great lengths making sure we are on our best behavior. Many people who experience fasting in this month, feel the impact that this intense training has on their habits, and realize the power of this transformative tool designed to make us better human beings- the ultimate goal of any spiritual exercise. The entire Ramadan atmosphere provides the driving force for this positive change.

10. It makes us realize the reality of life and death. Fasting makes us realize how dependant our lives are on things that we often take for granted, such as food and water. It makes us think about our dependence on God and God’s mercy and justice. Moreover, it reminds us of the life after death, which itself has a great impact on our character and our world-view.

11. Ramadan is a blessed month for a special reason: It is actually the month in which God first revealed His final message and guidance for mankind to our beloved Prophet Muhammad. This message has been perfectly preserved both orally and textually in the form of a Book, called the Qur’an (The Reading/Recital). Therefore, Muslims try to do an intense study of the Quran in this month especially, and evaluate their lives according to the standards and guidance contained in it.

12. After the month of Ramadan is over, Muslims celebrate one of the two most important holidays in the Islamic year: EID-UL-FITR, or the Festival of the Fast Breaking. It is a day to thank God for the blessing and training that He provides us with throughout the month of Ramadan. EID-UL-FITR is marked by praying in a huge congregation at an Islamic center or mosque, and by giving a small donation to the poor in the community. The adults give the donation on behalf of their children as well. Dinner parties, family outings, fairs, carnivals, and great joyous celebrations follow the prayer and charity.

In a nutshell, even though the real purpose of the dynamic institution of Fasting is to discipline our soul and moral behavior, and to develop sympathy for the less fortunate, it is a multi-functional and a comprehensive tool of change in various spheres of our lives, including: social and economic, intellectual and humanitarian, spiritual and physical, private and public, personal and common, inner and outer ---all in one!



# Proper Way to Contemplate the Qur'an

*Ibn Qayyim Jawzi (ra)*

*One day He will gather them together: (It will be) as if they had lived only an hour of a day—just getting to know each other... [10:45]*

*On the day when they see it, it will be as if they had but lived for an evening or its morning. [79:46]*

*On the day when they see that which they are promised (it will seem to them) as though they had lived for but an hour of daylight. A clear message. Shall any be destroyed save the transgressors? [46:35]*

*In whispers will they consult each other: "You lived not longer than ten (days); We know best what they say, when the fairest of them in course would say: (In fact) you lived for not more than a day! [20:103-104]*

Once the messenger of Allah said to his Companions at a time when the evening was drawing near and the sun was barely above the mountains, *What is left of this world compared to what has passed of it is no more than what has been left of this day compared to what has passed of it. (Ahmad)*

## Contemplating the Quran

Reflection upon the Quran is accomplished when the heart sees its meanings, and the mind becomes focused on grasping its implications and the purpose of its revelation. Mere mindless recitation is not sufficient. God Almighty has said:

*(It is) a Book We have revealed to you abounding in good that they may ponder over its verses, and that those endowed with understanding may be mindful. [38:29]*

Three things aid proper contemplation (tafakkur):

- (1) Thinking of the transience and shortness of this life and avoiding long hopes;
- (2) reflecting on the Quran; and
- (3) avoiding corruptions that ail the heart.

To recognize the shortness of this life and nearness of death is most beneficial for the heart and impels the believer to take advantage of every moment of his or her life, moves the focus of attention and concern to the Abode of Eternity, encourages one to compensate for what is missing in the preparation for the journey, and makes one abstemious in matters of this ephemeral life.

If one persists in such contemplation, it leads one to see the truth of this life—and how little of it is left—less than what remains on one's finger when dipped into an ocean, while the ocean is the eternal life of the Hereafter. The sun of this world has set—as if just setting down the hilltops in the evening.

The conditions and signs prophesied to mark the end of times have come true. Death and you, as if two friends on their way to meet each other—and any moment you two shall meet and embrace each other.

Sufficient it is to recall the words of the Almighty:

*Do they not then reflect on the Quran, or are their hearts locked up? [Surat Muhammad, 47:24] We have made it an Arabic Quran so that you may understand. [43:3]*

Commenting on this latter ayah, Al-Hasan [Al-Basri] remarked,

He has revealed the Quran so that it may be pondered, reflected, and acted upon.

There is nothing more beneficial for a servant of God, both in matters of this life and the next, than thinking about the Words of God—meditating upon them for long periods of time, concentrating one’s mind (thoughts) and heart (emotions, feelings, desires) on these words. This meditation upon the meanings of the verses of the Quran:

- Meditation endows one with true knowledge of good and evil—of their essence, their means and their consequences.
- It establishes the foundations of the fortification of faith in one’s heart, raises its walls and strengthens its pillars.
- It shows one the images of Heaven and Hell, shows him around (as if in a museum of human history) the past nations and peoples and lays bare their great and tragic days, points out to him the immense lessons hidden in these events and makes him recognize the justice and mercy of God upon His servants.
- It tells him about God, His Names, attributes and deeds.
- It shows him the path that leads to Him and the rewards that await the one who successfully treads His path.
- It warns him of the robbers and the calamities on the path.

To sum up, meditation upon the meanings of the Quran gives the servant

- True knowledge of his Lord
- The way to reach Him
- The generous reward that His Lord has prepared for him
- Knowledge of what Satan calls towards
- The ways that lead to it
- The humiliation and chastisement that lie on

this ignominious path

It is necessary for the servant to know and ponder upon these above six matters.

Reflection upon the Quran shows one the Hereafter as if he were witnessing it with his own eyes; it diminishes this world in his eyes as if he were not in it. It bestows upon him the ability to distinguish between the truth and the falsehood in every disputed matter of this world. It shows him the truth as the truth, and falsehood as falsehood.

### **The message of the Quran**

- Revolves around the concept of Tawhid, its evidence and manifestations, and other attributes of Allah—all marked by perfection and infinitude—in which the Almighty is unique.
- Includes the knowledge of Allah’s apostles, evidence of their truthfulness, and their rights (upon the humanity who is indebted to them and must honor and follow them).
- Speaks of belief in Allah’s angels, and in the Last Day.
- Speaks volumes of the greatness and inevitability of the Last Day which will bring with it the eternal torment for some and eternal luxury and joy for others.
- Calls the servant towards his Lord with beautiful promises and warns him of a terrible punishment.
- Guides him through the confusion of human opinions (ara’) and madhahib (sub-paths, narrower paths within Islam or outside it—tr.) to the one right path.
- Strengthens him against the paths of innovation and deviation.
- Encourages him to be vigilant in being thankful to his Exalted Lord, and be persevering in calamities and difficulties that he might encounter in Allah’s path. It calls out persistently: Beware, beware! Hold on to God and ask for His help ... and say,

Sufficient for me is Allah—and He is the best advocate.

*Translated by Ovamir Anjum*

# There is no Life Without Haya

*Khalid Baig*

Imam Shu'bah ibn Hajjaj was riding his horse when Abdullah intercepted him. Abdullah was a known street urchin. Not only he was given to a life of sin, he was also unabashed about it. Imam Shu'bah knew that trouble was ahead when Abdullah stopped him.

Shu'bah (d. 100 A.H) is known as the "Amirul Momineen fil hadith." He is one of the foremost scholars of the science of Hadith Criticism. Abdullah knew his stature as a great hadith scholar, but he was bent on having some fun. "Shu'bah! Tell me a hadith," he said with mischief in his eyes. "This is not the way to learn hadith," Imam Shu'bah replied. "You are going to tell me a hadith or else..." Abdullah threatened. When Shu'bah realized that he could not talk his way out of this he said: "OK, I'll tell you a hadith." He then narrated the isnad (a chain of narrators) and then the hadith: "Prophet (Allah's peace be upon him) said: "If you have lost haya then do whatever you feel like."

Abdullah's demeanor changed suddenly. It was as if the Prophet (Allah's peace be upon him) had himself caught him in his mischief and was speaking to him: "Abdullah, if you have lost haya then do whatever you feel like." He was totally shaken. "I just wanted to cause trouble for you,"

he admitted, "but please extend your hand. I want to repent."

