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RADIANT REALITY

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"A person's tongue
can give you the
taste of his heart."

-Ibn Qayyim Al Jawziyyah-

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

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Question Answer

Question

Can my mum go with my husband i.e. her son-in-law for umrah ? My mum has one sister who has no husband or children that stays with her. Can she go with them as well ?

Answer

A mother-in-law is a Mahram (prohibited for marriage) whereas a mother-in-law's sister is not a Mahram (not prohibited for marriage).

Hence, it will be permissible for ones husband to travel as a Mahram for his mother-in-law provided that there is no fear of Fitnah (temptation) between them whilst it will not be permissible for him to travel as a Mahram for his mother-in-law's sister.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

Is it permissible to contribute and benefit from a fund in this way: 12 people contribute a R1000 each to a fund for 12 Months. At the end of every Month, 1 person is chosen from the 12 people to benefit from the fund (R12,000.00) based on a draw. So, every Month, a new person is chosen to benefit from the fund (12,000.00) based on a draw. At the end of the 12 Months, every person would have contributed R12,000 to the fund and would have taken back their R12,000.00. The benefit on such a fund is that the person who is chosen in advanced uses the money to his benefit whilst continuing to pay in instalments but the person chosen last does not really benefit in any way although he gets his money back. Is this type of fund permissible?

Answer

One of the main purposes of forming a fund/union as explained in reference (also known as stokvels) is to assist one another with expenses on a Monthly basis. This is commonly practiced amongst family members and business people.

This type of fund/union is not formed as a partnership, investment scheme that generates profits or a loaning scheme. It is simply formed on the basis of loyalty and mutual understanding to mutually assist one another.

In the enquired situation, forming such a fund/union will be permissible. (Aap Ke Masaail Aur Unka Hal 6/262)

Note: One should ensure that such a fund/union is Shariah Compliant before forming or contributing to it by seeking guidance from the Ulama

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

I have a pet who is old and quite ill. Is it permissible to have him euthanased at the SPCA?

Answer

If an animal is in pain and agony and there is no hope of its recovery and it is close to dying, it will be permissible to euthanize such an animal to relieve it of its pain. (Shaami 6/474)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

Is it Haraam for a woman to change her surname to her husband's surname after marriage?

Answer

The above confusion stems from the prohibition of denying ones biological association as Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Waallam men-

tioned in a Hadith: “Verily, one of the worst lies is to claim (falsely) to be the son of someone other than one’s biological father” (Bukhari)

For e.g. if a person’s name is Musa and his father’s name is Haniff, he will be referred to as Musa the son of Haniff (Musa Bin Haniff). It will be prohibited to refer to him as Musa the son of Ahmed (Musa Bin Ahmed) as this will be denying his biological association.

In the case of the wife adopting the husband’s surname after marriage, the wife is not denying any biological association at all. She is merely indicating in which family she is married.

Hence, it will be permissible for a woman to change her surname to her husband’s surname after marriage as there is no prohibition in this regard.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

I stay in say ‘A’. When i travel to ‘B’ I know I am NOT a musafir. But if I go directly to ‘C’ I am a musafir because of the distance. My question is what happens if I decide to go ‘B’ and whilst I am in there, during the day I decide to go to ‘C’. Am I then musafir even though I had no intention of going to ‘C’ whilst I was in ‘A’. My reason for asking is that I heard from someone else that if I decide to go to ‘B’ and later during the day I decide to go to ‘C’, it’s a new trip and I am not musafir.

Answer

A person who intends to travel a distance of 78 kilometers or more is categorized as a Musaaafir (traveller) and all the laws of Safar will apply.

Hence, in the enquired situation, if you intended to travel from ‘A’ to ‘C’ which is more than 78 kilometres, you would be categorized as a Musaaafir. However, if you intended to travel from ‘A’ to ‘B’ which is less than 78 kms and thereafter in ‘B’ you intended to travel to ‘C’, you will not be categorized as a Musaaafir as you did not intend to travel 78 kms or more.

On the other hand, if you intend to return to

‘A’ from ‘C’, you will be categorized as a Musaaafir (traveller) as you have now intended to travel a distance of over 78 kilometres.

In principle, every intention of travel is considered individually. Any other intended travel made thereafter will be calculated separately in determining whether one is Musaaafir or not. (Tabyeenul Haqaaiq 1/209)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

A woman lost her jewellery 20 years ago. Whilst moving houses, she found that jewellery which she had lost. Does she now have to pay Zakaat on the lost jewelry for the past 20 years?

Answer

In the enquired case, if the woman lost her jewellery 20 years ago and had no hope of finding it, Zakaat on the jewellery was not compulsory upon her for the past 20 years. (Shaami 2/226)

However, since she has now found her lost jewellery, Zakaat will be compulsory upon her only for the current year if she is paying zakat.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

Can a step daughter can get married to her step father if her step father divorces his wife (her mother)?

Answer

If a husband consummates his Nikah with his wife, he becomes a Mahram (non-stranger) to his stepdaughter. (Surah Nisaa 4/23)

Therefore, it will not be permissible for a stepfather to marry his stepdaughter once he consummates his marriage with his wife (stepdaughter’s mother). The ruling will remain the same even if the wife passes away or the marriage is terminated.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

When performing one janaazah Salaah for

several mayyits, how should all the janazahs be placed, e.g. the janazahs comprise of adult males, adult females, female and male children.

Answer

If there are several Janaazah's present at one time, performing a separate Janaazah Salaah on each deceased is better. However, if one Janaazah Salaah was performed on all the deceased it will be permissible.

In this case the method of performing the janaazah salaah will be that the first mayyit will be placed in front of the Imaam. The second mayyit will be placed next to the first mayyit in the manner that the left hand of the second mayyit is next to the right hand of the first mayyit and so forth (i.e. the chest of the imaam will be in line with the chest of all the janaazahs).

If among the deceased, there are men, women and children, then the saffs of the deceased will be made in the manner the saffs of salaah are made (i.e. the men will be closest to the Imaam, then the immature male children, then the women and last will be the female immature children). They will all be placed in such a manner that the chests of all will be in line with the Imaam.

Mufti Zakaria

Question

Can one recite durood or make any zikr when performing the ghusal for the deceased?

Answer

It is not a Sunnah practice to recite durood or any form of zikr in an audible manner while carrying out the ghusal. However, one should remember Allah Ta'ala in one's mind.

Mufti Zakaria

Question

Is it waajib that the the person giving ghusal and those assisting in giving ghusal to the deceased be in the state of wudhu?

Answer

It is not waajib for those taking part or assisting in the ghusal to be in the state of wudhu, however it is better for them to be in the state of wudhu. It is makrooh for a person in the state of janaabat or a woman in the state of haidh or nifaas to carry out the ghusal.

Mufti Zakaria

Question

If the Azaan is called out almost at once from several Masjids, which Azaan should one reply to? Is it compulsory to reply to all the Azaans being called out?

Answer

A person should respond to the first Azaan of his/her Masjid or another Masjid from where he/she hears the Azaan being called out. It is not necessary to respond to all the Azaans being called out. (Halabi Sawgheer 1/94)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

I have divorced my wife and she is sitting in Iddah. Do I as an ex-husband have any responsibilities to my now ex-wife? Do I have to pay my ex-wife's medical/doctor's bills?

Answer

In principle, it is the responsibility upon a husband to provide financial support (Nafaqah) for his wife throughout the period of the marriage. This includes the necessities of life i.e. food, clothing and shelter. (Shaami 3/572) It also includes the responsibility of medical and doctor's bills as this is also a necessity of life. (Al-Fiqhul-Islaamiy-Wa Adillatuhu 10/7381)

Furthermore, just as the financial support (Nafaqah) is the responsibility upon the husband throughout the marriage, this responsibility remains upon a husband even after a husband issues a divorce to his wife (revocable or irrevocable) until her Iddah period terminates.

Therefore, as an ex-husband, it will still remain your responsibility to provide financial support (Nafaqah) to your ex-wife until her Iddah period terminates. (Shaami 3/609)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

Zayn gave Ashraf his Zakaat to give to Jamaal but Ashraf gave Zayn's Zakaat to Ali. Is Zayn's Zakaat valid?

Answer

If Zayn appointed Ashraf as his representative to discharge his Zakaat to Jamaal but instead, Ashraf discharged it to Ali, Zayn's Zakaat will not be discharged and Ashraf will be responsible in discharging Zayn's Zakaat to Jamaal. (Fataawa Mahmoodiyah 9/494/495)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

Please can you forward me the correct procedure on how to give talaq?

Answer

One should adopt all halaal means and ways in trying to resolve the marital disputes and misunderstandings. If one is able to speak to the wife directly and thereby reach some resolution in amicably settling their marital problems, then one should do so. If this is not possible, then one should refer the matter to a third person or a third party and ask them to assist in bringing about a reconciliation. If after exhausting all efforts and means to bring about a reconciliation one does not succeed in reconciling, then in this case when one is in the right frame of mind, calm and composed, one should issue one revocable talaq when the wife is in the state of tuhr (i.e. when the wife is in a pure state) in which the husband did not cohabit with her from the time she had come out of her previous menses. Thereafter the wife should observe her iddat.

Mufti Zakaria

Question

Could Mufti Saheb please clarify the following issues regarding meals at the funeral house:

1. We notice that after the burial, an announcement is made for those who attended to partake of meals at the funeral house, is it permissible for those who attended (e.g. family, neighbours, friends, etc) to partake of the meals?

2. What is the shar'ee ruling if relatives from far attend the funeral and no arrangements have been made for their meals and accommodation. Will it be permissible for the family of the deceased to provide accommodation and meals for them? Could Mufti Saheb please provide some guidelines in this regard.

3. If a person goes for ta'ziyat on the second or third day and is served some sweets or something to drink, will it be permissible for him to accept it? Similarly, if he comes for ta'ziyat at a mealtime and he is asked to partake of meals, will it be permissible for him to partake of meals?

Answer

1. This is a baseless custom that has to be forsaken. Partaking of such a meal hardens the heart.

2. Those family members who have travelled from far and they genuinely require accommodation, then there is no harm in providing accommodation for them.

3. If it is not from the unwound estate of the deceased, then it is permissible.

Mufti Ebrahim

Question

Some of the coverings of the janaaza carriers have Arabic/Quranic inscriptions. Is this permitted?

Answer

It is not permissible that there be Quranic inscriptions on the janaazah carriers, biers etc.

Mufti Zakaria

Question

What do the Ulama say about a person who passed away reciting the Kalimah but for most of his life didn't perform Salaah. What can the family do to compensate for his qadha Salaah? Please guide.

Answer

Reciting the Kalimah at the time of maut is a sign of one passing away upon Imaan. However, this will not compensate and atone for leaving out Salaah for the past years. Leaving out Salaah is a major sin and severe warnings have been sounded in the Ahaadith for the one who forgoes his Salaah.

If the deceased had made a bequest that fidyah be given for his missed Salaah, then fidyah should be discharged on behalf of each Salaah from one third of the estate. If the deceased did not make a bequest, then the wealth of the estate cannot be given as fidyah on behalf of the missed Salaahs of the deceased. The entire estate will be wound and distributed among the heirs according to the stipulated shares of inheritance. If any adult heir wishes, he may discharge fidyah from his own share of the inheritance on behalf of the missed Salaahs of the deceased. However, this should be done with his free will and choice and without any coercion and force. Similarly, the family should make dua for the forgiveness of the deceased.

Mufti Zakaria

Question

Is it permissible for a man to take a second wife without his first wife's approval?

Answer

It is permissible for the husband to marry a second wife without the approval of the first wife. However, to avoid complications, he should inform his first wife at the time of taking a second wife.

NOTE: We totally discourage secret nikaahs

as this leads to creating suspicion in the minds of people regarding the man and woman whose nikaah has not been publicized as well as a lot of confusion and complications in many masaail i.e. the husband not being able to maintain equality between the wives in regard to their night turns, wealth and other aspects, laws of inheritance in the case of death, etc.

Mufti Zakaria

Question

Is it advisable for one who has the need to get married to delay on account of studying further?

Answer

It is the Mubaarak teaching of Shari'ah that when a boy or girl reaches the age of marriage and they perceive the need to get married, they should get married. The Hadith explains that if they delay in performing the nikaah then widespread corruption will occur in the world. Hence, when one has the need to get married, one should immediately get married. Studying is not a valid Shar'ee excuse for one to delay the marriage.

Mufti Zakaria

Question

Is it Sunnah to visit someone that has come from Hajj or Umrah?

Answer

It is encouraged to honour a person who has returned from Hajj by visiting him and requesting him to make dua. Consider the following Hadith,

When you meet a haji, (upon his arrival) greet him and shake his hands and request him to make istighfaar (dua) for you, before he enters his house, for verily he is a forgiven one. (Musnad Ahmad)

The above Hadith is specific to a Haji. However, a person who has performed Umrah is also worthy of honour.

Ml. Huzaifah

Good Life

Whoever, male or female, has done righteous deed, while a believer, We shall certainly make him live a good life and shall give such people their reward for the good they used to do. [16:97]

According to the majority of commentators, the expression 'good life' used here means a pure and pleasing life in the present world while some Tafsir authorities have taken it to mean life in the Hereafter. And a closer look at the explanation given by the majority would also show that it does not mean that such a person will never encounter poverty or sickness. Instead, it means that a believer - even if he ever faces poverty or pain - has two things with him which shield him from becoming disturbed. First comes his habit of remaining content with the available (qana'ah), the hallmark of a simple life. This thing works in straitened circumstances as well. Secondly, there is this belief of his, the belief that he is going to receive the great and eternal blessings of the Hereafter in return for whatever poverty or pain he has suffered from. Poised counter to this is the condition of a disbeliever and sinner. If such a person faces poverty and pain, he has nothing to hold him together and give him solace and comfort. In this state, he is likely to lose his sanity, even think of committing suicide. And in case he was affluent, his greed would not let him sit peacefully. When the drive for more wealth makes him a millionaire, the dreams of becoming a billionaire would keep spoiling his peace.