This hadith turned a life around. Abdullah, the street urchin, became a student and then a great scholar of hadith. Today he is known as Abdullah ibn Maslamah Qan'awi. His name can be found repeatedly in Sihah Sitta or the six most authentic collections of hadith, especially in the collection of Imam Abu Dawud who was his disciple.

What is haya? It is normally translated as modesty or inhibition but neither word conveys the same idea as haya. Modesty suggests shunning indecent behavior but it also implies bashfulness based on timidity. That is why the adjective based on its opposite, immodest, is sometimes also used as a compliment suggesting courage. Inhibition is defined as: "Conscious or unconscious mechanism whereby unacceptable impulses are suppressed." This is a very neutral definition with no reference to right or wrong. So one finds psychiatrist "helping" their patients overcome inhibitions.

In contrast to the moral ambiguity of these words, haya refers to an extremely desirable quality that protects us from all evil. It is a natural feeling that brings us pain at the very idea of

committing a wrong.

Along with its unique connotation comes the unique value of haya in Islam. Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) said:

*“Every religion has a distinct call. For Islam it is haya.” [Ibn Majah].*

Another famous hadith says:

*“There are more than 70 branches of Iman (Faith). The foremost is the declaration that there is no god except Allah and the least of it is removing harmful things from the path. And haya is a branch of Iman.” [Bukhari, Muslim].*

As some Muhaditheen point out, the number 70 is a figure of speech. What the hadith tells us is that the declaration of faith is the most important part of Iman but that is not all. Iman also has to reflect itself in all kinds of actions in real life. Moreover, haya is a centerpiece of most of the actions that Iman calls for. It is the basic building block of Islamic morality. When it is lost everything is lost.

Based on such teachings, Islam brought about a moral revolution of unprecedented dimensions with haya as its cornerstone. The pre-Islamic Jahilya society of Arabia knew the word but did not understand its meaning. Nudity, the antithesis of haya, was not only common in every day life, it was even part of the most important religious ritual of tawaf (circumbulation of Ka’bah). So were all the other evils that flow from it. Islam exterminated all of those evils and changed the society in such a way that haya became one of its most cherished values. To this day in Friday Khutbahs around the world, the third Khalifah Hazrat Usman (RA) is mentioned as the person with perfect haya and perfect Iman (Kamil lil-haya wal Iman). Is there any other religion that celebrates haya like that?

Islam’s laws about hijab, its ban against free mixing of men and women, its teachings about gender-relations — all of these reflect a deep concern for haya.

For men and women who have not lost their haya, these come naturally. There is a moving sto-

ry from the earlier Islamic period about a woman who learnt that her young son had been lost in a battle. She ran in a panic to confirm the news, but before that she took time to make sure that she covered herself fully in accordance with the newly revealed laws of hijab. She was asked how did she manage to do that in a time of great personal tragedy. She replied: “I have lost my son, but I did not lose my haya.”

And for centuries afterwards Muslim societies did not lose their haya. When Muslim lands came under the western colonial rule about three centuries ago, they were faced with a civilization that was no different than the pre-Islamic Jahilya on the issue of haya. While it did not have better morality, it did have better guns. At the gunpoint of military and political domination, Muslim societies were made to loose their grip on haya on the collective scale. The powerful and attractive media became an important instrument in this war. First it was books, magazines and newspapers. Then radio. Now it is television. Together they projected ideas and images detrimental to haya. They made indecency attractive. The pace was increased tremendously by television, which has shown more firepower than all the previous media combined.

When historians write about the moral decline in Muslim societies in the twentieth century, they will probably underscore television in subverting the moral fabric of society. We can get a sense of the rapidity of our fall by realizing that what was unthinkable just a decade ago has become routinely accepted today. In some cases, we seem to have lost all control. Isn’t it shocking that while contraceptive ads cannot be shown on TV in the U.S. or U.K for moral reasons, they are freely shown in Islamic countries?

We can get out of the morass by making haya as our number one concern in both individual as well as public lives. There is no Islamic life without Islamic morality. There is no Islamic morality without haya.

# The Only Valid Path?

*J. Idrees*

Is Islam (the religion and way of life the Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) came with) the only path to God? Does the Qur'an extend the validity of religions beyond Islam; to any who believe in God and act rightly? Or does the Qur'an insist that Islam is the exclusive and only path to God? And what of the idea that some have culled from their personal reading of the Qur'an that at the heart of the world's major religions and faiths, there is an essential unity of truth?

Our discussion concerning the above delicate and, in our current time, controversial questions are addressed through the following points:

1. The Qur'an is categorical when it says: He who seeks a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he shall be among the losers. [3:85] Elsewhere it states: The [true] religion in Allah's sight is Islam. [3:19] Whatever other verses may be marshalled in this issue, these two must surely lie at its heart.

2. Turning to the words of the Prophet (SAWS), we find him informing: "By Him in whose Hand is the life of Muhammad! Anyone from this nation, be they a Jew or a Christian, who hears of me and dies without believing in what I have come with, shall be among the inhabitants of Hell."<sup>1</sup> Fleshing out the hadith's theological implications, Imam al-Nawawi said: 'It contains [a proof] that all religions have now

been abrogated by the prophethood of our Prophet (SAWS). Also, in its explicit meaning is a proof that those to whom the call of Islam does not reach, are excused.'<sup>2</sup>

3. Not only has the religion of Islam that the Prophet (SAWS) was sent with superseded all previously revealed heavenly teachings, this last dispensation or "version" of Islam is a universal one too. The Qur'an says: Say: 'O Mankind! Truly I am the Messenger of Allah to you all.' [7:158] Al-Ghazali said in his magisterial *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* – "Revival of the Religious Sciences": 'Allah sent the Qurayshi unlettered Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) with His divinely-inspired Message to the entire world: to Arabs and non-Arabs, jinn and mankind. The Prophet's Sacred Law has abrogated and superceded all earlier revealed laws, except those provisions in them that the [new] Sacred Law has reconfirmed.'<sup>3</sup>

4. Over the past eight decades or so a view has arisen which alleges that Islam affirms the validity of other religions, denying or failing to mention that they have long since been abrogated. Recourse has been taken to the following passage to justify the claim: Those who believe [in the Qur'an], the Jews, the Christians, and the Sabaeans; whosoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does what is right, shall be rewarded by their Lord; no fear will come upon

them, nor shall they grieve. [2:62] This verse, it's claimed, extends the validity of religions beyond just Islam, and the possibility of salvation beyond just Muslims, to whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day. The error of such a claim can be gauged from the next three points:

5. Apart from ignoring the above proof-texts to the contrary, this view stands against Islamic orthodoxy which states, as per Imam al-Nawawi: 'One who does not consider a person who follows a religion besides Islam – like a Christian – to be a disbeliever, or doubts that such a person is a disbeliever, or deems their religion to still be valid, is himself a disbeliever – even if, along with this, he manifests Islam and believes in it.'<sup>4</sup> Such, then, is the enormity of the error and the magnitude of its misguidance. Qadi 'Iyad affirmed a consensus about this, saying that: 'there is a consensus (ijma') about the disbelief of one who does not consider as disbelievers the Christians, Jews and all those who part from the religion of the Muslims; or hesitates about their disbelief, or doubts it.'<sup>5</sup>

6. How then should the above verse [2:62] be read? Scholars of tafsir, along with their belief that the Qur'an's message now supersedes all previous heavenly teachings, offer these interpretations for the above verse: [i] It is said to refer to those seekers of truth who believed in the imminent arrival of the final Prophet – like Habib al-Najjar, Qays b. Sa'adah, Waraqah b. Nawfal, Zayd b. 'Amr b. Nufayl, Bahirah the Monk, Salman al-Farsi and Abu Dharr al-Ghiffari. Some of them reached the Prophet (SAWS) and accepted Islam at his hand. Others didn't reach him, but are nonetheless included among those who believe in Allah and the Last Day. [ii] It refers to the believers of previous nations, following the prophets of their respective times. [iii] It's claimed to refer to those Jews and Christians who, prior to accepting Islam in the time of the Prophet (SAWS), followed the unaltered teachings of Moses and Jesus; peace be upon them both. [iv] A few say it refers to the hypocrites;

which is somewhat odd.<sup>6</sup> Whatever the correct intent of this passage is, the view which extends salvation unrestrictedly, to include even those who deny the Prophet Muhammad's prophethood, is conspicuous by its absence in the classical tafsir literature.

7. Ibn Kathir helps put the above verse into context with his customary hermeneutics; he explains: 'The faith of the Jews was that of those who adhered to the Torah and the way of Moses, peace be upon him, until the arrival of Jesus. With the advent of Jesus, those who followed the Torah and the Mosaic Laws, not leaving them to follow Jesus, were doomed. The faith of the Christians was that of whoever adhered to the Gospel and to the teaching of Jesus. They were believers and their faith valid till the advent of Muhammad (SAWS). Those who rejected Muhammad (SAWS), by not leaving the Gospel and Jesus' way are doomed ... This doesn't conflict with what 'Ali b. Abi Talha relates from Ibn 'Abbas that: Those who believe [in the Qur'an], the Jews, the Christians, and Sabaeans; whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day was followed by Allah revealing: He who seeks a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him, and in the Afterlife he will be among the losers. For what Ibn 'Abbas is simply informing is that no path is acceptable from anyone, nor any deed, unless it conforms to the shari'ah of Muhammad (SAWS) now that he has been sent. Prior to this, anyone who followed the particular prophet of his time was upon right guidance and the path of salvation.'<sup>7</sup>

8. In the above light, philosophies that speak of the "Essential Unity of Religions", or "Perennialism", are disbelief (kufr). The metaphysics of these philosophies is such that they insist the world's major faiths: Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity, like Islam, all contain at their heart a core set of esoteric truths, despite them differing immensely in their external appearance, forms and practices – and even in many of their beliefs. They also believe that

these major religions, again like Islam, still retain their validity even today. The metaphor used to describe the Unity of Religions is that of a bicycle wheel. The spokes represent the different religions; the hub symbolises God, the Supreme Being, the Transcendent Reality. Just as the spokes come closer to each other as they near the hub, so too, as each path comes closer to the One Reality, it comes closer to all other paths. Now as appealing as it sounds to some, it can never pass for authoritative, orthodox Quranic teachings – as has been shown.

9. Asserting that such Perennialist philosophy is clear disbelief (*kufr*) does not amount to an accusation that each specific individual who holds such a belief is necessarily an unbeliever (*kafir*) – as is well attested to in mainstream Sunni theology. The maxim in this matter runs as follows: *laysa kullu man waqa'a fi'l-kufr sara kafir* – ‘Not everyone who falls into disbelief, becomes a disbeliever.’ The shari’ah upholds the distinction between a general charge of disbelief (*takfir ‘amm*), and the charge of disbelief upon a specific individual (*takfir mu’ayyan*). Ibn Taymiyyah said: ‘They have not given proper consideration that making *takfir* has conditions (*shurut*) and impediments (*mawani*) that must be actualised if it is to be applied to a specific individual. Because a general declaration of *takfir* doesn’t imply *takfir* on a specific individual – until conditions are fulfilled and impediments lifted.’<sup>8</sup>

10. The Perennialist Philosophy (*religio perennis*) was first propagated in the late 1930s. It was Frithjof Schuon who would bring this idea to its fruition. Among those who came under Schuon’s influence were those like Martin Lings, Gai Eaton and Seyyed Hossein Nasr (the first two also being converts to Islam). Such Muslims who, through a hugely errant *ta’wil* or interpretation that misled them into perennialism, are part of a highly learned body of authors and academics who offer some of the finest critiques of modernity from a traditional perspective, and profoundest spiritual expositions of Islam

to modern beleaguered hearts and minds. That their writings have, by Allah’s grace, brought so many Westerners into the fold of Islam is beyond doubt. Perennial beliefs aside, their writings are a reminder that to hold to a simple faith without much intellectual and spiritual content is no longer possible in our modern world. For the spirit of our times asks questions, questions for the most part hostile to faith, which demands answers. And those answers can only come from informed and thoughtful faith; from adequate familiarity with modernity’s philosophical underpinnings; and from reflective study, introspection and meditation.

11. Interestingly, the late Martin Lings wrote in *The Eleventh Hour* about the theory of man’s evolution that if it is indeed true, why didn’t God tell believers about it to begin with, or at least gradually bring them into it? Why did He allow religion after religion to repeat the same old ways of thinking, and prevent prophet after prophet from ever divulging its true nature? Yet He allowed a mere non-prophet to discern its reality and propagate it in defiance of all spiritual authorities of the time.<sup>9</sup> And yet a similar line of argument can equally apply to the belief in perennialism. For using the same rhyme and reason one could ask: Why didn’t Allah tell believers about this to begin with, or wean them steadily onto it? Why did Allah allow prophet after prophet to repeat the same ways of thinking, or prevent them from disclosing its true nature? And yet, we are to believe, He allowed a mere non-prophet to arrive at this great existential truth, propagating it in disregard to a scholarly consensus of the past sages and present-day spiritual authorities. The point being is that if Islam’s religious authorities all deemed the belief to be *kufr*, on what basis should Perennialism be accepted?

12. What of those to whom the message of Islam has not been conveyed, or they have heard about Islam and the Prophet, but in a distorted form? Here the Qur’an presents a far wider, ecu-

menical scope: Nor do We punish until We have sent a Messenger. [17:15] Also: Whenever a fresh host is cast into it [Hell], its keepers ask them: 'Did a warner never come to you?' They will say: 'Yes, a warner came to us; but we denied.' [67:8-9] The idea of bulugh al-da'wah, "conveyance of the message," therefore, is vital in this issue; typified by the words of Imam al-Nawawi (which have already preceded in point 2) that 'those to whom the call of Islam does not reach are excused.'

13. Some to whom the message of Islam is communicated refuse to believe in it out of wilful rejection (*juhud*) of it or because of belying (*takdhib*) it. Others, however, choose not to hear the message, but instead turn away from it (*i'radan 'anha*) out of arrogance or prejudice against it, or hostility towards it – in some cases doing so knowing it is the truth: And they rejected them [Allah's signs], although they inwardly recognised them, through injustice and arrogance. [27:14] Now it's quite possible that many non-Muslims today fall into this predicament, in that some of them are capable of discerning the revealed truths of Islam. But whether out of not desiring to forsake familiar habits; or losing their standing among people; having contempt for Muslims; arrogant prejudice against them; or just out of sheer folly and misguidance, many turn away from even considering the Qur'an. Unless there are other factors to mitigate this kufr of theirs, such people will have no excuse on Judgement Day.<sup>10</sup>

14. As for those who have heard about Islam, but in a distorted form, I'll suffice with what Imam al-Ghazali wrote about the matter: 'In fact, I would say that, Allah willing, most of the Byzantine Christians and the Turks of this age will be included in Allah's mercy. I'm referring here to those who live in the farthest regions of Byzantium and Anatolia who have not come into contact with the message. These people are of three groups: [i] A party who have never so much as heard the name 'Muhammad' (SAWS). They are excused. [ii] A party who knew his

name, character and miracles he wrought; who lived in lands adjacent to the lands of Islam and thus came into contact with Muslims. These are blaspheming unbelievers. [iii] A third party who fall between the two. These people knew the name 'Muhammad' (SAWS), but nothing of his character or his qualities. Instead, all they heard since childhood is that a liar and impostor called 'Muhammad' claimed to be a prophet; just as our children have heard that an arch-liar and deceiver called al-Muqaffa' claimed Allah sent him [as a prophet] and then challenged people to disprove his claim. This party, in my opinion, is like the first party. For even though they've heard his name, they heard the opposite of what his true qualities were. And this does not provide enough incentive for them to investigate [his true status].'<sup>11</sup>

15. That some non-Muslims will be excused for their disbelief in the Hereafter doesn't mean that they are not judged as disbelievers in this world. All who have not declared the Two Testimonies of Faith, the shahadah, are non-Muslims; disbelievers. Some are actively hostile against Islam and Muslims; most are not. While it behoves a believer to wisely and sincerely seek to guide into faith those who disbelieve, it does not befit a believer to blur the distinction between faith (*iman*) and disbelief (*kufr*). Al-Ghazali gives us this rule of thumb: 'Disbelief is to reject the Prophet (SAWS) in whatever he came with, while faith is to affirm as true all that he came with. Therefore the Jew and the Christian are disbelievers due to their rejection of the Prophet.'<sup>12</sup>