As for righteous believers, says Ibn 'Atiyyah, Allah blesses them with a life full of pleasure,

contentment and gracefulness right here in this world as well, something that never changes whatever the condition. That their life will be graceful while they enjoy health and extended means is all too obvious, particularly so on the ground that they just do not have the greed to keep their wealth increasing unnecessarily, an urge that keeps harassing one under all circumstances. And even if they have to face lean days or sickness of some sort, they always have a strong support to fall back on. They are perfect believers in the promises made by Allah. They have strong hopes of seeing ease after hardship and comfort after pain. These strengths never let their life become graceless. It is like the work of a farmer who has made his farm ready for crops. No matter how much pain he takes in working to see his crops grow, yet he welcomes all that for the sake of the comfort he is going to have. In a short time, he is certain, he is going to have the best of return for what he has done. A businessman or a wage earner would do the same. They would face all sorts of hardship in their job, even a little disgrace once in a while. But, they brave through everything and remain happy and hopeful. They believe that their business will bring profit and their job, a salary. The believer too believes that he is getting a return for every hardship and when comes the life of the Hereafter, his return for every hardship will

come to him in the form of blessings that are great and everlasting. As for the life of the present world, it is not such a big deal as compared to that of the Hereafter. Therefore, a believer finds it easy to remain patient against worldly variations in living conditions.

Thus, these conditions never make a believer suffer from anxiety, apprehension and boredom. This is the 'good life' a believer is blessed with in cash, on the spot, right here in this world.

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

Patience of Noble and Ignoble people

Everybody has to be patient in facing difficulties whether voluntarily or by compulsion. The patience of noble people is voluntary because they believe in the benefits of patience and they know that they will be criticized if they panic. They know that if they panic, this will not regain what they have missed and will not prevent what they dislike. There is no one who can prevent what is destined to happen. So, the harm of panic is more than its usefulness. A wise man said, "When anything bad happens to a wise man, he does what a foolish man does after a month."

The patience of ignoble people is compulsory. Firstly, they panic and when they realize that it is useless, then, they become patient as the patience of those who are tied up to be beaten.

The noble person practices patience in obeying Allah. On the other hand, the ignoble one practices it in obeying Satan. The ignoble people are the most patient people in following their desires and the noble ones are so but in obeying their Lord. They endure difficulties for their Lord. They avoid enjoining the good and forbidding the evil because of the fear of what the others will say about them.

Those people will never be noble in the sight of Allah, and on the Day of Judgement, they will not be raised with noble people. This is only for people who deserve nobility and fear Allah on that Day.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (ra)

Lessons from Sahih Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

Chapter 34 : Scraping off (nasal) mucus from the mosque using stones.

Ibn Abbas said, "If you step on some wet impurity, wash it off. If it is dry, do not bother."

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Imam Bukhari mentions that it is not necessary to scrap off the nasal secretion with hand, as this can be also done with a stone etc. As per Shah Waliullah Muhaddith Delhvi, Imam Bukhari here refutes the view of those who consider nasal secretion ritually unclean (najs). He also remarks that it is Imam Bukhari practice to establish a separate chapter in case he quotes something from different chains.

Hadith No. 399

Narrated Abd Huraira and Abu Sa'eed

Allah's Apostle saw some expectoration on the wall of the Masjid; he took gravel and scraped it off and said, "If anyone of you wanted to spit he should neither spit in front of him nor on his right but he could spit either on his left or under his left foot."

Comments

In this hadith it is mentioned that Rasulullah (SAWS) used a stone to scratch off the filth, whereas in the earlier chapter it was mentioned that he did so with his hand; therefore, both are

permissible. The reason to use a stone could be - disliking the nasal secretion more than the oral secretion.

Chapter 35 : Not spitting to the right during the Salaah.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

It is said that the prohibition to spit towards the right side during salaah is a token of respect for the angel on the right shoulder of every human being. This is so because the angel on the right is the leader of the one on left, therefore, worthy of more respect. Imam Bukhari opines that the prohibition is restricted to only during salaah, however, a large number of scholars consider the prohibition absolute.

Hadith No. 400

Narrated Abd Huraira and Abu Sa'id

Allah's Apostle saw some expectoration on the wall of the Masjid; he took gravel and scraped it off and said, "If anyone of you wanted to spit, he should neither spit in front of him nor on his right but could spit either on his left or under his left foot."

Hadith No. 401

Repeated (same as above).

Hadith No. 402

Narrated Anas

The Prophet said, "None of you should spit in front or on his right but he could spit either on his left or under his foot."

Comments

Sayyiduna Abdullah bin Mas'ud, Sayyiduna Maudh bin Jabl and Allaama Nawawi hold the opinion that it is not permissible to spit towards one's right side during salaah, or otherwise. However, according to Imam Bukhari, Imam Maalik and Qaadhi Ayyadh there is no problem in spitting towards one's right when not in salaah.

Chapter 36 : Spitting to the left or under the left foot.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

There is a consensus amongst the learned scholars on the issue of prohibition of spitting in the mosque, and during salaah; however, in case of emergency one can spit towards his left or under his left foot.

Hadith No. 403

Narrated Anas bin Maalik

The Prophet said, "A faithful believer while in prayer is speaking in private to his Lord, so he should neither spit in front of him nor to his right side but he could spit either on his left or under his foot."

Hadith No. 404

Narrated Abu Sa'eed

The Prophet saw sputum on (the wall of) the mosque in the direction of the Qibla and scraped it off with gravel. Then he forbade spitting in front or on the right, but allowed it on one's left or under one's left foot.

Comments

Various words have been mentioned in

hadith viz., 'Bisaaq' 'Nukhaama' and 'Mukhaat'. Al-Bisaaq means sputum, Nukhaamah means nasal secretion, and Mukhaat means the sputum which arises from the lungs. All these are disliked with reference to the Masjid.

Chapter 37 : The expiation for spitting in the mosque.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

As already stated one should not spit inside the mosque or during salaah as it is a sin, however, it is permissible only under certain unavoidable circumstances.

Hadith No. 405

Narrated Anas bin Maalik

The Prophet said, "Spitting in the mosque is a sin and its expiation is to bury it."

Comments

Here Rasulullah (SAWS) clearly mentions that it is a sin to spit in a mosque. This hadith along with the earlier one implies that it is permissible to spit towards one's left side only under certain unavoidable circumstances, and further one has to clean it off immediately after finishing the salaah. If the surface is soft it should be buried off, and in case it is concrete then it should be cleaned.

Chapter 38 : Burying phlegm in the Masjid.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

The purpose of this chapter is to stress on the point that the mosque should be kept clean.

Hadith No. 406

Narrated Abu Huraira

The Prophet said, "If anyone of you stands for prayer, he should not spit in front of him because in prayer he is speaking in private to Allah and he should not spit on his right as

there is an angel, but he can spit either on his left or under his left foot and bury it.”

Comments

Allaama Ayni has quoted a narration from Tabari, which says:

“Indeed he (a musalli) stands before Allah, and His angel on his right and shaitaan on his left”. (Umdatul Qaari)

Allaama Ayni then writes:

“It is highly probable that when he spits to the left it will fall on Shaitaan and nothing of it will reach the angel”.

Chapter 39 : When someone is compelled by his sputum (i.e., it becomes difficult for him to hold it in his mouth), he should hold it by the end of his garment.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Here a third option viz., to hold the sputum with handkerchief, one of the corners of the garments worn, or a tissue paper, is being discussed.

Hadith No. 407

Narrated Anas

The Prophet saw expectoration (on the wall of the Masjid) in the direction of the Qibla and scraped it off with his hand. It seemed that he disliked it and the sign of disgust was apparent from his face. He said, “If anyone of you stands for the prayer, he is speaking in private to his Lord, (or) his Lord is between him and his Qibla, therefore he should not spit towards his Qibla, but he could spit either on his left or under his foot.” Then he took the corner of his sheet and spat in it, folded it and said, “Or do like this.”

Comments

Already discussed.

Chapter 40 : The Imam’s exhortation to the people about offering salaah properly, and

mentioning about the Qibla.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Imam Bukhari wants to stress that it is the duty of the Imam to keep an eye on the people offering salaah behind him. If they do something wrong, he should immediately try to rectify them. He should ensure that they are facing the Qibla, and standing straight in the rows.

Hadith No. 408

Narrated Abu Huraira

Allah’s Apostle said, “Do you consider or see that my face is towards the Qibla? By Allah, neither your submissiveness nor your bowing is hidden from me, surely I see you from my back.”

Hadith No. 409

Narrated Anas bin Maalik

The Prophet led us in a prayer and then got up on the pulpit and said, “In your prayer and bowing, I certainly see you from my back as I see you (while looking at you.)”

Comments

Rasulullah (SAWS) told his companions that they should not consider him unable to see the people behind him while he is facing the Qibla during salaah. He made it clear to them that he was able to see them even from his back.

Allaama Ayni says:

“Thus the learned scholars have differed here in the meaning of *ru’yah* ‘seeing”.

1. According to some scholars Rasulullah (SAWS) was informed about the people behind him during salaah through Wahy (divine inspiration). Allaama Ayni says:

“This statement has no weight”,

since there is no fun of saying “I can see you from behind”.

2. As per some others, Rasulullah (SAWS) used to see from the corners of his eyes.

Cont’d on page 14

A Stone so Heavy

You discover God through His signs; except that you do not have to go looking for signs leading to God. The signs dance before you. To deny those signs, you have to close your eyes, writes SYED IQBAL ZAHEER.

If the atheists claim that God does not exist, then, in a way, they are right. He surely does not exist in the world they know: in the physical world in which they can conduct tests and experiments, and which, wherever possible, they can manipulate. He does not exist in the 'realm of existence.' He is above and beyond the realm of existence known to the humans, or knowable to them.

God is even beyond that realm of existence which the humans suspect there exists, besides their own, but about which they do not know anything, not even how to reach out to it through intellect or information. They call it the realm of the multiverses.

Yet God does not exist in that realm either: the multiverses of the 8 or 26 dimensions that the String-theorists talk about, warning us in the same breath that such universes will never be visible to us, even if their theories offer sound proof, and even if these multiverses overlapped each other within the same physical boundaries – one of them being intruding our own.

God is a Reality of the Domain of Inexistence (a word we picked up from Schuon). In fact, He does not exist in the realm of the Transcendental world either – the world of Ibn `Arabi, Rene Guenon, Frithiof Schuon, the Ahl-Kashf, saints, rishis, or spiritualists of other traditions.

If He existed in the sense in which the humans or any other creations exist, and in the

realm in which the universe, and what is lost of it beyond sight outside the edge of space, 152 light years away, exists, then we would have physically discovered Him by now – or perhaps. But He does not. He is beyond and above any 'realm of existence.' As an article in Muslim doctrine goes, 'Allah is separate and apart from His existence.'

Let alone the Realm of the Inexistent, we humans have been denied a full understanding of the existent. To demonstrate the fact the following may be noted: Unable to integrate or reconcile the two scientific theories concerning our world, (presently expressed in the Standard Model and the Quantum Mechanics) a new explanation is being sought of our physical world, with no success in sight, despite top-class scientists and super-computers engaged in the search since last 20 years. The successfully tested theories of Relativity worked out by Einstein, and the equally successful theories of matter at the Quantum level, are scientifically irreconcilable. If Einstein's theories are correct, the Quantum explanation is wrong, and if Quantum tantrum is correct, Einstein's songs are wrong. To some, it might be fascinating, to others disappointing, or yet others simply boring to know that we live in a world which we humans will never be able to know or explain; although such realization, heavy on the scientists too, do not suggest that they take a holiday from physics.

To many, (the well-fed non-scientist theorists, as well as the very-well-fed practical scientists), the lure of working out a Unified Theory – at the cost of turning the Sahara, or Arabian, or Gobi deserts into lush green fields – is too attractive to sacrifice for the sake of removing the mundane problem of hunger from the planet.

The most popular effort at reconciling the two is with the help of what is famously known as the String Theory. It has several versions, but none too satisfactory. M-theory is the new shot, but the target is as fuzzy as the explanation, and perhaps the calculations that go with it.

Even if a theory is worked out, it will be inscrutable. Such is the nature of Nature. It promises us that we will never know, and never be able to explain our physical world. And God's existence is not in the realm of any world known to us or knowable.

But there is a tractor-load of confusion that goes with it. With science ever on the march, it seems it has begun to confound the specialists more than it would clarify. A German scientist, Christopher Schiller PhD, has produced six volumes (we do not pretend to have read them all), on the topic of 'motion' (Motion Mountain, the Adventures of Physics). In so doing, he attempts at explaining the nature of matter, time, and space, at the micro level, or rather, at the Quantum level, and arrives at conclusion that are simply stupefying. The work, divided into hundreds of modules, with thousands of equations and illustrations evenly spread throughout the work (we do not pretend to understand them all), each with its logical conclusions, can make anyone's hair stand on its ends.

If the results did not have mathematical equations behind them, and if the volumes were not on the Net for anyone to criticize, one would tend to believe that the conclusions are fantasy. In fact, some reviewers believe they are fantasy, or, at least, questionable. But, so far, the books and their contents have not been properly, scientifically, criticized. Those who disagree with

the contents or conclusions have so far failed to point to specific errors. It is pointed out, in fact, that going by the tens of thousands of downloads from the Net every year, the book is, as says a reviewer: "among the most widely read physics texts across the world."

So, one may take the conclusions with a pinch of salt, but they cannot be ignored altogether. In fact, some of the author's conclusions are those that are aired by astrophysicists, while a few are the subject of discussion in the newly developing discipline of 'Field Theory' and 'Holographic Nature' of the universe (of which we shall have more to say sometime later, Allah willing). While the author places his conclusions after every module, we shall, to simplify things for our readers, place here the summary of summaries as stated by him on p. 103, vol. VI:

"Is the universe really the sum of matter-energy and space-time? Or of particles and vacuum? We have heard these statements so often that we may forget to check them. We do not need magic, as Faust thought (the reference is to Goethe's lines in Faust: 'Thus I have devoted myself to magic, that I understand how the innermost world is held together' – ed.): we only need to list what we have found so far, especially in this section, in the section on Planck scales, and in the chapter on brain and language. Table 3 shows the result.

(His Table 3 says): The universe has no age, no size, no shape, no mass, no matter, no density, no volume, no energy, no boundaries, no beginning, it cannot be distinguished from vacuum, ... (and) cannot be described." (list shortened).

All the above conclusions had behind them (as discussed in the earlier part of the books) scientific discussions, each of them emerging as the logical consequences of a detailed investigation.