16. As for the honourific distinctions given to the Jews and Christians in the Qur'an, in that they are referred to as People of the Book (*ahl al-kitab*), their chaste womenfolk are lawful to marry, and their ritually-slaughtered meat may be eaten, then this in no way excludes them from being a category of disbelievers. Fakhr al-Din al-Razi wrote, citing al-Qaffal, that 'although the *ahl al-kitab* have acquired the virtue in this



world of [us] being able to marry their women and eat their slaughtered meat. Yet this does not set them apart from the idolators in matters of the Afterlife, in terms of rewards and chastisements.<sup>13</sup>

To wrap up the discussion: The Qur'an insists that every prophet came with a core set of universal truths centred around Allah's Oneness (tawhid). The Qur'an says: We have sent to every nation a Messenger [proclaiming]: 'Worship Allah and shun false gods.' [16:36] It is possible, therefore, for Buddhism and Hinduism to have been, in the ancient past, divinely-revealed. Yet it is equally true that the Qur'an insists of previously-revealed religions and their scriptures that they have long suffered alteration and corruption at the hands of men, and that whatever revealed truths were once present in them have long since been forgotten, changed, compromised or overshadowed by corrupted and idolatrous beliefs and practices. So while the world's major faiths do show similarities with Islam, this does not prove their essential unity with it as they currently exist. For they haven't only been altered, but have also been abrogated and superceded by what was revealed to the final Prophet Muhammad (SAWS). This is why: He who seeks a

religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be among the losers. Now whether such an explanation is passionate or dispassionate, narrow and unecumenical, or born of a "madrasah mentality," it is the unanimous belief of Islam's eminent sages, jurists and theologians. It is, in other words, the Quranic truth.

That said, I think it befitting to close with these words from Shaykh Bin Bayyah, one of contemporary Islam's most revered and learned jurists: 'Of course, a devotional life in this world should be lived in peaceful co-existence with others.'<sup>14</sup> O Allah! Bless us with iman and aman – with faith and security; and make us of benefit to Islam and to humanity, and not a harm or a hindrance to them. Amin.

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1. Muslim, no.240.
2. Sharh Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1995), 2:162.
3. Ihya 'Ulum al-Din (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, 2004), 1:120.
4. Rawdat al-Talibin (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2003), 7:290. *Its like is seen in al-Buhuti, Kashshaf al-Qina' (Beirut: 'Alam al-Kutub, 1983), 6:170.*
5. Qadi 'Iyad, al-Shifa' (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm, 2002), 450.
6. Cf. al-Baghawi, Ma'ālim al-Tanzil (Riyadh: Dar Taybah, 2010), 1:57; Ibn al-Jawzi, Zad al-Masir (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami, 2002), 65.
7. Tafsir Qur'an al-Azim (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, 1986), 1:107.
8. Majmu' Fatawa (Riyadh: Dar 'Alam al-Kutub, 1991), 12:487-8. *Also see the article on this blog: Takfir: Its Dangers & Rules.*
9. Lings, The Eleventh Hour (Cambridge: Archetype, 2002), 28.
10. See: Bin Bayyah, What of Those to Whom Islam Does Not Reach?
11. Al-Ghazali, Faysal al-Tafriqah (Damascus: 1993), 84.
12. *ibid.*, 25.

## **The Reward of Pleasing a Muslim**

*'Abdullah bin 'Abbaas (radhiyallahu 'anhuma) narrates that Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) said, "Indeed (among) the most beloved of actions to Allah Ta'ala after fulfilling the faraa'idh (obligatory acts of Deen) is bringing happiness to a Muslim." (Tabraani – Majma'uz Zawaaid)*

Bringing happiness to a Muslim is an act of 'ibaadah that is easy to fulfill yet earns immense rewards. In trying to bring to bring happiness to a person, we should never consider any deed to be small and insignificant. Whether it is sharing something like a chocolate or a simple meal, or lending the neighbour flour and eggs in their hour of need, these seemingly mundane actions, when carried out with the correct intention, bring abundant rewards.

# A View from the Inside

*Nakata Khaula*

When I returned to Islam, the religion of our inborn nature, a fierce debate raged about girls observing the hijab at schools in France. It still does. The majority, it seemed, thought that wearing the head-scarf was contrary to the principle that public – that is state-funded – schools should be neutral with regard to religion. Even as a non-Muslim, I could not understand why there was such a fuss over such a small thing as a scarf on a Muslim student's head.

Muslims contributed a proportionate amount of tax to the state funds. In my opinion, schools could respect religious beliefs and practices of students as long as they did not disrupt the school routine, nor pose a threat to discipline. However, the French faced, apparently, increasing unemployment and they felt insecure about the immigration of Arab workers. The sight of the hijab in their towns and schools aggravated such insecurity.

More and more young people in Arab countries were ( and are ) wearing the hijab, despite

the expectations of many Arabs and non-Arabs alike that it would disappear as Western secularism took root in Arab societies. Such a revival of Islamic practices is often regarded as an attempt by Muslims to restore their pride and identity, both undermined by colonialism. In Japan, it may be seen and understood as conservative traditionalism, or the result of anti-Western feeling, something which the Japanese themselves experienced following the first contact with Western culture during the Meiji era; they too reacted against a non-traditional lifestyle and Western dress. There is a tendency for people to be conservative in their ways and to react against anything new and unfamiliar without taking the time to

see if it is good or bad.

The feeling still persists amongst non-Muslims that Muslim women wear the hijab simply because they are slaves to tradition, so much so that it is seen as a symbol of oppression. Women's liberation and independence is, so they believe, impossible unless they first remove the hijab.

Such naivete is shared by "Muslims" with little or no knowledge of Islam. Being so used to secularism and religious eclecticism, pick and mix, they are unable to comprehend that Islam is universal and eternal. This apart, women all over the world, non-Arabs, are embracing Islam and wearing the hijab as a religious requirement, not a misdirected sense of "tradition." I am but one example of such women. My hijab is not a part of my racial or traditional identity; it has no social or political significance; it is, purely and simply, my religious identity.

For non-Muslims, the hijab not only covers a woman's hair, but also hides something, leaving them no access. They are being excluded from

something which they have taken for granted in secular society.

I have worn the hijab since embracing Islam in Paris. The exact form of the hijab varies according to the country one is in, or the degree of the individual's religious awareness. In France I wore a simple scarf which matched my dress and perched lightly on my head so that it was almost fashionable! Now, in Saudi Arabia, I wear an all-covering black cape; not even my eyes are visible. Thus, I have experienced the hijab from its simplest to its most complete form.

What does the hijab mean to me? Although there have been many books and articles about the hijab, they always tend to be written from an outsider's point of view; I hope this will allow me to explain what I can observe from the inside, so to speak. When I decided to declare my Islam, I did not think whether I could pray five times a day or wear the hijab. Maybe I was scared that if I had given it serious thought I would have reached a negative conclusion, and that would affect my decision to become a Muslim. Until I visited the main mosque in Paris I had nothing to do with Islam; neither the prayers nor the hijab were familiar to me. In fact, both were unimaginable but my desire to be a Muslim was too strong (Alhamdulillah) for me to be overly concerned with what awaited me on the "other side" of my conversion.

The benefits of observing hijab became clear to me following a lecture at the mosque when I kept my scarf on even after leaving the building. The lecture had filled me with such a previously unknown spiritual satisfaction that I simply did not want to remove it. Because of the cold weather, I did not attract too much attention but I did feel different, somehow purified and protected; I felt as if I was in Allah's company. As a foreigner in Paris, I sometimes felt uneasy about being stared at by men. In my hijab I went unnoticed, protected from impolite stares.

My hijab made me happy; it was both a sign of my obedience to Allah and a manifestation of

my faith. I did not need to utter beliefs, the hijab stated them clearly for all to see, especially fellow Muslims, and thus it helped to strengthen the bonds of sisterhood in Islam. Wearing the hijab soon became spontaneous, albeit purely voluntary. No human being could force me to wear it; if they had, perhaps I would have rebelled and rejected it. However, the first Islamic book I read used very moderate language in this respect, saying that "Allah recommends it (the hijab) strongly" and since Islam (as the word itself indicates) means we are to obey Allah's will I accomplished my Islamic duties willingly and without difficulty, Alhamdulillah.