The point we are driving at is: if we cannot explain our world, nor in fact, (the biologists would like to remind us), ourselves, then, how

can we ever know and explain God? The denial of the atheists then, is denial of what they do not know, and will not know. A fact which leaves them cold, yet somehow, it appears, comfortable; perhaps because the denial has become a religion, and a false religion is opium.

So, how do we know whether God exists or not? Well, one way is the same old way in which scientists discover and invent things. How was diabetes discovered? When a doctor found that flies were gathering in large numbers on the sample urines of certain class of patients, he wondered why? He took the courage, or maybe asked his nurse assistant, which is more likely, to taste a little on the pain of keeping her job, and discovered that those samples were rich in sugar. So, the bodies of these patients were not digesting sugar. Diabetes was discovered. How was Pluto discovered? Well, discrepancies in mass, position, and orbit of Neptune did not fully explain the discrepancies in the orbital behavior of Uranus. The astronomers concluded that there had to be another planet beyond Neptune. It was not too long (in astronomical terms) before, following a good chase, Pluto was discovered.

This is how you discover God: through His signs; except that you do not have to go looking for signs leading to God. The signs dance before you. To deny those signs, you have to close your eyes. The Qur'an said (7: 179),

“They have hearts but wherewith they understand not, they have eyes but wherewith they see not, and they have ears but wherewith they hear not. They are like cattle. Indeed, worse misguided. They indeed - they are completely unheeding.”

It also said(22: 46),

“Do they not journey through the land, so that they might have hearts that they think thereby, or ears they hear thereby, for, it is not sights

that go blind, but rather, hearts that are in the breasts that go blind.”

Perhaps to hide his shame or deflect the masses, some scientists-cum-atheists wish to create doubts. One of them asks, ‘OK, supposing God exists and that, as you believers claim, He has power over all things; agreed, but, may we ask, “Can God create a stone so heavy, He cannot lift it?”’

This is being clever (and cunning). Consider, if God could create a thing, whatever thing, it should be obvious that He could lift it too. If He created something so heavy He could not lift it, then, the created thing would be God which would, in turn, promptly lift the helpless god.

The question is absurd on many grounds. Why shouldn't the scientist ask, can God fit a square peg into a round hole? Or, can God create a man of snow living on the surface of the Sun? Or, can God create a man in two equal halves, each half completely cut off from the other, but both acting together, sleeping together, living together? Or, can God create a man with eyes that can pop out of his sockets, that he can keep in his pocket, and pop them back when required? He could as well ask: ‘Can God commit suicide?’ These are self-contradictory, absurd questions that only a stupid mind can entertain.

Cont'd from page 11

Allaama Ayni again says, “This statement has no weight”.

3. Some others say that the wall in front of Rasulullah (SAWS) behaved like a mirror through which he was able to see behind himself.

4. The majority of scholars, as per Allaama Ayni say: According to the majority of scholars, which also seems to be most appropriate, this ability was one amongst the special miracles of Rasulullah (SAWS).

“Authority, power and riches do not change a man; they only reveal him.” -Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib (R)

The Rhythm's is Gonna Get You

Habib & Sa'ad Quadri

What! We know what you're thinking: "everything is haram." Music is everywhere in our society and very much a part of our lives. Music can make a person who is down feel better, prepare athletes for competition, and generally alter an individual's mood. In movies, music is used to frame scenes. For example, if a scene is full of suspense, then the background music rises and builds up; if it is an action-packed scene then the music has a faster tempo. In clubs, music can quite literally make our bodies move. Before getting into whether music is halal or haram, we want to look at music itself.

One of the rare things about listening to music is that it is not an exclusive activity, compared to other issues we cover in this book. An individual can do other things while listening to music like driving, doing homework, playing sport, and so on. This is one reason why music is so prevalent today.

The main problem with music is how greatly we allow it to encompass us. Is it that every time we get into the car, we turn on the radio? Compare how many music CDs we have with Islamic lectures or Qur'an CDs. Which ones do we listen to more often? Better yet, let's examine the play lists on our MP3 players. Just having lectures or Qur'an on our MP3 player is not sufficient. How many songs can we sing? How

many lyrics have we memorized? On the other hand, how much of the Qur'an have we learned? Do the songs we listen to make us want to watch the accompanying music videos? Does the music we listen to have sexually-explicit lyrics or other inappropriate content? Do any of these songs mention things against the teachings of Islam? Do the musicians we listen to help dictate the way we talk or dress, or influence whom we choose to hang out with? What we need do is to think about how much music affects us. Is it bringing us closer to Allah or pushing us further away from Him? Does it make us think about things that remind us of Allah or about things that are against His commands?

Music itself has effects on us that we should be wary of. Lyrics are often essential to the enjoyment of a song. We often hear people saying that the words to a song are deep or they hit them hard. In fact, many people go so far as to explain why certain lyrics are spiritual or Islamic. But what type of lifestyle and values are these songs promoting? Sometimes the overall content of a song may be sending out the wrong message. People will argue that we are exposed to questionable values and behavior on a daily basis at school; therefore, it's already a part of their lives. However, an initial exposure doesn't legitimize further exposure. Lyrics that speak

about getting with a girl or a guy, doing drugs, having illicit relationship, killing, and whatever other topics exist today go against all Islamic principles. The problem is that these lyrics are often not as harmless as we may often think.

Have we ever thought about why commercials on the radio are not just spoken? Or why specific slogans by companies are accompanied by a jingle? The reason is simple: music becomes embedded in the mind. Any time music accompanies something, the resulting combination will get into our heads. That is why we may hear a song and it will remind us of an incident or moment in our lives and it feels as if we are re-living it. This same idea applies to the lyrics we listen to. If we just listen to lyrics without any music we would probably struggle to remember the words. However, with music, the lyrics become ingrained in our minds. Common sense and experience tell us that when something is ingrained in the mind, a person may be influenced by the ideas behind the lyrics.

When the songs we listen to are filled with swearing and promote sin, we can only listen to so much before the message begins to influence what we think is normal and may even influence our behavior. Now Islam completely prohibits swearing. It comes in a hadith related by Imam Tirmidhi, a famous scholar of hadith, that the Prophet (SAWS) forbade us from using foul language. We mention this because a lot of popular music has foul language, and our listening to this type of language is completely haram. The content of the songs we listen to make a lasting imprint on our hearts.

Dr. Jawad Shah, a neuro-surgeon residing in Flint, Michigan, and also a famous and reputed speaker about various topics within Islam, once told Sa'ad - after he was discharged from the hospital following his life-threatening accident - that when people are unconscious they begin to say random things that they do not remember speaking about when they become conscious. He notes that when people are un-

conscious, whatever is in their mind and heart begins manifesting itself on their tongues. Dr. Shah's observations indicate how people ultimately reveal much of what is reverberating in their hearts either quite obviously through their tongues or in their daily actions. This explanation also brings to light an incident regarding one of Sa'ad's teachers in madrasa, a traditional Islam school of learning, who had surgery, and, as a result, was unconscious for a period of time. During this time the doctors heard him saying and singing strange things that they could not understand. When he awoke the doctors asked him what he was saying. He responded by telling them that he obviously does not know what he was saying, but he would not be surprised if he was reciting the Qur'an. The reason for this was because he never left the Qur'an while he was conscious, so he would not expect the Qur'an to leave him in his time of need. SubhanAllah! Glory be to Allah! This is the result of having only pure things inside his heart.

Returning back to the topic, we all know according to Islam, people are not supposed to tell others about the sins they commit. What else do these people rap or sing about? Many lyrics deal with what they did or what they plan on doing. Exposing our sins or even our inclination towards sin goes against our human nature. No one would like to be embarrassed and have their more shameful moments exposed.

And surely We have honoured the children of Adam. (17:70)

If we were honored by Allah why are we so quick to disgrace ourselves?

Beyond the messages touted in songs, the sounds within the music have profound effects on our hearts as well. The beats and melodies resonate throughout our hearts and minds and will shape us as people. This is what attracts most people to listen to songs. How would it be to watch a music video while the volume was muted? Think about this question. We probably can not imagine watching people dance or strut

to a beat without the music. They would look ridiculous! It would also be strange if they were merely dancing to the words of a song without any music or beat. It is clear in this example that in most cases the instrumental portion of the music is essential. Without it, the song would not be as appealing. Now let's examine the Islamic perspective on music.

Islamically, lyrics that are proper and do not include foul language or improper content are permissible. Historically, we see that the Sahabah did sing and chant, but they did not use musical instruments. The only permitted type of musical accompaniment that we find in hadith is the *duff*, a percussion instrument which is a drum covered with a skin on one side only. The *duff* was only used in rare occasions, such as war. Islamic scholars comment on such use of instruments and have varying opinions regarding it. A small minority of scholars feel that all musical instruments are permissible, whereas some scholars feel that all percussion instruments are permissible. Finally, the remaining scholars feel that only a *duff* can be used and even that is only for specified occasions, and even, on those situations, using only a certain

beat. While we are not proclaiming any one view as being correct, we can look at the Hadith for guidance. The Prophet mentioned, "Bells (music) are the instruments of Satan." (Muslim) In another Hadith the Prophet (SAWS) warned us, "Music causes hypocrisy to grow in the hearts as water causes plants to grow." (Abu Dawud)

The first Hadith displays the enticing manner in which Shaytan uses musical instruments against us, while the latter Hadith, which is even scarier, shows that music causes hypocrisy to grow in our hearts. The hypocrites, according to the Qu'ran, are in the worst situation in the hereafter.

Indeed the hypocrites are in the lowest level of the hellfire. (4:145)

Although listening to music does not make

us complete hypocrites, why would we want to share any semblance with the hypocrites existing within our lives? We want to distance ourselves from every person heading toward the hellfire, especially those approaching its lowest level.

In an explanation given by Shaykh Husain Abdul Sattar on this particular Hadith, he mentions the example of our hearts being like a garden that can be cultivated. Anyone who gardens knows that one of the biggest enemies a garden faces is weeds. By allowing music to seep into our hearts, we unknowingly begin to allow weeds to flourish in our garden. As a result, the potential beauty that our heart can reach is ruined by the presence of these weeds. Anyone who has tried to remove weeds knows that when we pull them up, they are not easy to take out. They have put down roots in the garden. What this shows is that much of the damage is done to a garden before the weeds even appear on the surface. In that same way, much of the damage is done by music before the traces of hypocrisy become apparent in our actions. Thus, if this is the effect music has on our hearts and on our akhirah, despite the deep attachment we have with it, we will find greater benefit in leaving it.

Words of Wisdom

"A true scholar does not cause people to become despondent of Allah's mercy, or give them concession to disobey Allah." Hadrat Ali (RA)

"Learn to listen like you learned to talk." Hassan al-Basri

"When the world pushes you to your knees, it's a great time to prostrate. Al-Fudayl ibn 'Iyad (ra)

HOW TO COPE WITH DEATH

I lost my mother when I was 19. It was obvious to anyone that she had been unwell for some time, yet I refused to accept the clear signs of her terminal illness. To me, denial would somehow keep death at bay, and of course I was wrong.

Years later, my best friend in her late 20s lost her newborn baby. She passed away at the tender age of twelve hours old. She was taken away before she could even enter our lives.

More years passed, and a friend of mine lost her husband without warning. He was fine in the morning, suffered a heart attack around lunchtime, and was buried by evening.

What exactly is the “correct” age for death? There is none. It’s always too early.

These deaths, together with the other deaths that I have witnessed in between and since, drove home the point that death is definite and indiscriminate. It can happen in a flash, or with months of warning signs, but when the time comes, nothing can hold it back.

How do we handle it when we lose someone?

We know that death is a certainty but in reality we tend to harbour illusions that we will live forever. We feel as if those around us will not be taken from us, and we form deep attachments that make it difficult for us to cope, or even comprehend, when someone is not there anymore.

In understanding death, we have to first

understand life. The nature of this world is that everything in it is temporary. Monuments crumble, civilizations perish, people come and go. Health alternates illness. The old make way for the new, and the cycle of life continues.

People are placed in our lives for a reason, but we lull ourselves into the false sense of security that they will be around indefinitely. This is why we cannot cope with the loss. We feel as if the death of a parent, a relative or a loved one is against the natural order of things, almost a betrayal, when in fact, the opposite is true – death is the only certainty in life.

We also approach life with an inherent sense of ownership. We feel as if people belong to us – our parents, children, spouses or friends – and many of us rely on them to be there for us forever; even more than we rely on our Creator.

In truth, we enter this world owning nothing and we leave taking nothing. We do not even own our bodies - our souls occupy them as trustees or as custodians, and our physical flesh is the temporary vessel for hosting our souls in the journey of life. Our permanent life is in the hereafter. Meantime, everything that crosses our paths, and everything that is placed in our hearts and hands, were put there as a trust from God.

People are placed in our lives for different periods of time and at different points in our lives, as a trust and for a reason and wisdom that

only Allah knows. We have to accept these relationships for what they are – something transitory. The situation will change: we will leave them, or they will leave us. We cannot claim a permanent stake in any relationship.

In fact, one of the things already ordained for us before we were even born, is when we will die. It is written for everyone and beyond our control to prevent or delay: from the cancer patient to the person who suddenly slipped on the pavement, death is an imminent appointment, not a random accident.

If we can fathom this, we will appreciate that everything in our lives is on borrowed time. Even those who we feel should be in our lives forever, aren't there to stay. When the Prophet SAW passed away, some of his followers, including Umar Al Khattab (RA), initially denied reports of his death, until they were reminded that like the rest of us, even Prophets die, and that the only permanent presence in our lives is the Almighty Creator. The One who will be waiting for us on the other side; the One who will never die.

It is a part of Life

Instead of shielding ourselves from the certainty of death, we should accept it as a part of life. We cherish, celebrate and appreciate those who are in our lives when they are still alive, and we accept Allah's decree when their time is up. Resisting and denying death will not prolong their lives. By accepting the reality, we rid ourselves of the notion that life is everlasting, and instead acknowledge that like all who came before them, their time will run out.

Death is also an acute reminder of our goal in life. It brings us back to the basic purpose of our existence, which is to worship our Creator. Everything else that is placed in our lives are simply embellishments, to either support us or detract us from our journey to Paradise. Therefore, all relationships, love and attachments that we form should be relative to that goal.