The hijab reminds people who see it that God exists, and it serves as a constant reminder to me that I should conduct myself as a Muslim. Just as police officers are more professionally aware while in uniform, so I had a stronger sense of being a Muslim wearing my hijab.

Two weeks after my return to Islam, I went back to Japan for a family wedding and took the decision not to return to my studies in France; French literature had lost its appeal and the desire to study Arabic had replaced it. As a new Muslim with very little knowledge of Islam it was a big test for me to live in a small town in Japan completely isolated from Muslims. However, this isolation intensified my Islamic consciousness, and I knew that I was not alone as Allah was with me. I had to abandon many of my clothes and, with some help from a friend who knew dress-making, I made some pantaloons, similar to Pakistani dress. I was not bothered by the strange looks the people gave me!

After six months in Japan, my desire to study Arabic grew so much that I decided to go to Cairo, where I knew someone. None of my host family there spoke English (or Japanese!) and the lady who took my hand to lead me into the house was covered from head to toe in black. Even her face was covered. Although this is now familiar to me here in Riyadh, I remember being surprised at the time, recalling an incident in

France when I had seen such dress and thought, “there is a woman enslaved by Arabic tradition, unaware of real Islam,” (which, I believed, taught that covering the face was not a necessity, but an ethnic tradition).

I wanted to tell the lady in Cairo that she was exaggerating her dress, that it was unnatural and abnormal. Instead, I was told that my self-made dress was not suitable to go out in, something I disagreed with since I understood that it satisfied the requirements for a Muslimah. But, when in Rome . . . So I bought some cloth and made a long dress, called khimar, which covered the loins and the arms completely. I was even ready to cover my face, something most of the sisters with whom I became acquainted did. They were, though, a small minority in Cairo.

Generally-speaking, young Egyptians, more or less fully westernized, kept their distance from women wearing khimar and called them “the sisters.” Men treated us with respect and special politeness. Women wearing a khimar shared a sisterhood which lived up to the Prophet’s saying (Allah’s blessings and peace on him) that “a Muslim gives his salaam to the person he crosses in the street, whether he knows him or not.” The sisters were, it is probably true to say, more conscious of their faith than those who wear scarves for the sake of custom, rather than for the sake of Allah.

Before becoming a Muslimah, my preference was for active pants-style clothes, not the more feminine skirt, but the long dress I wore in Cairo pleased me; I felt elegant and more relaxed. In the western sense, black is a favorite color for evening wear as it accentuates the beauty of the wearer. My new sisters were truly beautiful in their black khimar, and a light akin to saintliness shone from their faces. Indeed, they are not unlike Roman Catholic nuns, something I noticed particularly when I had occasion to visit Paris soon after arriving in Saudi Arabia. I was in the same Metro carriage as a nun and I smiled at our similarity of dress. Hers was the symbol of

her devotion to God, as is that of a Muslimah. I often wonder why people say nothing about the veil of the Catholic nun but criticize vehemently the veil of a Muslimah, regarding it as a symbol of “terrorism” and “oppression.” I did not mind abandoning colorful clothes in favor of black; in fact, I had always had a sense of longing for the religious lifestyle of a nun even before becoming a Muslimah!

Nevertheless, I balked at the suggestion that I should wear my khimar back in Japan. I was angry at the sister’s lack of understanding: Islam commands us to cover our bodies, and as long as this is done, one may dress as desired. Every society has its own fashions and such long black clothes in Japan could make people think I am crazy, and reject Islam even before I could explain its teachings. Our argument revolved around this aspect.

After another six months in Cairo, however, I was so accustomed to my long dress that I started to think that I would wear it on my return to Japan. My concession was that I had some dresses made in light colors, and some white khimars, in the belief that they would be less shocking in Japan than the black variety.

I was right. The Japanese reacted rather well to my white khimars, and they seemed to be able to guess that I was of a religious persuasion. I heard one girl telling her friend that I was a Buddhist nun; how similar a Muslimah, a Buddhist nun and a Christian nun are! Once, on a train, the elderly man next to me asked why I was dressed in such unusual fashion. When I explained that I was a Muslimah and that Islam commands women to cover their bodies so as not to trouble men who are weak and unable to resist temptation, he seemed impressed. When he left the train he thanked me and said that he would have liked more time to speak to me about Islam.

In this instance, the hijab prompted a discussion on Islam with a Japanese man who would not normally be accustomed to talking about re-

ligion. As in Cairo, the hijab acted as a means of identification between Muslims; I found myself on the way to a study circle wondering if I was on the right route when I saw a group of sisters wearing the hijab. We greeted each other with salaam and went on to the meeting together.

My father was worried when I went out in long sleeves and a head-cover even in the hottest weather, but I found that my hijab protected me from the sun. Indeed, it was I who also felt uneasy looking at my younger sister's legs while she wore short pants. I have often been embarrassed, even before declaring Islam, by the sight of a women's bosoms and hips clearly outlined by tight, thin clothing. I felt as if I was seeing something secret. If such a sight embarrasses me, one of the same sex, it is not difficult to imagine the effect on men. In Islam, men and women are commanded to dress modestly and not be naked in public, even in all male or all female situations.

It is clear that what is acceptable to be bared in society varies according to societal or individual understanding. For example, in Japan fifty years ago it was considered vulgar to swim in a swimming suit but now bikinis are the norm. If, however, a woman swam topless she would be regarded as shameless. To go topless on the south coast of France, however, is the norm. On some beaches in America, nudists lie as naked as the day they were born. If a nudist were to ask a "liberated" female who rejects the hijab why she still covers her bosoms and hips which are as natural as her hands and face could she give an honest answer? The definition of what part of a woman's body should remain private to her is altered to suit the whims and fancies of either men or their surrogates, the so-called feminists. But in Islam we have no such problems: Allah has defined what may and may not be bared, and we follow.

The way people walk around naked (or almost so), excreting or making love in public, robs them of the sense of shame and reduces

them to the status of animals. In Japan, women only wear makeup when they go out and have little regard for how they look at home. In Islam a wife will try to look beautiful for her husband and her husband will try to look good for his wife. There is modesty even between husband and wife and this embellishes the relationship.

Muslims are accused of being over-sensitive about the human body but the degree of sexual harassment which occurs these days justifies modest dress. Just as a short skirt can send the signal that the wearer is available to men, so the hijab signals, loud and clear: "I am forbidden for you."

The Prophet, Allah's blessings and peace on him, once asked his daughter Fatima, May Allah be pleased with her, "What is the best for a woman?" And she replied: "Not to see men and not to be seen by them." The Prophet, Allah's blessings and peace on him, was pleased and said: "You are truly my daughter." This shows that it is preferable for a woman to stay at home and avoid contact with male strangers as much as possible. Observing the hijab, when one goes outside, has the same effect.

Having married, I left Japan for Saudi Arabia, where it is customary for the women to cover their face outdoors. I was impatient to try the niqab (face cover), and curious to know how it felt. Of course, non-Muslim women generally wear a black cloak, rather non-chalantly thrown over their shoulders but do not cover their faces; Non-Saudi Muslim women also often keep their faces uncovered.

Once accustomed to, the niqab is certainly not inconvenient. In fact I felt like the owner of a secret masterpiece, a treasure which you can neither know about, nor see. Whereas non-Muslims may think they are life imitating caricatures when they see Muslim couples walk in the streets, the oppressed, and the oppressor, the possessed, and the possessor, the reality is that the women feel like queens being led by servants.

*Cont'd on page 46*

# The Value of Appreciation

A young person who excelled academically applied for a managerial position in a large company. He passed the first interview. The director who did the second and the last interview had to make the final decision.

The director discovered from the CV that the youth's academic achievements were excellent all the way from secondary school until postgraduate research – never was there a year he did not score.

The director asked, "Did you obtain any scholarship in school?" The youth answered, "None". The director asked, "Was it your father who paid for your school fees?" The youth answered, "My father passed away when I was one year old, it was my mother who paid for my school fees." The director asked, "Where did your mother work?" The youth answered, "My mother worked as a clothes cleaner."