We are placed here on trust for each other. This is beautifully illustrated by Umm Sulaim (RA), in a long hadith reported in Muslim. While her husband was away, their son died. She forbade her family members from breaking the news to her husband until she had relayed it herself. When he came home, she presented him with his meal, decorated herself and relaxed him with physical intimacy. She then asked him "Abu Talha, if some people borrow something from another family and then (the members of the family) ask for its return, would they resist its return?" He said: "No." She said: "I inform you about the death of your son." The story continues, her husband, being annoyed with her for conveying him the news in such a fashion, consulted with the Prophet SAW, who endorsed her actions. As time passed, she was blessed with nine other sons, all of whom were pious.

While this story is often quoted to demonstrate the qualities of a patient and considerate wife, it also reveals her profound wisdom and understanding. She comprehended that Allah was the owner of her son and was entitled to claim him back at His will.

Our reinforcement of Allah being the owner of all things is also reflected by how we are encouraged to react when we hear of someone's death. We are taught to say "inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji'uun" which loosely translated means - "Surely we belong to Allah and to Him shall we return". This phrase is a comfort and reminder for us. We are not here forever, and our lease of life will one day end.

The First Stroke of Grief

Patience is a virtue often extolled in Islam. Anas (RA) reported: The Prophet (SAWS) passed by a woman who was crying over a grave and said, "Fear Allah and be patient." She said, "Away from me! My calamity has not befallen you and you are not aware of it." The woman was later told that it was the Prophet (SAWS) (who had advised her). She came to his door where

she found no doorkeeper. She said, “(I am sorry) I did not know you.” Messenger of Allah (SAWS) said, “Patience is (becoming) only at the first (stroke) of grief.” [Bukhari & Muslim].

Numerous ahadith have prohibited us from any excessive or violent display of grief that is reminiscent of the period of pre Islamic ignorance, such as wailing or tearing our clothes. This does not mean that we are to deny our emotions. We are only human and Allah bestowed upon us the faculty to love and feel pain, but we are also reminded to treat death in a dignified and patient manner. Allah understands our distress when it comes to losing someone, and what we are expected to do is to turn to Him for help and ease. The simple message can be distilled into: trust Allah and be patient with what has been ordained.

We are continuously being tested, by what we love and what we don't, including the loss of life, and the loss of those we love. However, we can turn the loss into a blessing for us:

On the authority of Abu Hurayrah (RA), who said that the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) said: “Allah (mighty and sublime be He) says: ‘My faithful servant’s reward from Me, if I have taken to Me his best friend from amongst the inhabitants of the world and he has then borne it patiently for My sake, shall be nothing less than Paradise.’” [Bukhari]

We may feel as if our situations are unique, and that we feel shocked, devastated and overwhelmed. However, others too have faced terrible losses of their loved ones. Even our Prophet SAW was not insulated from the passing of those beloved to him – his parents, grandfather, uncle, wives, children and cherished Companions. He shed tears at their passing, wept as he laid them to rest, and missed them after they were gone. However, he accepted Allah's decree. And did not permit his grief to overshadow his mission in life.

Even if our loved ones are gone, we have to hold on to our belief that Allah is our sustain-

er and cherisher. We will naturally feel the void that has been left behind, but we need to surrender to Allah's will, and turn to Allah for guidance and strength. Allah will fill the emptiness, and will comfort and provide for us – and slowly, over time, the pain will subside. After everyone is gone, Allah will still remain, and there is great compensation, so much higher than our sorrow and anguish, waiting for us at the finish line if we bear the loss with patience and trust in Allah.

Like the shifting currents of life, the grief too shall pass. However, life will be different, and one has to accept again that nothing in this world is permanent. Physical and emotional adjustments will have to be made to accommodate the new circumstances. It will take time to fully accept that the person will never be there again. Memories and emotions will come flooding back when we least expect. The healing will take time. But if you are patient with Allah's decree and turn to Him during your anguish, the peace and calm will return sooner rather than later.

The Relationship After Death

Someone once told me that real test of love begins after death. The sincerity of the love that we felt for the ones who have passed on, will continuously crystallize into our supplications for them, by living out any good legacy that they left behind, and by emulating all the good that they have taught us. Whenever we think about them and feel sad, don't just think of our own personal loss, but also, the condition of their soul and how we can help them with their lives in the hereafter.

We can still communicate our love to the departed through our dua and our prayers for them. We can beg Allah to bestow His mercy on their souls, forgive their sins, give them ease in the grave, and elevate their stations in the hereafter. We also dignify the dead by remembering their goodness, forgiving their wrongs against us, and by never speaking ill of them or their

past mistakes. We can even make dua to be reunited with them in jannah. While we may not see the product of our efforts now, the sincerity and depth of our love will prove itself in the hereafter.

This is how I eventually dealt with my mother's death. My tears will neither bring her back to life, nor ease the guilt for the times when I should have been a better daughter. I still have a relationship with her – a totally different kind of relationship of course, one in which I pray to Allah to save her from the torture of the grave, reward her with jannah, and to give her a better and happier life than what she experienced during her short stay in dunia with us. I do not know if my prayers have been accepted, so I keep trying. She has been gone for over 20 years now, but I still have the rest of my life to pray for her eternal well being, insha Allah. This realization was the turning point that finally made me cope.

What about our own death?

Death is a humbling reminder of our own vulnerability, fragility and mortality. If there is any other lesson to consider, whenever we witness death we should also wonder who will be next. Could it be us?

Muslims are encouraged to recite Surah Ya-sin on the eve of every Friday as a means of commemorating our departed Muslim brothers and sisters. However, it is also a reminder for us, the ones who are still alive, to remedy our own misbehavior and turn back towards Allah before it is too late.

Visit a graveyard, and you will realize the utter loneliness of those buried there, as years go by, visitors stop frequenting, names fade from headstones and the dead are gradually erased from the memories of the living.

The same way that others have left their own

footprints in our lives, what legacy are we leaving behind?

When it is time for us to breathe our last, who will weep for us and why?

Who will remember us and pray for us a year, a decade, a century, after we've gone?

What awaits us in the next life?

This is what life, and death, is truly about.

May Allah give us all a good ending, ameen.

Cont'd from page 45

gentle arguments (and later through instant and effective communication of the morale boosting initial verses of Surah Fat'h among the companions).

The most profound politics (especially diplomacy) lies in setting of the agenda. At Hudaybiya, the greatest political success of the Prophet Muhammad (s) was the success in shaping the agenda of the negotiations.

1. Muslims negotiated for entering Makkah and performing pilgrimage THAT VERY YEAR.

2. Qureysh negotiated for not letting Muslims enter and perform pilgrimage THAT VERY YEAR.

Head and tail both were in favor of Muslims (if earlier stand of Qureysh not letting Muslims into Makkah at all is taken into consideration). Conceding on the issue of performing pilgrimage that very year (which nevertheless was only a psychological concession and not a substantial one) and claiming other points of importance like ceasefire and peaceful contact with Makkans – an opportunity which was denied to Muslims ever since they left Makkah – was the greatest victory. Moreover tribes that were earlier apprehensive about concluding alliance with Medina due to the newness of the State freely aligned themselves with it afterwards.

A man asked al-Hasan al-Basri (ra) to whom he should marry his daughter. Al-Hasan replied, "To someone who fears Allah. If he loves her, he will honour her. And if he de-tests her, he will not mistreat her."

Do Not Care About What They Say

*Dr. Muhammad bin Abd
al-Rahman al-Aarifi*

My son, ‘Abd al-Rahman, once kept repeating a phrase I was amazed by. I think at that age he couldn’t actually understand what it meant. He used to say, “Ignore, live and let live.” I contemplated on this phrase as I thought about people’s criticisms, opinions, and dialogues, and found that people vary in their speech and criticisms.

Amongst them are those who are sincere advisors but are not very skilful, and hence, their approach saddens you rather than making you happy. Amongst them are those who are envious, people who actually intend to sadden you and make you grieve. Amongst them are those who do not know much, and hence, they often do not know what they are saying. It would be better if such people were to remain silent. Amongst them are those whose nature is always to criticise, since they look at life through a dark set of goggles, as it were.

There is an old saying, “If people had the same taste, merchandise would be rendered futile.”

It is said Juha once mounted on his donkey while his son walked by his side. As they passed by another group of people, the people said, “Look at this inconsiderate father! He rides the donkey in comfort while his son is walking by him in the sun!” Juha heard them, stopped the

donkey, dismounted and let his son ride instead.

They continued on, and as Juha felt better about himself, they passed by another group of people. One of them said, “Look at this disobedient son! He rides while leaving his father to walk in the sun!” Juha heard them, stopped his donkey and mounted it along with his son to save himself from people’s criticism.

They then passed by a people who said, “Look at these inconsiderate people! They do not have pity on the animal!” Juha then dismounted and said to his son, “Dear son, please descend.” The son descended and began to walk by his father’s side.

They passed by some people who said, “Look at these two foolish people! They are walking whilst no one is riding the donkey! Why was the donkey created if not to be mounted on?” Juha screamed, and dragged his son. They sat beneath the donkey and lifted it up on their shoulders!

If I had been with him at the time, I would have said to him, “Dear beloved, do as you please and do not care about what others have to say. Pleasing others is an unachievable objective.”

Some people do not think thoroughly about their views before suggesting them to others.

For example, one of them will come to you after you have been married and say, "Why didn't you propose to such and such woman? Why didn't you marry her?" At this point, you feel like erupting in his face, saying, "Dear brother! I have already got married! End of discussion! No one asked you for your suggestions!"

Or he would come to you after you have sold you car and say, "If only you were to have informed me earlier! So-and-so would have paid you more." You would say in response, "Dear brother, enough! I have already sold my car and that is the end of the story. Do not distract me by making me look back!"

Generally speaking,

A man is never without an opponent

Even if he lives alone on a mountain peak

Do not punish yourself.

Experience

One of the predecessors said, "The one who subjects his religion to argumentation changes his opinions very often!"

FORM IV
(See Rule 8)

Statement about ownership and other particulars about newspaper **Radiant Reality** to be published in the first issue every year after the last day of February

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Social Media, Laghw and Khushu

Olivia Kompier

The Age of Social Media and the Smart Phone

Let's be clear that technology has brought great benefits to humanity, which includes both hardware and software that has allowed us to communicate in ways never before seen. Instant communication between people using text/email on smart phones has enabled people to travel more safely and keep in touch with ease, it has enabled people to uphold the ties of kinship globally with greater frequency. Technology has also enabled Muslims to attend classes or give dawah from their homes, which has opened the door of education to many. Information about Islam is now available at the touch of a button. Social media has allowed Muslim voices to be heard and awareness raised about many issues affecting our Ummah that mainstream would like to sideline. There is no doubt that modern technology is a blessing from Allah and the creative genius of human intelligence is a testament to Allah's statement to the angels "I know that which you do not." Like the jinn, human beings have been capable of bloodshed and destruction on this earth, but we are exceptional in that our creation is also capable of great inventions, civilizations, and discoveries.

Benefits aside though, we must be honest with ourselves in that, for the vast majority of us,

this blessing of technology and communication has been a fitnah as well (which is the nature of blessings in general). With the number of halâl entertainment options being limited compared to larger society it isn't a wonder that Muslims spend way too much time on the internet. Shaytân is always trying to mislead us, and if he cannot get us to sin, then he will get us to indulge in useless things, prioritize lesser things over greater, or procrastinate our ibâda. It is so much easier to touch the Facebook app, a high-drama social hub with pictures, than it is to open the mushaf. Even with a Qur'an app on the phone, many of us can only read a few pages before caving in to the notification for Whatsapp or FB. After reading "Forty-two Reasons You're Really a 90s Kid" on Buzzfeed or taking a quiz to find out which Disney character you are, praying two rakah for salât Al-Duha seems boring. If you manage to do it, you may find it full of distractions. Even the fard salâh is snatched away by Shaytân because we've already weakened the fortress of khushû with all the time we spend on laghw.

On a daily basis most of us spend more time than is spiritually healthy on the internet or our smart phones, whether it's surfing the web, texting, or browsing through Facebook or Twitter. And the vast majority of information on the in-

ternet and social media is laghw, and because we can text someone instantly and excessively, a lot of our individual conversations are laghw. There are entire websites (Buzzfeed comes to mind) that are solely dedicated to laghw. Even when it comes to Muslims, many blogs, Twitter accounts, and Facebook pages are little more than laghw. Many of us delude ourselves into thinking we are making dawah, and maybe we are, but what percentage of the time?

What is the Ratio of Truly Beneficial Posts to Casual Posting?

Even the time we spend talking to other Muslims is time taken away from more important activities. Saying salaam to another Muslim once a week at Jumu'ah used to be a norm and always has been, so let's not kid ourselves that we need to meet and greet each other daily on social media, especially when we have to bypass so much laghw just to do it. Ideally, we should crave more time alone; the Prophet himself enjoyed solitude nightly in Qiyâm Al-Layl after a full day of beneficial communication, and described the salâh as the "coolness of his eye." We should be spending more time on personal acts of worship than social media dawah. The sahâba spent a great deal of time helping their community, but we can't honestly equate this time spent tweeting and posting as "community service" (though there are exceptions). And let us not forget our families; how many of us can say we put the same care and concern into teaching our children that we put into teaching a Facebook or Twitter audience? It isn't to say that reaching a social media audience is unimportant, but for many of us this dawah has eclipsed higher Islamic priorities in our lives.

As was mentioned earlier, laghw pushes out khushû, meaning a heart that is deadened with laghw cannot be alive with khushû. Khushû is a type of humility, a realization of one's true position in relation to his Lord, which is an 'abd, or slave to his Master. At any moment his earthly time can come to an end and he will be called to

account by his Master, and when one truly feels this, he will feel an aversion to activities that waste and disrespect the time Allah has gifted him. Allah says in Sûrat Al-Asr:

By time! indeed, mankind is in loss, except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience. [Sûrat Al-Asr, 103:1-3]

Laghw and the Nafs

The nafs is the part of the human being created from this dunya, and thus it is nourished by things of this dunya, like food, drink, entertainment, etc. Laghw is like a trap set for the nafs by Shaytân; it often involves speech that feels light-hearted, funny, or exciting but can easily turn crude, vulgar, or shameless. It reminds me of the childhood game "truth or dare." With laghw, one thing often leads to another, and Shaytân is stripping away the defenses set forth by taqwa and khushû until our hearts are deadened and the rûh is smothered by the feel-good indulgence of the nafs. Laghw is very similar to the stupid, crass speech of a drunk. Allah says:

There they shall pass from hand to hand a (wine) cup, free from any laghw and free from sin (because it will be legal for them to drink). [Sûrat Al-Tûr, 52:23]

The internet has become a platform for anyone and everyone to have an audience and for us to believe we are more important than we really are. On social media we have become fixated with what other readers think of us and worry more over their opinion than Allah's opinion of us. We compete with one another not only in items of dunya, but even in Dîn; we compete to have our "voice" drown out those of others, to become the one whose page or blog is visited the most, to be the one people are liking and sharing above others. Social media and the internet has become a place that elevates the ego, and it is often the person with the most outrageous or controversial be-

havior that is sought-after, rather than one who is full of humility towards his Lord. There are some exceptions, people who use the internet as a tool for their cause or a means of education, but they are the exception and you won't find them spending more time on the internet than is minimally needed to get their message out. The internet is a place of false kings and queens. But one who has khushû in his heart cannot have his intentions mingled with riyâ, or showing off.

The good news is for those of us who are struggling with khushû, the first step is simple; it is a step back from laghw, which for many of us means a step back from the internet, social media, and our smart phones. One simple way to improve our khushû is to spend the same amount of time reading Quran that we spend online. Track how many minutes you spend on the internet or texting today and spend that same amount of time reading Qur'an or reading athkâr. Then gradually tip the ration in favor of khushû; make a commitment that for every minute you spend online, you will spend two minutes on ibâda and so on.

For many of us who are not native Arabic speakers, we need to make sure our hearts are being moved by the remembrance of Allah, and this can be achieved by studying Arabic and understanding it, or in the mean time studying the translation and tafsîr of the Qur'an in a language we understand.

A person develops khushû not just through his ibâda but also through looking at Allah's creation in nature; the sky, trees, hills, clouds, stars and so on should point our hearts back to the Majesty of the One who created them. Allah himself encourages us to remember Him vis-à-vis His creation time and again in the Qur'an. All of these activities, whether reading or simply spending time outside in the backyard, all require us to disconnect from laghw. This disconnect from laghw automatically opens us up an opportunity for khushû to grow.

Finally, good company is pivotal to elimi-

nating laghw from one's life, and with Facebook posts/tweets being shoved in our face multiple times a day when we go on social media, we have all sorts of "friends" that aren't even real friends, let alone good ones. We are inundated with the voices of people or links posted by them that lead straight to laghw. Honestly Shaytân barely has to work to set the traps of laghw anymore, people do his work for him on Facebook or Twitter or some waste-of-time-website. We need to limit our interaction with these people as much as possible, be it going online less, limiting what apps are on our phones, or putting some very strong filters on our social media accounts.

And of course the speech is the Speech of Allah, whether it be by reciting the Qur'an or engaging in tasbîh or making duâ to Him, He is the one we should be spending the most time in conversation with. To close I will end with this hadîth:

Allah the exalted said, 'I have divided the prayer [Sûrat Al-Fâtihah] into two halves between Me and My servant. A half of it is for Me and a half for My servant, and My servant shall acquire what he asked for.'

If he says, 'All praise and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of existence,' Allah says, 'My servant has praised Me.'

When the servant says, 'The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful,' Allah says, 'My servant has glorified Me.'

When he says, 'Master of the Day of Judgment,' Allah says, 'My servant has glorified Me.'

When he says, 'You (alone) we worship, and You (alone) we ask for help,' Allah says, 'This is between Me and My servant, and My servant shall acquire what he sought.'

When he says, 'Guide us to the straight path. The way of those on whom You have granted Your grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your anger, nor of those who went astray,' Allah says, 'This is for My servant, and My servant shall acquire what he asked for.' (Muslim)

Reflection on Leading

Yasmin Mogahed

On March 18, 2005, Amina Wadud led the first female-led jum`ah (Friday) prayer. On that day, women took a huge step towards being more like men. But did we come closer to actualizing our God-given liberation?

I don't think so.

What we so often forget is that God has honored the woman by giving her value in relation to God—not in relation to men. But as Western feminism erases God from the scene, there is no standard left—except men. As a result, the Western feminist is forced to find her value in relation to a man. And in so doing, she has accepted a faulty assumption. She has accepted that man is the standard, and thus a woman can never be a full human being until she becomes just like a man.

When a man cut his hair short, she wanted to cut her hair short. When a man joined the army, she wanted to join the army. She wanted these things for no other reason than because the “standard” had it.

What she didn't recognize was that God dignifies both men and women in their distinctiveness – not their sameness. And on March 18, Muslim women made the very same mistake.

For 1400 years there has been a consensus of the scholars that men are to lead prayer. As a Muslim woman, why does this matter? The

one who leads prayer is not spiritually superior in any way. Something is not better just because a man does it. And leading prayer is not better, just because it's leading. Had it been the role of women or had it been more divine, why wouldn't the Prophet (SAWS) have asked Ayesha or Khadija, or Fatima—the greatest women of all time—to lead? These women were promised heaven—and yet they never led prayer.

But now, for the first time in 1400 years, we look at a man leading prayer and we think, “That's not fair.” We think so although God has given no special privilege to the one who leads. The imam is no higher in the eyes of God than the one who prays behind.

On the other hand, only a woman can be a mother. And God has given special privilege to a mother. The Prophet (SAWS) taught us that heaven lies at the feet of mothers. But no matter what a man does he can never be a mother. So why is that not unfair?

When asked, “Who is most deserving of our kind treatment?” the Prophet (SAWS) replied, “Your mother” three times before saying “your father” only once. Is that sexist? No matter what a man does he will never be able to have the status of a mother.

And yet, even when God honors us with something uniquely feminine, we are too busy

trying to find our worth in reference to men to value it—or even notice. We, too, have accepted men as the standard; so anything uniquely feminine is, by definition, inferior. Being sensitive is an insult, becoming a mother—a degradation. In the battle between stoic rationality (considered masculine) and selfless compassion (considered feminine), rationality reigns supreme.

As soon as we accept that everything a man has and does is better, all that follows is a knee-jerk reaction: if men have it, we want it too. If men pray in the front rows, we assume this is better, so we want to pray in the front rows too. If men lead prayer, we assume the imam is closer to God, so we want to lead prayer too. Somewhere along the line we've accepted the notion that having a position of worldly leadership is some indication of one's position with God.

A Muslim woman does not need to degrade herself in this way. She has God as a standard. She has God to give her value; she doesn't need a man.

In fact, in our crusade to follow men, we as women never even stopped to examine the possibility that what we have is better for us. In some cases we even gave up what was higher only to be like men.

Fifty years ago, society told us that men were superior because they left the home to work in factories. We were mothers. And yet, we were told that it was women's liberation to abandon the raising of another human being in order to work on a machine. We accepted that working in a factory was superior to raising the foundation of society—just because a man did it.

Then, after working, we were expected to be superhuman—the perfect mother, the perfect wife, the perfect homemaker—and have the perfect career. And while there is nothing wrong, by definition, with a woman having a career, we soon came to realize what we had sacrificed by blindly mimicking men. We watched as our children became strangers and soon recognized the privilege we'd given up.

And so only now—given the choice—women in the West are choosing to stay home to raise their children. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, only 31 percent of mothers with babies, and 18 percent of mothers with two or more children, are working full-time. And of those working mothers, a survey conducted by Parenting Magazine in 2000, found that 93% of them say they would rather be at home with their kids, but are compelled to work due to 'financial obligations.' These 'obligations' are imposed on women by the gender sameness of the modern West, and removed from women by the gender distinctiveness of Islam.

It took women in the West almost a century of experimentation to realize a privilege given to Muslim women 1400 years ago.

Given my privilege as a woman, I only degrade myself by trying to be something I'm not – and in all honesty – don't want to be: a man. As women, we will never reach true liberation until we stop trying to mimic men, and value the beauty in our own God-given distinctiveness.

If given a choice between stoic justice and compassion, I choose compassion. And if given a choice between worldly leadership and heaven at my feet—I choose heaven.

Precious Pearls

"By his good character a believer will attain the degree of one who prays during the night and fasts during the day."

(Abu Dawud)

"The most hated person in the sight of Allah is the most quarrelsome person."

(Sukhari)

A Word of Advice

S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (ra)

Many of you would come out of your educational institutions as preachers and reformers, teachers and writers and leaders and intellectuals. I want to give you a piece of advice which is the result of my life-long study and experience. I may also tell you that you would be able to appreciate full import of my counsel when you have grown wise in the ways of the world.

I warn you against presenting Islam in a way that may give an impression that the earlier generations had not been able to fathom the true spirit of faith or that they had failed to comprehend the fundamental precepts of the Qur'an or its phraseology. Islam contains plain and distinct truth, intelligible to all ages and circumstances, but any presumption of this nature simply goes to prove that the Book of God has remained an impenetrable mystery during the times gone-by. It would mean that shortly after its revelation the Qur'an became incomprehensible. But this is against the Quranic dictum:

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

In this verse the promise of God to safeguard His message includes cognizability of the Quranic text and its meanings, translating its teachings into practice and a congruence between its doctrines and the ever changing life of man. How can any scripture command the

respect of man if it remains dead for ages, unknowable and unacted for a long, long time? God tells His Prophet (SAWS) in the Qur'an :

It is surely undertaken by Us to store it (in your heart), and to let it be recited (by you after revelation is completed). Therefore, when it is recited by Us (through the angel), follow its recitation (by concentration of your heart).

Then, it is undertaken by Us to explain it.

(45:17-19)

The new slant adopted by certain thinkers and writers of the modern age implies that the Muslim peoples who had exhibited wonderful qualities of head and heart were in fact a dormant people suffering from intellectual languor. How can you expect to get the harvest from a grove which remains without leaves and stems for such a long time? One would certainly lose every hope of the capability and future unfoldment of such people.

This assumption may not appear to be outrageously damaging at the first glance, but it is bound to make a deep impression on one's mental attitude and way of thinking; for, it throws doubt upon the capability of the people charged to keep guard and disseminate the message of Islam. Since this raises doubts about the soundness of past efforts made for the furtherance of

Islam and renders undefendable all the great achievements of Muslim preachers and reformers, it becomes doubtful whether similar endeavours in future would be in the right direction. It bears a helping hand to the enigmatic imagery of the Batinites who sought to promote their interests by introducing the obscure concepts of esoteric or underlying reality and the extrinsic or supervenient form of religion. For Islam was not passed on by one generation to another merely through written pages, such a presumption is not only against the universal belief of the Muslims but also against the historical evidence. The forebears had continued to teach and train the succeeding generations in the recitation of the Qur'an, its contents and meanings and the observance of Its commandments. And, this is the reason why the Qur'an is spoken of by God as:

"These are verses of the enlightening Book. We have sent it down, as an Arabic Qur'an, so that you may understand." (12:1-2)

and

"(This is) a book the verses of which have been made firm, and elaborated by the One who is All Wise, All Aware." (11:1)

These characteristics and distinguishing marks of the Qur'an give a lie to the theory that its expressions and implications have remained lying under the surface for any length of time.

Another inference drawn from this way of thinking is that since the followers of Islam had been, for a long time, oblivious of the true content and import of the basic glossary of the Qur'an on which rested the perfection of their faith and behaviour, they had gone astray from the right path, or, to be more exact, drifted to the path of impious nonconformity. But, the Book of God as well as the sayings of the Prophet are explicit on the point that the votaries of Islam shall never fall a prey to any extensive undutifulness, unlike the followers of earlier prophets. Eminent doctors of religion and reputed Traditionists are all agreed in holding this view. Al-

though the Tradition: "My followers shall not be united in waywardness" is not considered unimpeachable by virtue of its transmitting links, it is nevertheless correct in its sense and content. Abu Mohammad Ali ibn Hazm (d.1063) the noted Andalusian Traditionist and Critic writes in *Al-Ahkam fi Usul il-Ahkam*:

"Traditionists hold the view that the followers of Islam can never unite in unvirtuousness because the Prophet has predicted that they shall be the standard-bearers of Truth in every age. The Prophet is reported to have said: 'My followers shall never be united in waywardness.' Although the language of the Tradition and its transmission is not regarded as unimpeachable (*This is, in fact, the personal view of Ibn Hazm. Another reputed Traditionist, Sakhawi, has expressed the view that the Tradition in question is well known and confirmed by several authentic transmitting links. Al-maqasid-ul-Hasanah*), the prophecy made in it is confirmed by other Traditions which promise Muslims to walk the straight path in every age."

Hafiz Ibn Qayyim says :

"Thanks God that-the Muslims have never come round to give up even one precept or practice of the Prophet save in a case where it was proved to have been abrogated by another precept."

In his commentary on Surah Nisa, Hafiz Ibn Kathir explains the verse:

"Whoever breaks away with the Messenger after the right path has become clear to him, and follows what is not the way of the believers." (4:115)

as adverting to the divine guarantee that the Muslims shall never lend themselves to an erroneous view in religion.

Ibn Taimiyah also agrees to the above view. Discussing the doctrine of Ijma or concensus of learned doctors, he writes:

"Unanimous consent of the followers of Islam shall always be right and proper, since, the Muslims will never be of one accord on anything indecorous. For the Qur'an and the Traditions announce: "whom they find written with them in

the Torah and the Injil , and who bids them what is fair and forbids what is unfair,” (7:157), and “The believers, male and female, are friends to each other. They bid virtue and forbid vice” (9:71), concurrence of the Muslims with wrongfulness would mean their failure to perform the duty of enjoining that which is right and forbidding that which is wrong. In a like manner, reads another verse of the Qur’an: “In the same way We made you a moderate Ummah (community), so that you should be witnesses over the people.” (2:141). (Fatawa ibn Taimiyah)

It can hardly be denied that the fanciful ideas giving a new interpretation to the Qur’an arise from attachment of the people to the prevailing political philosophies and parties. There can also be no two opinions about the importance and justification of re-introducing Islamic political system for which, indeed, every Muslim thinker and writer should work ceaselessly. Nevertheless, it is not at all necessary to strain the meaning of Quranic terms nor to give a false colouring to its accepted teachings for proving one’s pet notions. The Qur’an and the Sunnah contain enough intrinsic evidence in support of organising the Muslim community on the basis of its own political thought, and the Muslim reformers and preachers of the past have, indeed, successfully invoked them for similar ends They have enough of clear directions on the subject to require beating about the bush.