The director requested the youth to show his hands. The youth showed a pair of hands that were smooth and perfect.

The director asked, "Have you ever helped your mother wash the clothes before?" The youth answered, "Never, my mother always wanted me to study and read more books. Furthermore, my mother can wash clothes faster than me." The director said, "I have a request. When you go back today, go and wash your mother's hands,

and then see me tomorrow morning."

The youth felt that his chance of landing the job was high. When he went back, he happily requested his mother to let him clean her hands. His mother felt strange, happy but with mixed feelings, she showed her hands to her child.

The youth cleaned his mother's hands slowly. His tears fell as he did that. It was the first time he noticed that his mother's hands were so wrinkled, and there were so many bruises in her hands. Some bruises were so painful that his mother shivered when they were cleaned with water. This was the first time the youth realized that it was this pair of hands that washed the clothes every day to enable him to pay the school fees. The bruises in the mother's hands were the price that the mother had to pay for his graduation, academic excellence and his future. After finishing the cleaning of his mother's hands, the youth quietly washed all the remaining clothes for his mother. That night, mother and son talked for a very long time.

Next morning, the youth went to the director's office. The director noticed tears in the youth's eyes and asked, "Can you tell me what have you done and learned yesterday in your house?" The youth answered, "I cleaned my mother's hands, and also finished cleaning all the remaining clothes." The director asked, "Please

tell me your feelings.” The youth said, “Firstly, I know now what is appreciation. Without my mother, there would not be the successful me today. Secondly, by working together and helping my mother, I now realize how difficult and tough it is get something done. Finally, I have come to appreciate the importance and value of relationship.”

The director said, “This is what I am looking for in a manager. I want to recruit a person who can appreciate help from others, a person who knows the sufferings of others to get things done, and a person who would not put money as his only goal in life. You are hired.

Later on, this young person worked very hard, and received the respect of his subordinates. Every employee worked diligently and as a team. The company’s performance improved tremendously.

A child who has been protected and habitually given whatever he wanted, would develop an ‘entitlement mentality’ and would always put himself first. He would be ignorant of his parent’s efforts. When he starts work, he assumes that every person must listen to him, and when he becomes a manager, he would never know the sufferings of his employees and would always blame others. For this kind of people, who may be good academically, may be successful for a while, but eventually would not feel a sense of achievement. He will grumble and be full of hatred and fight for more. If we are this kind of protective parents, are we really showing love or are we destroying the child instead?

You can let your child live in a comfortable house, eat a good meal, enjoy different forms of entertainment. But when you are cutting grass, let them experience it. After a meal, let them wash the plates together with their brothers and sisters. It is not because you may not have money to hire a domestic assistant, but it is because you want to love them in a right way. You want them to understand, no matter how wealthy their parents may be, one day their hair

will grow grey, same as the mother of that young person.

The most important thing is your child learns how to appreciate the efforts of their parents, experiences the difficulty they underwent and develops the ability to work with others to get things done.

Let us supplicate to Allah, the Most High, to grant our children the ability to show real appreciation to their parents for their immense favors and also to reciprocate in the best possible manner. Ameen

## Anger Management

Many times we are faced with situations where we become angry and feel the urge to vent our anger by shouting at or reprimanding those around us. We often vent our anger on those that are closest to us and those over whom we have some type of authority.

Did we ever stop for a moment and think, “How many times have I disobeyed Allah and hence earned His anger? Would I be pleased if Allah had to punish me for every sin that I commit? Would I be pleased if Allah had to deprive me of a single bounty of His, merely because I disobeyed Him?”

Definitely not! Hence, we should apply the same principle to others and overlook their shortcomings to the extent that we wish Allah to overlook ours.

# Express Your Gratitude with Love

A study published in the journal *Personal Relationships* has suggested how just a little display of gratitude between spouses is the key to improving a marriage.[1] It is not just one study, rather several that have found such levels of effectiveness of gratitude in one's marriage. According to Dr. Katia Sol in her Tedx talk on gratitude, The Gottman Institute, renowned for their work on marital stability and divorce prediction, found that the number one predictor of success in marriage is the level of gratitude the spouses express to one another.[2]

## What does gratitude (Shukr) really mean?

- Linguistically: It is that which is apparent.
- It is taken from when the Arabs used to say.[3] "The camel has expressed gratitude," meaning, the camel ate a lot of good food so it grew and it was apparent on it the effect of the food it ate.
- Technically: It is when the blessing is apparent on the one it is bestowed upon.

And there are three pillars to correctly be grateful and had we not fulfilled all three pillars then we would not be considered truly grateful for that blessing:

- Internal: sense, feel and believe that you have been blessed. You simply do not take that blessing for granted.
- Verbal: express your appreciation verbally, especially to the bestower.

- Physical: express your appreciation physically by utilizing that blessing in a pleasing way to its bestower.

Indeed, Allah is ultimately the Bestower of all blessings but remember that He uses certain beings to facilitate for you these blessings. Hence, Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) said: "Whoever is not grateful to the people, is not grateful to Allah." [At-Tirmidhi].

## Dividing deeper into each of the 3 pillars of gratitude:

### 1) Internal: Sensing the blessing

Do you recognize your spouse as a blessing? Do you feel and believe that your spouse has done any good to you?

Please realize that sensing and believing that we have been blessed with a specific blessing is the first step towards expressing true gratitude. Without it, our verbal and physical expressions of gratitude become very much ineffective and insincere.

But how can we sense that we've been blessed, that someone is a blessing in our lives?

Use the technique which Allah has taught us in the Quran to be grateful towards Him where He said:

*And remember the favor of Allah upon you..." [5:7].*

Start recalling the good that person, your spouse for the purpose of this article, has done for you. Recall all the blessings that have been



brought to your life because of Allah and then your spouse.

Disclaimer: You know best what good your spouse has done to you and what they have sacrificed for you. However, provided below are some examples that may be applicable to some married couples and you can customize examples of your own to help you maximize the benefit of feeling and sensing the blessing of having your spouse.

Realize how Allah described the relationship between husband and wife and how it is one of Allah's signs and miracles which you should ponder upon; Allah said:

*“And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought.” [30:21]*

Yes, my respected brother and sister, give it some thought...

Your spouse knows you inside out, the good and the bad. Allah described the spousal relationship as:

*“They are clothing for you and you are clothing for them.” [2:187]*

Remember my brother, the good your wife has done to you and perhaps to your children and family; carrying your child for so many months, multiple times! To some and perhaps to you, it is she who takes care of the house, cooks, cleans and spends more time than you with the children. Have you truly appreciated her efforts?

Brother, it is true that your wife has shortcomings but so do you and so does she have good qualities. Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) said:

*“A believing man should not hate a believing woman; if he dislikes one of her characteristics, he will be pleased with another.” [Muslim]*

Remember, brothers and sisters, how the

spouse is the purest source of having the sexual desires fulfilled in the most permissible and pleasing way to The Creator whereas others struggle and go as far as committing a major sin. May Allah guide and forgive those who do.

Remember my sister, how much of your husband's life is spent providing a livelihood so you and the children can live with as much of your needs fulfilled as possible. or perhaps remember his contributions to the home: when he mows the lawn, or takes the trash out or wakes up at night when the baby is crying.

Sister, Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) said: *“Allah does not look (with mercy) at a woman who is not grateful to her husband when she cannot live without him.” [As-Silsilah As-Saheehah].*

Brothers and sisters, it is very critical that we spend some time recalling the good our spouses have done in order for us to feel and sense that we have been blessed.

Prophet Muhammad (SAWS), the greatest husband of all time, was grateful to his spouse and recalled the good she has done even after she has passed away! It was narrated in the collection of Imam Ahmad how Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) would frequently remember and then praise his wife Khadijah (RA) after she has passed away. He would recall the good she has done to him and say: “She believed in me when the people have disbelieved. She assisted me with her wealth when the people refrained. And Allah has blessed me with children through her when He refrained me from getting children from other women.”

Do your best to make it a habit to recall the good your spouse has done to you especially when things are not going too well.