Noble Traits

When the Prophet (SAWS) first received revelation from angel Jibreel, the first person he went to seek comfort from was his wife, Khadijah (RA). He was scared after receiving the revelation, but Khadijah (RA) consoled the Prophet (SAWS) by telling him:

“Never, I take an oath in Allah, Allah will never place you in difficulty or disgrace you. You have such great qualities and traits, that you strengthen family ties, you take the burden of others, help the poor, serve the guests, and you assist the truth at the times of difficulty.” The comfort she gave him exemplified the confidence she had in him and the message that he had received.

How They Lived

When Umayyah gave up trying to revert Sayyiduna Bilal (RA) to disbelief, he accepted Sayyiduna Abu Bakr’s (RA) offer and sold him to Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (RA). Ummayah stated he was ready to sell him for only an ounce of gold. Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (RA) replied, “I would have paid even one hundred for him.” Sayyiduna Bilal (RA) was so beloved to the Prophet (SAWS) and the Companions; they would have freed him at any cost.

Personalized Generosity

Yusra Owais

One day Abdullah, the son of Zubair, told those around him: “I have never met anyone more generous than my mother and my aunt.”

He was describing Asma (RA) and Aisha (RA). Abdullah, the son of Asma and the nephew of Aisha, explained: “Their generosity was different. Aisha (RA) used to gather things, and after they had been collected, she would give them out. Asma (RA), on the other hand, would not keep anything for the next day.” (Al-Adab Al-Mufrad)

Immediately, we notice how their expressions of generosity were the exact opposite; one woman waiting until she gathered a large amount to give, while the other gave as soon as she received. Yet one method of giving was not favoured over the other. Both forms of giving were equally seen as virtuous.

Among the many virtues we know of our Mother Aisha (RA), the one she received a nickname for was charity. She was called Umm al-Teeb (the mother of fragrance). Using “umm” or “mother” in Arabic emphasizes that this person is the source of something or that this is a particular characteristic of the person or object. Aisha (RA) was called Umm al-Teeb because she used to spray perfume on the money she donated. When asked why she did this, she explained that charity reaches Allah before the receiving person’s hand so she wanted it to smell nice. She did this so often that it became her trademark and earned her

this nickname.

Asma (RA) was known for her strength and resilience. She was the older sister of Aisha (RA) by ten years. As a young woman, she walked miles until she reached the cave outside of the city where her father, Abu Bakr (RA), and the Prophet (SAWS) were hiding on their pilgrimage to Medina, in order to bring them food. For her creativity in bringing them supplies, the Prophet (SAWS) personally gave her a nickname. She became known as Dhat an-Nitaqayn, which means “she who has two belts.” To hide the supplies she was carrying, Asma (RA) tore her belt in two and secured the packages under her clothes. A part of this story that is not well-known was that Asma (RA) was recently married and pregnant at the time.

This brief glimpse into their lives shows us how these women embodied generosity. What can we specifically learn from this narration?

Firstly, we learn that there are benefits and challenges to both ways of giving, but that both methods can make you among the most generous of people. Asma’s method teaches us that we should be in the constant habit of giving as we receive. Giving as soon as you receive can make you among the most generous of people. Aisha’s case, giving after accumulation, may seem harder. We live in a society which encourages accumulation and collecting things. When you have one thing

in your hand, it may be easier to give rather than collecting a large amount and giving it all at once. But the bottom line is that we should be giving. The question is: how can we adjust this giving to fit our circumstances and make us better people?

In the Qur'an, Allah (swt) when speaking of Maryam (as) describes her as being among the most devout worshippers. He (swt) did not specify 'devout female worshippers,' highlighting that her devoutness was not related to her being a woman; it transcended gender. She, and all of us, are first and foremost worshipers of Allah. Similarly, Abdullah (RA) did not say these two women are the most generous women, but in his eyes, they were the two most generous people he knew.

Abdullah (RA) also noted the difference between the amount of giving (Aisha) versus the frequency of giving (Asma). Despite this stark contrast, he recognizes that either/or, both forms of giving embody generosity. It does not matter which way you follow as long as you give. Abdullah (RA) did not share what his mother and aunt actually gave, and from this we can understand that they did not only give money but assorted items.

If you were to look up "charity" in any hadith (Prophetic traditions) database, you would come up with hundreds upon hundreds of narrations and examples of charity. Allah (swt) and His Prophet (SAWS) teach us that giving charity and being generous are important and noble traits of a believer. Yet, they did not give us only one way to practice generosity. An act which embodies a general virtue such as honesty or kindness can be practiced many ways. Asma (RA) and Aisha (RA) teach us two of the many ways we can be generous people.

An important lesson from this narration is that we should personalize our worship. We know that there are acts of worship which have specific conditions and practices which we cannot deviate from, such as prayer or fasting. But doing general good, which is considered worship, can be moulded to fit our personalities. We

all have unique gifts Allah (swt) has blessed us with. We should use these talents to worship Allah and to benefit ourselves and those around us. We should be creative and find our own unique ways of doing good, under the greater umbrella of virtuous deeds. Islam does not remove our personalities or qualities. Instead, Islam should accentuate our personalities. Dr. Sherman Jackson sums it up wonderfully by saying, "Let us not think that greatness can only be by becoming a religious scholar. Many of us don't find greatness because we don't find ourselves. We are too busy trying to be someone else and their greatness. Because we don't focus on Allah we can't see the greatness that Allah wants us to achieve. When we find that path, the talents and ingrained values will find their fruition."²

You can be generous in many ways, based on your circumstances and personality, because Islam accommodates this. Sometimes we take very grand virtues and present a linear and restrictive definition of how to act upon them. For example, we all know that honesty is a virtue. But does honesty only mean to speak the truth? Doesn't honesty include honesty in earning a lawful income or honesty in eating from pure and good sources? Generosity is not just to give money nor is it to only give something when you get it. Yes, giving money is part of generosity but it can also be to give people your full attention when speaking to them. It can be to spend time with family. It can be showing hospitality to your guests. When we restrict a virtue, we end up restricting ourselves and our Islam. If we try to manifest these virtues in everything we do, if we go beyond the linear definition, then we move past Islam as being a series of acts and rituals and instead work towards truly embodying Islamic virtues in all aspects of our lives.

This short narration from Abdullah (RA) at a cursory glance may teach us simply that generosity is a virtue. Taking a closer look allows us to see how two great women embodied generosity and how we can be creative in our worship.

The Qur'an: A Clear Proof

Maulana Saleem Dhorat

*“Indeed, We have sent down the Dhikr [the Qur'an], and indeed We are its guardian.”
(Quran 15:9)*

In this verse Allah proclaims that it is He, and He alone, who has revealed the Glorious Qur'an to mankind, which means it is His Word. This claim is followed by a proof to validate it: that Allah Himself is its guardian and protector. When Allah protects something, nothing and no one can ever interfere with it, so the continual preservation of the Qur'an is a proof that it is the Word of Allah. There are many other proofs of the Divine origin of the Qur'an, including its i'jaz (inimitability) – the challenge to mankind to invent even a single verse to match the Qur'an in its perfection. However, the preservation of the Qur'an is a proof that even a child can understand.

Over 1,400 years have passed and it is still plain for everyone to see that not a single change has occurred in the Qur'an. To fulfil the promise of protecting the Qur'an, Allah has created a comprehensive system consisting of scribes who accurately copy the text; huffaz who accurately memorise its words; qurra who preserve its mode of recitation; and mufassirin, muhaddithin, fuqaha and 'ulama who protect its meaning and message.

Non-Muslim experts, while arguing over the authorship of the Qur'an, nevertheless acknowledge that despite the passage of over fourteen centuries it has not undergone even the slightest alteration – not of a single letter or diacritical mark.

It is obvious that a very powerful being must be safeguarding the Qur'an for it to have been preserved over so many centuries.

The Protected Book

'Allamah Al-Qurtubi (ra) narrates an interesting story about the preservation of the Qur'an. Once a stranger attended one of the debates that the 'Abbasid Khalifah Ma'mun Ar-Rashid used to hold at his court. The man spoke eloquently during the debate, and afterwards Ma'mun summoned him. Sensing that he was not a Muslim he asked him whether he was a Jew. The man replied that he was. Ma'mun then invited him to embrace Islam and, as a test, offered him incentives for doing so. However, the man preferred to keep his religion, the religion of his forefathers.

A year later the same man attended the court of Ma'mun as a Muslim and spoke learnedly on Islamic jurisprudence. Afterwards, Ma'mun

called him and asked him if he was the same man who had come the year before. He replied in the affirmative, and upon being asked how he had come to become a Muslim he told his story.

After he had left the debate the previous year he had decided to examine the different religions. Being a good calligrapher he made three copies of the Tawrat, making some additions and omissions in the process. He took the copies to its adherents and they bought them from him. He then made three copies of the Injil, again making some additions and omissions, and took them to its adherents, who bought them. Then he did exactly the same with the Qur'an and took the copies to the Muslims. They checked them and when they noticed the additions and omissions they discarded the copies and refused to buy them. "I realised then that this was a Protected Book, and that was how I came to embrace Islam," concluded the man.

Enthusiasm for Memorising the Qur'an

The preservation of the Qur'an is a great miracle, and the means Allah employs in its preservation are also amazing. Parents who encourage their children to memorise the entire Qur'an are aware of the rewards they and their children will receive for doing so, but the children themselves are not. If you were to ask the students of a typical tahfiz-ul-Qur'an class what the rewards for memorising the Qur'an are, majority would not be able to reply. Despite this, the desire Allah places in their hearts to memorise the Qur'an is such that very few if any would dream of giving it up.

Wherever you go you will see that there are never enough tahfiz-ul-Qur'an classes and that they are always oversubscribed! Just think, what power is there besides Allah that is keeping our children committed to memorising the Qur'an? There are countless other well-known good deeds that promise great rewards, yet people do not adhere to them with such commitment and dedication as to memorising the Qur'an. Allah

Himself puts the love of memorising His Word into the hearts of young people!

Nowhere in the whole world will you see classes full of children memorising a book that they do not understand. It is a miracle of the Qur'an that people are able to learn a whole foreign alphabet and how to read in the foreign language, without learning to understand the language; furthermore, then they memorise a whole book in that language, and then keep it memorised for the rest of their lives.

Remarkable Huffaz

Throughout history there are examples of people who memorised the Qur'an at a very young age and also in a very short time. Ibn Labban (ra) memorised the entire Qur'an in just one year, remarkable in itself, but even more amazing is that he completed his memorisation at the age of five! Hafiz Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani (ra) became a hafiz by the age of nine, and at the age of eleven led the Tarawih Salah in Al-Masjid Al-Haram. Imam Ash-Shafi'i (ra) memorised the Qur'an in just one month. When Imam Muhammad (ra) went to study under Imam Abū Hanifah (ra) he was asked whether he had memorised the entire Qur'an or not, for admission to his classes was conditional on being a hafiz. He replied that he had not, but his desire to acquire knowledge was so great that he returned after just one week and told Imam Abū Hanifah (ra) that he was now a hafiz!

Connect Yourself to the Qur'an

After learning something of the miraculous nature of the Glorious Qur'an, we need to take some practical steps to connect ourselves with it:

* Reciting the Qur'an regularly. Recite one juz daily, or if that is not possible then half a juz or a quarter, but recite daily. If the remembrance of Allah in its various forms such as tasbih, tahmid, salat 'alan-Nabi, du'a etc. are compared to individual 'vi-

tamins' beneficial to a person's spiritual health, the Qur'an can be likened to a multivitamin, for it contains them all.

Attend tajwid classes in your locality in order to learn how to recite the Qur'an properly, which is one of the rights of the Qur'an.

* Attend the Durūs (lessons) of the Qur'an delivered by the 'ulama in your locality in order to understand the message of the Qur'an.

* Practise upon the teachings of the Qur'an.

* Propagate the teachings of the Qur'an.

* Respect the people of the Qur'an, i.e. the huffaz and 'ulama. Refrain from disrespecting them and talking ill of them at all costs. 'Umar ibn 'Abd-ul-'Aziz (ra) used to say, "Become an 'alim if you can. If you cannot then become a student of 'ilm. And if you cannot then have love for them [the 'ulama and students]. And if you cannot then do not have hatred for them."

May Allah grant us love for and affinity with the Qur'an, the ability to memorise it, recite it in the proper manner, understand it and act according to it. Amin.

Do Good Have Good

The great scholar Ibn al-Qayyim (ra) gave some amazing and life-changing advice for the believer:

"A friend will not (literally) share your struggles, and a loved one cannot physically take away your pain, and a close one will not stay up the night on your behalf. . .so look after yourself, protect it, nurture it. . .and don't give life's events more than what they are really worth. . .Be certain that when you break no one will heal you except you, and when you are defeated no one will give you victory except your determination. . .your ability to stand up again and carry on is your responsibility. . .Do not look for your self worth in the eyes of people; look for your worth from within your conscious. . .if your conscious is at peace then you will ascend high. . .and if you truly know yourself then what is said about you won't harm you.

Do not carry the worries of this life. . . because this is for Allah. . . and do not carry the worries of sustenance because it is from Allah. . .and do not carry the anxiety for the future because it is in the Hands of Allah..

Carry one thing: How to please Allah. Because if you please Him, He pleases you, fulfils you and enriches you. Do not weep from a life that made your heart weep. . .just say "O Allah. . .compensate me with good in this life and the hereafter".

Sadness departs with a sajdah. . .happiness comes with a sincere du'a. . .Allah does not forget the good you do. . .nor does He forget the good you did to others and the pain you relieved them from. . . Nor will He forget the eye which was about to cry but you made it laugh..

Live your life with this principle: Be good even if you don't receive good. . .not because of other's sake but because Allah loves the good doers". Subhanallah!

Sa'id ibn Aamir al-Jumahi (RA)

Khalid Muhammad

Does any of us know this man or have any of us ever heard his name before? Most probably, the majority of us, if not all, have not heard his name mentioned before. I imagine that you wonder, who is Sa'id Ibn Aamir? Well, you are about to embark on a journey back in time so as to find out all that there is to be known about this 'happy' (Sa'id means 'happy') man, so fasten your seat belts.

In short, Sa'id was one of the outstanding Companions of the Prophet (SAWS) notwithstanding the fact that his name was seldom, if ever, mentioned. He was one of the most distinguished unknown pious Companions. It was natural that he, like all Muslims, would accompany the Prophet (SAWS) in all his expeditions and battles, for as a believer, he could not lag or turn his back on Allah's Prophet (SAWS) in peace or war time. Shortly before the Conquest of Khaibar, Sa'id submitted himself to Islam. Ever since he embraced Islam and gave his allegiance to the Prophet (SAWS), he consecrated his life, existence, and destiny to the service of Islam. All the great virtues of obedience, asceticism, dignity, humbleness, piety, and pride thrived harmoniously inside this pure and kind man.

In our attempt to unveil his greatness, we must bear in mind that, in most cases, appear-

ance contrasts with reality. If we are to judge him by his outer looks, we will not do him justice, for he was definitely ill-favoured as regards his appearance. He had dusty uncombed hair. Nothing in his looks or appearance distinguished him from poor Muslims. If we are to judge his reality by his appearance, we will see nothing impressive or breath-taking. But if we dive deep into his inner self beyond his outer appearance, we will see greatness in the full meaning of the word. His greatness stood aloof from the splendour and ornament of life. Yet, it lurked there beyond his modest appearance and worn-out garments. Have you ever seen a pearl hidden inside its shell? Well, he was much like this hidden pearl.

When the Commander of the Faithful Umar Al-Khattab dismissed Mu'aawiyah from his position as governor of Homs in Syria, he exerted himself in searching for someone who was qualified to take over his position.

Undoubtedly, Umar's standards of choice of governors and assistants were highly cautious, meticulous, and scrutinizing. He believed that if a governor committed a sin, error, or violation, two people would be asked to account for it before Allah: Umar and the governor, even if this governor were in the farthest corner of the earth. His standards of estimation and eval-

uation of governors were highly subtle, alert, and perceiving. Centuries before the advent of Islam, Homs was a big city that witnessed, one after the other, the dawn and eclipse of many civilizations. Besides, it was a vital trade centre. The attractions of the vast city turned it into a place of seduction and temptation. In Umar's opinion only an ascetic, devout, and repentant worshiper would be able to resist and renounce its attractions.

Umar suddenly realized that Sa'id Ibn Aamir was the man he was looking for and cried out, "Sa'id Ibn Aamir is the right man for this mission." He summoned him. Sa'id was offered the governorship by the Commander of the Faithful, but he refused saying, "Do not expose me to Fitnah (trials and affliction)." Umar then cried out, "By Allah, I will not let you turn me down. Do you lay the burdens of your trusteeship and the caliphate upon my shoulders, then you refuse to help me out?" Instantly, Sa'id was convinced of the logic of Umar's words. Indeed, it was not fair to abandon or avoid their obligation towards their trusteeship and towards the caliphate and lay them on Umar's shoulders. Moreover, if people like Sa'id Ibn Aamir renounced the responsibility of rule, then Umar would definitely have a hard time to find a man who was highly pious and righteous enough to be entrusted with such a mission.

Hence, Sa'id travelled with his wife to Syria. They were newlywed. Ever since his bride was a little girl, she had been an exquisitely blooming beauty. Umar gave him a considerable sum of money at the time of his departure.

When they settled down in Syria, his wife wanted to use this money, so she asked him to buy appropriate garments, upholstery, and furniture, and to save the rest of it. Sa'id said to her, "I have a better idea. We are in a country with profitable trade and brisk markets, so it would be better to give this money to a merchant so as to invest it." She said, "But if he loses it?" Sa'id said, "I will make him a guarantee that the

amount will be paid notwithstanding." She answered, "All right then."

Of course, Sa'id went out and bought the necessities for an ascetic life, then gave all his money in voluntary charity in Allah's cause to the poor and those in need. Time went by, and every now and then his wife would ask him about their money and their profits and he would answer, "It is a highly profitable trade."

One day, she asked him the same question before one of his relatives who knew what he had done with the money. His relative smiled, then he could not help laughing in a way that made Sa'id's wife suspicious. Therefore, she prevailed on him to tell her the truth. He told her, "Sa'id on that day gave all his money in voluntary charity in Allah's cause." Sa'id's wife was broken-hearted, for not only had she lost her last chance to buy what she wanted but also lost all their money. Sa'id gazed at her sad, meek eyes glistening with tears that only added more charm and grace to her eyes; yet before he yielded to this fascinating figure, he perceived Paradise inhabited by his late friends and said, "I had companions who preceded me in ascending to Allah and you will not deviate from the path they have taken, not for the world." He was afraid lest her excelling beauty should make her disobey him; therefore he said as if he were talking to himself, "You know that Paradise is filled with Houris, fair females with wide and lovely eyes as wives for the pious, who are extremely lovely. If one of them had a peep at the earth, she would illuminate it with her light that combines the light of both the earth and the moon. So you should not blame me if I chose to sacrifice your love for their love and not vice versa." Throughout his talk, he was calm, pleased, and satisfied. His wife was peaceful, for she realized that she had no choice but to follow Sa'id's example and adopt herself to his rigid, ascetic, and pious way of life.

Homs at that time was called the second Kufa. The reason behind this was that its people

were easily stirred and swayed to revolt against their governors. Homs was named after Al-Kufa in Iraq, which was notorious for endless mutiny and uprisings. Although, the people of Homs were given to mutiny, as we have already mentioned, Allah guided their hearts to His righteous slave Sa'id. Thus, they loved and obeyed him.

One day, Umar said to him, "I find it rather strange that the people of Syria love and obey you." Sa'id answered, "Maybe they love me because I help and sympathize with them."

Despite the love of the people of Homs for Sa'id, their innate rebellious disposition got the better of them. Hence, sounds of discontent and complaint began to be heard, thus proving that Homs was not called the second Kufa in vain. One day, as the Commander of the Faithful was visiting Homs, he asked its people who gathered around him for their opinion of Sa'id. Some made complaints against him which were blessings in disguise, for they unveiled an impressively great man.

Umar asked the criticizing group to state their complaints one by one. The representative of the group stood up and said, "We have four complaints against Sa'id : First, he doesn't come out of his house until the sun rises high and the day becomes hot. Second, he does not see anyone at night. Third, there are two days in every month in which he doesn't leave his house at all. Fourth, he faints every now and then, and this annoys us although he can't help it." The man sat down and Umar was silent for a while for he was secretly supplicating Allah saying, "Allah, I know that he is one of Your best slaves. Allah, I beseech You not to make me disappointed in him." He summoned Sa'id to defend himself. Sa'id replied, "As for their complaint that I do not get out of my house before noon, by Allah I hate to explain the reason that made me do that, but I have to do so. The reason is that my wife does not have a servant, so I knead my dough, wait for it to rise, bake my bread, perform ablu-

tion and pray Duha, then I go out of my house." Umar's face brightened as he said, "All praises and thanks be to Allah." Then he urged him to refute the rest of the allegations. Sa'id went on, "As for their complaint that I do not meet anyone at night, by Allah, I hate to say the reason, but you force me to. Anyway, I have devoted the day to them and consecrated the night for Allah. As for the third complaint that they do not see me two days per month, well, I do not have a servant to wash my garment and I have no spare one. Therefore, I wash it and wait for it to dry shortly before sunset, then I go out of my house to meet them. My defence against the last complaint of the fainting fits is that I saw with my own eyes Khubaib Al-Ansaariy being slain in Makkah. The Quraish cut his body into small pieces and said, "Do you want to save yourself and see Muhammad in your place instead?" He answered, "By Allah, I will not accept your offer of setting me free to return to my family safe and sound, even if you gave me all the splendours and ornaments of life in return for exposing the Prophet (SAWS) to the least annoyance, even if it was a prick of a thorn. Now, every time this scene of me standing there as a disbeliever, watching Khubaib being tortured to death and doing nothing to save him flickers in my mind, I find myself shaking with fear of Allah's punishment and I faint."

These were Sa'id's words which left his lips that were already wet from the flow of his pure and pious tears. The overjoyed Umar could not help but cry Out, "All praises and thanks be to Allah Who would not make me disappointed in you!" He hugged Sa'id and kissed his graceful and dignified forehead.

What a great guidance must have been bestowed on those outstanding men! What an excellent instructor Allah's Prophet (SAWS) must have been! What a penetrating light must have emanated from Allah's Book! What an inspiring and instructive school Islam must have been! I wonder if the earth can take in so much of the

piety and righteousness of those fortunate men. I presume that if that happened, then we would no longer call it the earth but rather Paradise. Indeed the 'Promised Paradise.'

Since it is not time for Paradise yet, it is only natural that those glorious superior men who pass by life are but few, very few. Sa'id Ibn Aamir was definitely one of those superior Muslims.

His position allowed him a considerable salary, yet he took only enough money to buy the necessities for himself and his wife and gave the rest in voluntary charity in the way of Allah. One day, he was urged to spend this surplus on his family and relatives, yet he answered, "Why should I give it to my family and relatives? No, by Allah, I will not sell Allah's pleasure to seek my kinfolds' pleasure."

He was later urged, "Spend more money on yourself and on your family and try to enjoy the lawful good things." But he always answered, "I will not stay behind the foremost Muslims after I heard the Prophet (SAWS) say, "When Almighty Allah gathers all people on the Day of Reckoning, the poor believers will step forward in solemn procession. They will be asked to stop for reckoning but they will answer confidently: We have nothing to account for. Allah will say: My slaves said the truth. Hence, they will enter Paradise before all other people."

In A.H. 20, Sa'id met Allah with a pure record, pious heart, and honourable history. He yearned for so long to be among the foremost Muslims; in fact, he consecrated his life to fulfil their covenant and follow in their footsteps. He yearned for so long for an instructor and his pure and repentant comrades. He left all the burdens, troubles, and hardships of life behind. He had nothing but his pious, ascetic, awesome, and great inner self. These virtues made the balance of good deeds heavy rather than light. He impressed the world with his qualities rather than with his conceit.

Peace be upon Sa'id Ibn Aamir. Peace be upon his life and resurrection. Peace be upon the honourable and obedient Companions of the Prophet and blessings and peace be upon him.

Source: Men Around the Messenger

Focus....

*We get so scared sometimes,
Afraid of all that can go wrong.
All that can be lost. But in our
debilitating fear, we lose fo-
cus. We see the sickness, but
not the cure. The storm, but
not the shelter. Yes, there are
flames. But remember, the
sickness, the storm, the fire,
the armies and the sea, are all
creations in the hands of the
Sovereign. He saved Ayyoub
(AS) from the sickness, Nuh
(AS) from the storm, Ibrahim
(AS) from the flames, and Musa
(AS) from the armies and the
Sea. It wasn't that they didn't
face these hardships. They
did. They were surrounded by
them. But Allah kept them safe,
even while in the belly of the
calamity. Our focus is wrong.
We fear the Red Sea, because
we don't see the One who
can split it in two. It is not the
storm we should fear...*

*but he distance from the Shel-
ter.*

Hudaibiya

Political Foresight of the Prophet

K. Yasir

- To be ice-cool in demeanor,
 - To be fire-hot in determination,
 - To be sponge-soft with issues at periphery,
- and
- To be steel-hard when it comes to principle.

This is the art of diplomacy (rather politics itself) and in the history of mankind the treaty of Hudaibiya is one of the most perfect paradigm of this art. It was for a reason that Allah referred to it as a “manifest victory” and a “mighty help”. In this article, we will look briefly at a few significant lessons related to the political foresight of the Prophet Muhammad (s) that can be directly derived from the text of the treaty in Hudaibiya. The treaty reads:

1. In your name, O God!
2. This is the treaty of peace between Muhammad ibn Abdullah and Suhail ibn Amr.
3. They have agreed to ceasefire for ten years. During this time each party shall be secure, and neither shall harm the other. No secret damage – theft or betrayal – shall be inflicted.
4. The people of Muhammad may visit Makkah for Haj, Umra or trade and their life and belongings shall be secure, likewise people of Qureysh may visit or pass through Medina to Egypt or Syria for trade and their life and be-

longings shall be secure.

5. And if a man from Qureysh comes, without the permission of his guardian, to Muhammad, he shall be returned to them; but if, on the other hand, one of Muhammad’s people comes to the Qureysh, he shall not be returned.

6. Whoever in Arabia wishes to enter into a treaty or covenant with Muhammad can do so, and whoever wishes to enter into a treaty or covenant with the Qureysh can do so.

7. This year, Muhammad, with his companions, must retract from Makkah, but next year, he, with his companions, may come to Makkah and remain for three days, yet without their weapons except those of a traveler i.e. the swords remaining in their sheaths.

Translated from Dr. Mohammed Hamidullah’s *Al-Wasa’iq us Siyasia* (p. 77-80) with some alterations in the sequence.

If we look at the political situation of the times we see that the persecuted Muslims at Makkah were now a political power to reckon with after establishing a state in Medina and braving the existential threats at Badr and Uhad triumphantly before foiling the ploy of Ahzab. Now they were at the doorsteps of Makkah which was a major blow to the psyche of Makkans and also their prestige in the whole of Arabia. There was a loss-loss situation for them. Either they allow Muslims to perform Umra

and recognize them or else draw them away and give an impression that they blocked the innocuous pilgrims from performing rituals at Kaba which was supposed to be open for all. While it was not possible anymore to ignore the Muslims or shoo them away, nevertheless Qureysh were not in favor of letting Muslims perform their pilgrimage at Makkah – they considered it too much of a blow to their egos. However cutting the long story very short we are going to discuss specifically how the text of the treaty, as we read it today, came up and how that's an example of political foresightedness on the part of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (s).

The first provision

The treaty was discussed and finalised between Prophet Muhammad (s) on one hand and Suhail ibn Amr on the other. Ali ibn Abu Talib wrote the treaty. The Prophet Muhammad (s) asked him to write “In the name of Allah who is most Gracious and most Merciful.” Suhail ibn Amr objected on this and disputed: Who is this most Gracious and most Merciful? We don't know Him. Write instead, “In your name, O' God” as per the tradition of the Arabs. The Prophet conceded and asked Ali to write, “In your name, O' God”. There was no problem in conceding on this, as what was being written was not wrong even according to the Islamic ideals.