**2) Express your gratitude verbally: Thank you! Merci! Gracias! May Allah reward you with goodness!**

William Arthur Ward said: “Feeling grat-

itude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.”[4]

When was the last time you sent a random text to your spouse saying how much you love them and thanked them for their support and existence in your life? When was the last time you walked slowly towards your spouse without them noticing and gently wrapped your arms around them and said: “I am so blessed to have you.”

Please, do not say the following, implying there is no need to verbally express your appreciation: “Well, my spouse already knows that I love them and appreciate what they do.” Regardless, we need to verbalize these feelings. A man was with the Prophet (SAWS) when another man passed in front of them, the man with the Prophet (SAWS) said: “O Messenger of Allah! I love this man.” The Messenger of Allah (SAWS) then asked: “Have you informed him?” He replied: “No.” He said: “Inform him.” He then went to him and said: “I love you for Allah’s sake.” He replied: “May He for Whose sake you love me love you!” [Abu Dāwūd]

If that was Prophet Muhammad’s advice to two companions then isn’t our spouse even more worthy of hearing such words?

Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) did not just make it clear to his wife, Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), that he loves her but he would not shy away to let the people know how much he loves her and how much she means to him had he been asked. Amr ibn Al-As (may Allah be pleased with him), the commander of the troops of Dhat-us-Salasil, asked Prophet Muhammad (SAWS): “Who is the most beloved person to you?” Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) said: “Aisha.” Then Amr asked: “From among the men?” Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) said: “Her father.”... [Al-Bukhari]

Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) said:  
*“Whoever some good was done to him, and he says: Jazaka Allahu khairun (May Allah reward you with goodness) then he has done*

*the most that he can of praise.” [At-Tirmidhi]*

Indeed it is painful when our “Thank you” and our “Jazakumullahu khairun (May Allah reward you with goodness)” is mostly said to strangers, friends and neighbors but rarely to family members.

Be sure to express your thanks with beautiful words on a consistent basis. If our spouses are shocked and start questioning our intention when seeing a text message from us with an emoji of a kiss or a flower then possibly that is a sign that we do not do it often. However, it is never too late to begin such a beautiful practice, in shaa Allah. If you are not in the habit of expressing your gratitude verbally to your spouse then try applying the following tip: add to your calendar a reminder that says something along the lines of, “Give Thanks to (Insert your spouse’s name)”. Time the reminder to appear on your phone screen at a time when you are about to get home from work or so. Upon seeing it and entering the house, you should know what to say ; be sweet and creative. Keep such reminders and continue to tweak them until it becomes a habit of yours to always verbalize your gratitude.

### **3) Express your gratitude in action! The epitome of gratitude**

A man would tell his wife: “I love you” and in return she’d say: “You are a liar.” He asks: “Why would you say that!?” She says: “Because I do not see it.” He then sarcastically asks: “Do you want me to write it on a board for you or text it so you can see it?” She finally clarifies and says: “I do not see it in your actions!”

Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) said:  
*“Whoever does you a favor, then reciprocate”, and if you cannot, then supplicate for him until you think that you have repaid him.”*

*[Abu Dāwūd]*

Seek to give back to your spouse for the good they’ve done to you. For example, did your spouse cook you a meal? If yes, then why

not cook them a meal in return? Would you destroy the kitchen if you attempted to do so? Then invite them to their favorite restaurant, not yours. Once again, seek to find examples that best fit your marriage for maximum benefit. At minimum, we need to include our spouses in our prayers!

The epitome of gratitude is when we utilize a blessing in a way that is pleasing to the bestower. Allah said about the family of Dāwūd: “*Work, O family of David, in gratitude.*” And *few of My servants are grateful.*” [34:13]

Of the best ways to thank your spouse for a gift they’ve given you is to utilize it in a way that is pleasing to them.

I will end with this story: As I was teaching a weekend class on gratitude and began talking about gratitude between spouses I noticed an older gentleman starting to cry. The more I spoke about that specific topic and mentioned reasons of why one should be grateful to their spouse, the more he cried! At the end of the class, on Friday night, that brother came up to me in tears and started to thank me for sharing the Prophetic teachings and scientific research on the importance of showing gratitude between spouses.

The next day of the class, on Saturday, I saw him again. During our break, after the first session of the class, he requested to speak to me privately. He started to explain to me his marital situation: he and his wife have abandoned each other for three months, sleeping in separate rooms, hardly communicating with one another and when they do communicate it mostly ends up in a fight in the presence of their children. As a result, he has decided to divorce his wife very soon. However, he told me that after last night’s session on gratitude he felt that he has been a very ungrateful husband and that he only focused on his wife’s shortcomings and overlooked some of her great qualities and the good she has done to him and the children. So he ap-

proached his wife that night with a sense of remorse and apologized over how ungrateful he was towards her. He shared with her what he has learned about gratitude and wished to always have an attitude of gratitude. He started expressing his gratitude by verbally recalling some of the many great things she had done in the past and is still doing for him and the children. In return, his wife was very touched by his words, accepted his apology and was regretful for her shortcomings as well. They had a blessed and emotional night after they had reunited once again since three months ago. He said that they woke up the next day feeling very happy and rejoiced. He freshened up and was very impressed at how his wife took good care of herself and how she prepared a delicious breakfast for the family. As I was hearing this great news I could not help but hug the brother tightly with tears of joy and thank him for sharing such great news as I was very happy for him, his wife and children. He too got emotional, teared up and informed me that his wife and children are going to come soon to attend the remaining talk on gratitude, God-willing. Upon their arrival, he introduced me to his family and they expressed their appreciation for learning such content and how having such attitude of gratitude makes one’s life meaningful.

My favorite part of the story is when he called me after perhaps weeks after the class ended and expressed how his family has been very united since and how blessed they all feel to have such an attribute of gratitude. I pray to Allah that He keeps him and his family steadfast and to grant you and I this attitude of gratitude towards people, especially our spouses.

[1] *The power of thank you: UGA research links gratitude to positive marital outcomes* [https://www.eurekalert.org/pub\\_releases/2015-10/uog-tpo102115.php](https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2015-10/uog-tpo102115.php)

[2] *The transformative power of gratitude: Katia Sol at TEDxMission The City2.0* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6VcN1kgN3eI>

[3] *Lesan Al-Arab* by Ibn Manthur

[4] <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/189187-feeling-gratitude-and-not-expressing-it-is-like-wrapping>

# A Lesson for Us Today

*Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi (ra)*

Obviously, the world was not a deserted place at the time of the upbringing of the Holy Prophet (upon him blessings and peace). It was not a graveyard. The wheels of life were moving at that time too with very little difference from what they are now. Business was carried on almost in the same manner, and the people, generally, were satisfied with the things around them and did not feel the need for change

But the Almighty did not like the state of the world. As it is mentioned in a prophetic tradition: “The Lord cast a glance at the dwellers of the earth, and felt highly displeased with them, whether Arabs or non-Arabs. He was angry with all except for a few who believed in the revealed religions. He, thereupon, sent down the Prophet Mohammad, and along with him, made provision for giving rise to a whole community. This community had evidently been created for a definite purpose which was not being fulfilled by others. There could be no need to raise a new community for something that was already being done or to produce the storm in the placid ocean of life that followed the emergence of the new Ummah.

When the Lord created Adam, the Angels asked: Were they not enough for His glorification? Why should this creature of clay be

brought into being? The Lord replied: I know what ye know not (Quran 2: 30). He, thereby, indicated that Adam had not been created to fulfill the function of the Angels, but He intended to take some other work from him.

If the Muslims were being raised merely for trade, the merchants of Mecca who took their caravans to Syria and Yemen, and the Jews of Medina who had established large business houses had the right to ask whether they were not good enough that a new community was called for. And if it was agriculture, the farmers of Medina, Khyber, Najd, Syria, Yemen and Iraq could have complained why they were being overlooked. And so on.

But Muslims were being created for a new task which no one in the world was performing or could perform. A new community was required for it. Hence, it was said:

*You are the best community that hath been raised up for mankind. Ye enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency; and ye believe in Allah.*  
(Quran 3:110)

It was for this sake that people left their home for good, suffered loss in trade and agriculture, and shut their eyes to the comforts of the world. They shed their blood like water, preferred widowhood for their women, and the state of an or-

phan for their children. Was all this strife, this struggle and sacrifice, aimed simply for the ends and activities with which the Muslims appear to be so contented today? The way to their attainment was safe and even. There was no opposition from the contemporary world over it. Progress along it was not the bone of contention between the Arabs and the other people. They had repeatedly been offered the things the Muslims are hankering after now, but each time, the preacher of Islam, the Prophet had firmly rejected all the proposals of power, wealth and luxury.

Now, were the Muslims to come down to the level of all the pagan communities subsisted at the time of the childhood of the Holy Prophet, and come down to the level the entire non-Muslim population of the world is finding itself today, and plunge recklessly into wordly affairs and interests like the Arabs, Romans and Persians of those days, and then make the high aim of their existence the ends and advantages the sacred Prophet had turned down with disdain, what could it denote save the repudiation and betrayal of the early history of Islam? Would it not show that the blood that was shed at Badr, Hunain, Ahzab, Qadsia and Yarmouk had been in vain?

If the leaders of the Quraish were able to speak today, they could rightfully tell the Muslims that the things they were craving for were exactly what they had offered to their Prophet. All these could be obtained without shedding a drop of blood. Was the net result of the whole struggle and the worth of all the sacrifices the way of life they had chosen and the moral standards that were so pleasing to them? What answer would we have then?

The chief anxiety of the Holy Prophet about the Muslims was that they would fall prey to the allurements of the world and forgot their mission. He had addressed this warning to them in the sermon he delivered during the last days of his life:

*“It is not poverty that I fear for you, but what I really fear is that the earth should be spread*

*for you, as it had spread for those who came before you, so that you could covet it as they had coveted, and, then, it destroyed you as it had destroyed them.”*

As we learn from Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, when it was felt by the Ansar of Medina that they withdrew, for some time, from struggle in the path of Allah and paid attention to trade and agriculture which were suffering through neglect, they could not even think of exempting themselves from the principal duties like Salat, Fasting and Zakat, but had only expressed the intention of taking leave for a time from participation in the active endeavor for the glory of Faith—, this temporary withdrawal, too, was held to be nothing short of suicide, and the following verse of Surah Baqara was revealed:

*“Spend your wealth for the cause of Allah, and be not cast by your own hands to fitting destruction; and do good as it ought to be and carry it on. Lo! Allah loveth those who do good deeds.” (2:195)*

The particular mould of a Muslim's life is such that he should either be engaged in the preaching and propagation of Faith and other practical endeavors in its path or lending help and support to those who are so engaged, and also, wishing, genuinely, to join in the task himself.

The life of a contented citizen or businessman is not the life of a Muslim. It can never be his aim and ideal. Legitimate concerns of life and lawful economic activity, of course, are not forbidden. On the contrary, these are a form of worship and a means to the gaining of the propinquity of the Lord provided that the intention is pure and the eye is on the reward of the hereafter and such an occupation is carried on within the limits prescribed by Islam.

This is the chief message of the life of the sacred Prophet for Muslims. To remain indifferent to it is to allow its purpose to be wasted and turn a blind eye to the fundamental reality the life of the Prophet presents to us

# Build Your House in Jannah

*Abu Aaliya*

So you might be struggling to get your house in this world. Maybe it's the high cost of real estate, Interest loans, or your financial situation is tight. At any rate don't let that get you down, because the houses we buy in this life are only temporary residences for us anyway, but In Jannah there are houses, mansions and castles. Those accommodations only share the same names with those in this life. A house in Jannah is your permanent residence. Houses made of gold and silver. There is the option to own as many as you want-Inshallah. In this article I'll present some authentic hadith including things we can do daily to build our palaces next to Allah.

## Ask Allah for a Castle in Jannah

*And Allah gives an example for those who believe: the wife of Pharaoh when she said: My Lord! Build for me a home with thee in the Garden (66:11)*

## Close the gaps in the prayer

The Prophet (SAWS) said:

*Whoever closes the gaps in the prayer Allah will build him a house in Jannah and elevate his status.*

## Visiting the sick and your brother in Islam.

The Prophet (SAWS) said:

*"Whosoever visits an ailing person or a brother of his to seek the Pleasure of Allah, an announcer (angel) calls out: 'May you be happy, may your walking be blessed, and may you be awarded a dignified position in Jannah'".*  
[Tirmidhi]

## Sunnah Ar-Rawatib Daily

The Prophet (SAWS) said:

*He who observed twelve voluntary rak'ahs, a house will be built for him in Paradise.[Muslim]*

## Building A masjid

The Prophet (SAWS) said:

*"Whoever builds a masjid seeking Allah's Pleasure, Allah will build a house for him in Jannah.[Muslim]"*

## Read Surah Al-Ikhlās 10 times

The Prophet (SAWS) said:

*Whoever reads Surathul Ikhlas 10 times Allah will build him a house in Jannah.[Ahmed]*

## Make Dua before entering the Market place

The Messenger of Allah (SAWS) said:

“Whoever enters the marketplace and says: ‘There is none worthy of worship except Allah, Alone, without partner, to Him belongs the dominion, and to Him is all the praise, He gives life and causes death, He is Living and does not die, in His Hand is the good, and He has power over all things, (Lā ilāha illallāh, wahdahu lā sharīka lahu, lahul-mulku wa lahul-hamdu, yuhyī wa yumītu, wa huwa hayyun lā yamūtu, biyadihil-khairu, wa huwa ‘alā kulli shay’in qadīr)’ Allah shall record a million good deeds for him, wipe a million evil deeds away from him, and raise a million ranks for him and house will be built for him in Jannah. [Tirmidhi]

#### **Abandon Arguing, Lying when Joking, and having good character.**

The Prophet (SAWS) said:  
*I guarantee a house in the surroundings of Paradise for a man who avoids quarrelling even if he were in the right, a house in the middle of Paradise for a man who avoids lying even if he were joking, and a house in the upper part of Paradise for a man who made his character good. [Abu Dawud]*

#### **Saying “Al-Hamdulillah” as recovery after losing a child.**

The Messenger of Allah (SAWS) said,  
*“When a man’s child dies, Allah, the Exalted, asks His angels, ‘Have you taken out the life of the child of My slave?’ and they reply in the affirmative. He ( then asks, ‘Have you taken the fruit of his heart?’ and they reply in the affirmative. Then He asks, ‘What did my slave say?’ They say: ‘He praised You and said: Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji’un (We belong to Allah and to Him we shall return).’ Allah says: ‘Build a house for my slave in Jannah and name it Baitul-Hamd (the House of Praise).”[Tirmidhi]*  
**Whoever prays 4 at Duha prayer then another**

#### **er 4 at Thur.**

The Prophet (SAWS) said:

*Whoever prays 4 Rak’ah at Duha and 4 before Dhuhr will have a house built for him in Jannah. [Tabarani]*

*Cont’d from page 36*

My first niqab left my eyes uncovered. But in winter I wore a fine eye-covering as well. All the feelings of un-ease when a man’s eyes met mine disappeared. As with sun glasses, the visual intrusion of strangers was prevented.

It is an error of judgment to think that a Muslim woman covers herself because she is a private possession of her husband. In fact, she preserves her dignity and refuses to be possessed by strangers. It is non-Muslim (and “liberated” Muslim) women who are to be pitied for displaying their private self for all to see.

Observing the hijab from outside, it is impossible to see what it hides. The gap, between being outside and looking in, and being inside and looking out, explains in part the void in the understanding of Islam. An outsider may see Islam as restricting Muslims. In side, however, there is peace, freedom, and joy, which those who experience it have never known before. Practicing Muslims, whether those born in Muslim families or those returned to Islam, choose Islam rather than the illusory freedom of secular life. If it oppresses women, why are so many well-educated young women in Europe, America, Japan, Australia, indeed all over the world, abandoning “liberty” and “independence” and embracing Islam?

A person blinded by prejudice may not see it, but a woman in hijab is as brightly beautiful as an angle, full of self-confidence, serenity, and dignity. No signs of oppression scar her face. “For indeed it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is the hearts within the bosoms, that grow blind,” says the Qur’an (Al-Hajj 22:46). How else can we explain the great gap in understanding between us and such people?

## Appeal

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