The second provision

The Prophet Muhammad asked Ali to write further that, “This is what Muhammad the messenger of Allah has agreed with Suhail ibn Amr.” To the utter dismay of the Muslims, Suhail objected yet again and argued that, “If we believed that you were Allah's messenger then we would not have fought you.” He told, “Write your own name and the name of your father.” And the Prophet obliged yet again saying, “Whether you believe it or not, I am the messenger of Allah.” He then asked Ali to erase it out and when Ali,

out of respect, said that, “I won't be the person to rub it out,” the Prophet himself erased out the words – messenger of Allah. Yet again, what was being written was not wrong, and conceding on this matter only gratified the egos of Qureysh and was practically going to cause no harm to the cause of Muslims.

The third provision

This was the major stroke – a cessation of hostilities for ten years. Neither the Qureyshi envoy nor the Qureysh understood what they did to themselves by signing for this truce. Medina State had two principal enemies 0 the Qureysh at Makkah and the Jews at Khaibar. Geographically and militarily it was not possible for Medina to take them down simultaneously. To deal with them one by one too was not viable option because, for example, if Muslims would take on Khaibar then Qureysh can either join forces with Jews in the battlefield or worse would attack the city of Medina which wouldn't be able to defend itself in absence of the larger chunk of its army. Jews would have done the same thing by opening up another front in circumstances of Muslim incursion over Qureysh. This truce secured the Makkan front for the Muslims and they, barely within two months of conclusion of the treaty, exterminated the Jewish threat at Khaibar. This boosted the military capability and political stature of the Muslims vis-a-vis Qureysh.

The fourth provision

Qureysh had forced Muslims out of their homes in Makkah and with that hostilities between Muslims and Qureysh ensued. Muslims migrated to Medina and an Islamic state came into being. Passing through Medina to Egypt, Syria and other markets was vital for the trade interest of Qureysh. It is noteworthy that trade was most important (if not the only) means for the livelihood in Makkah.

But, as a result of hostilities, Muslims had

more or else blocked this route and jeopardized the trade interests of Qureysh. Several skirmishes between trade caravans of Qureysh and Muslims are reported in history and all that made trade very insecure for the Qureysh. Besides, Prophet Muhammad (s) concluded treaties with other tribes. And with further alliances and military victories that resulted in growing influence of Medina, it threatened to close the Qureysh's caravan route to Iraq as well. Dr. Mohammed Hamidullah also notes that the "international trade between India and Europe, which is said to have passed through Mecca, was stopped. This deprived the Quraishites of their monopoly of providing escorts, which must have been a means of considerable income, not to speak of the direct gains of the northern traffic, which was reputed to bring them hundred percent profits." (The Battlefields of the Prophet Muhammad p. 80)

One of the major causes with which leaders like Abu Jahl could rally together Makkans against the nascent state of Medina was insecurity of their trade route. Earlier they tried to eliminate this threat through invasions. But after the battle of Trench they were forced to realize that a military solution to the Medina-problem might not be possible. Hence, this provision was in fulfillment of their primary interest -securing their trade route. What they didn't realize is the fact that they themselves were opposed to Muslims' access to Makkah and as a natural corollary were not allowed to pass through Medina. Muslims always wanted peaceful social and economic contacts with Makkah and Qureysh. This was vital for Dawah as well. And Qureysh were very apprehensive of the spread of Islam. During hostilities they were more or less immune from the 'Islamic virus' which they most feared. Readers would remember the fact that in Prophet's Makkan age they took pains to convince their folks (and outsiders) that Muhammad is a magician and his sorcery sows the seeds of discord between father & sons and

brother & brothers etc. This provision not only secured the trade routes of Medina for Makkans but also opened the doors of Makkah for the Muslims. Qureysh could no longer bind their people from mingling with Muslims; observing their behavior in daily life; talk to them about their religion ... and be impressed.

The fifth provision

The earlier half of this provision that – if a man from Qureysh without the permission of his guardian comes to Muhammad, he shall be returned to them was a big concern for Makkans. Their people, especially youths, were embracing Islam and leaving Makkah for Medina in considerable numbers. They wanted to check this trend and hence introduced the provision that if a man from Qureysh comes, without the permission of his guardian, to Prophet Muhammad (s), he shall be returned to them. But the later half of the provision was an utter nonsense which only served the purposes of fattening the egos of Qureysh. So, when this provision was objected to by the Muslims, Prophet Muhammad (s) explained to them that we do not need the apostate who, from our side, would return to Qureysh and their religion ... And after all both parties knew that it was not going to happen.

The earlier half of the provision was a political concession on the part of the Prophet Muhammad (s). It really seemed to jeopardize the Muslim interests. And Prophet Muhammad (s) explained to his companions that Allah would find a way for those who are stranded in Makkah as a result of this provision. Muslims abided by the treaty and handed over to Qureysh whoever came to them from Makkah, Abu Jandal (son of Suhail ibn Amr) and later Abu Baseer are a few names in this regard. But Abu Baseer, outside Medina, fought for his freedom and didn't return to Makkah. He camped on the trade routes of Makkah and attacked their trade caravans. Many fleeing Muslims including

Abu Jandal joined forces with him and Qureysh, themselves, came to Prophet Muhammad (s) nullifying this provision.

The sixth provision

With a very flimsy look at things someone may conclude that this provision was a mutual gain. But that's not the case. The point to be noted is the fact that there was no obstacle to tribes joining their hands with Qureysh as historically they were an established power in the region. To align with the Prophet Muhammad (s) – the challenger and enemy of the superpower 0 was however very risky and tricky. To improve their relationship with the nascent Islamic republic, no tribe would have desired to jeopardize their relations with Qureysh. So, the only way through which people would have aligned themselves to the Medina without provoking Makkah was a truce between Prophet Muhammad (s) and Qureysh. So, this provision was a major political gain for the Muslims. Through this treaty, not only Qureysh recognized Medina as a legitimate political force in the region but also the doors were opened for other tribes to align themselves with emerging political power of Medina.

The seventh provision:

It happened that Qureysh, like every decaying power, ended up emphasizing and fighting upon the most ephemeral and most useless provision of the treaty that served no purposes except satiation of their vanity. Prophet Muhammad (s) conceded to this because performing the pilgrimage that very year was not an objective in itself. Muslims had waited for six years and they could wait a year more especially if they were allowed to enter the city peacefully the next year. The major political gains that Muslims acquired from the treaty would not have been possible if Prophet Muhammad (s) would have insisted on performing the pilgrimage that very year.

.....

On the political chessboard it happens that

checks come from Queen or Rook or Knight but the ultimate defeat comes through unusual quarters of a petty pawn. There is nothing to deter an unbiased historian from concluding that a few hundred more wars may not have swept the Qureysh so emphatically and so thoroughly as the peace of Hudaibiya did ... In this brief article all the lessons that can be learnt from Prophet Muhammad (s) at Hudaibiya cannot be summarized. But besides the provisions discussed above, below are a few more honorable mentions. For example, there is a lesson in ...

- the route taken by the Prophet Muhammad (s) for Makkah;
- his arrangements for intelligence especially about the enemy movements;
- his sending and effective usage of the advance-scout to deceive the enemy about the whereabouts of the actual position of his caravan;
- the manner in which he ditched the enemy who were hell-bent to fight and not let Muslims enter the precincts of Harem of Makkah;
- the way in which he dealt with the envoys of Qureysh (as per to their individual and tribal psychology);
- the style in which he channelized the discontentment of his companions in The Pledge beneath the Tree and thereby also sent a strong message to Qureysh;
- the calm and composure with which he negotiated and dealt with the issue of Abu Jandal;
- the careful usage of the language in the treaty (for example the fifth provision was worded in a manner that excluded women from the return-clause);
- the ease with which he shared his problem with his wife Umm e Salma and listened to her advice; and
- the way he dealt with the discontentment of his companions especially Umar through

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Religion and Religiosity

An Ailment or Medicine?!

Dr. Ahmed Al Raissouni

“There are those who are preoccupied with Islam, and work on Islam, but are ignorant of it and wasteful of its essence, thus damaging it when their intention was to serve and support it.”

Religion today, especially Islam, preoccupies people more than any other previous time. Islam preoccupied people when it appeared, to such an extent that Arabs from different tribes used to counsel one another and say, “Beware from the young man from Quraysh so that he doesn’t test you.” After that it was Arab neighbours who became preoccupied, including the Persians and the Romans, until it became a big deal. Then it was Europe when Islam crossed the sea and the crescent started to appear in its horizon.

But today it preoccupies people in a way that has no precedence. It preoccupies those afar and those in proximity in the same way, just as it does its followers and its enemies, those who are afraid of it and afraid for it, the preachers and the rulers, as well as students and researchers in history, anthropology, sociology, Islamic studies, and others. It also preoccupies, as you know, security and legal agencies, the media, and even political parties.

A few decades ago the jurist Abdul Qadir Odah wrote a short book titled “Islam between the Ignorance of its Children and Ineptitude of its Scholars”, a title that remains relevant in describing the preoccupation with Islam today, even if in a general way. There are those who are

preoccupied with Islam, and work on Islam, but are ignorant of it and wasteful of its essence, thus damaging it when their intention was to serve and support it.

From among the children of Islam and Muslims are ones who believe in Islam and accept being Muslims, but they do not want Islam to interfere in their lives or freedoms. They see that religious ones have a type of exaggeration in religious observance, and therefore feel a bit of unease and malaise from this strict Islam. Although this concern with exaggeration in itself is not free from its own exaggeration and could even be considered a type of exaggeration in its own way, it yet contains some elements of reality and truth.

There are some religious people and preachers who turned religion into a heavy, burdensome, and even embarrassing thing where they do not waste an opportunity to make something either prohibited or more strict. In fact, there are some among the people of religion who do not see in religion anything else other than obligation and compulsion upon others, where they see in making people undertake detestable things to them and the constriction of their lives a form of worship and a getting nearer to God the Exalted. In other words, they see in religion a difficulty in

this life for a reward in the next life, and that is all there is to it.

On the other hand, there are those who do not see in religion and its people anything other than a political competitor and an ideological foe. Therefore, they see no other alternative but opposing solutions that target its roots at the political, cultural, and intellectual fronts. From this arose the irreligious genius that dries the source in order to uproot the tradition.

To the right of those – or to their left as it does not really make a difference – are those who do not see in religious observance and its people and preachers anything other than a security problem either currently happening or expected to happen. Egyptian police has a known vision on this matter, which is that every appearance of religiosity greater than normal, and every popular appeal that a religious organization or preacher gains, is indicative of a “pregnancy”, where the newborn will inevitably be an extremist movement and a security threat.

Upon this methodology appeared the theory promoted by some Western politicians and pundits that states: Every Muslim is an Islamist project, and every Islamist is an extremist project, and every extremist is a terrorist project. Hence, if you want to fight terrorists, fight extremists; if you want to fight extremists, then fight all Islamists; if you want to fight Islamists, then fight Muslims, especially the religious ones; if you want to fight religious Muslims, then fight Islam itself; and if you want to fight Islam, begin with the Quran.

Faced with these images and conceptions [one has to ask] what is the essence of Islam? And what is the essence of religion and religiosity? Is religion a curse or a blessing? Is religion a problem or a solution to a problem? Is religion security and serenity, or a security problem? Is religion an ailment or medicine?

If we are tasked with specifying the message of religion, its essence, and reality, and are charged with correcting its image and conceptualization, then this will not be acceptable or definitive ex-

cept by directly relying on what the religion has said about itself. Therefore, I will limit myself to presenting the religion’s texts to the observers. The Quran is the culmination of religions and the seal of messages, and only a few of its statements expressing the message of God the Exalted, His purpose, and intention from revealing His religion and setting His path will suffice us. So let us stop upon and at them, for they are enough of a healing answer.

Religion is a guidance and light

The first reason messengers were sent and scriptures were revealed is so that people are upon clear insight, guidance, and light from their Lord to know the great Truths related to their creation, the purpose of their existence and life, and what is to come after their life and death. This is the ultimate and primary purpose for revealing the Torah, the Gospel, the Quran, and everything God revealed to His servants.

We revealed the Torah with guidance and light [5:44]

We sent Jesus, son of Mary, in their footsteps, to confirm the Torah that had been sent before him: We gave him the Gospel with guidance, light, and confirmation of the Torah already revealed – a guide and lesson for those who take heed of God {5:46}

God: there is no god but Him, the Ever Living, the Ever Watchful. Step by step, He has sent the Scripture down to you with the Truth, confirming what went before: He sent down the Torah and the Gospel earlier as a guide for people and He sent down the Criterion [3:2-4] A light has now come to you from God, and a Scripture making things clear, with which God guides to the ways of peace those who follow what pleases Him, bringing them from darkness to light, by His will, and guiding them to a straight path [5:15-16]

People, a teaching from your Lord has come to

you, a healing for what is in your hearts, and guidance and mercy for the believers [10:57]

Religion is purification and uprightness

Guidance leads to uprightness, and knowledge of Truth calls to following it. The coming of light is so that it is used for illumination, and it is only to gain insight and thoughtfulness. Here comes the second component of what makes up religion and its message: uprightness and elevation, purification and growth, righteousness and reformation. This is what messengers were sent to do, and this is what the scriptures were made to speak of.

Prosperous are those who purify themselves, remember the name of their Lord, and pray.

Yet you prefer the life of this world, even though the Hereafter is better and more lasting. All this is in the earlier scriptures, the scriptures of Abraham and Moses [87:14-19]
The one who purifies his soul succeeds, and the one who corrupts fails [91:9-10]

It is He who raised a messenger, among the people who had no Scripture, to recite His revelations to them, to make them grow spiritually and teach them the Scripture and wisdom [62:2]

This Quran does show the straightest way [17:9]

They said, 'Our people, we have been listening to a Scripture that came after Moses, confirming previous scriptures, giving guidance to the truth and the straight path [46:30]

For those who say, 'Our lord is God,' and then follow the straight path there is no fear, nor shall they grieve [46:13]

Say, "I am only a mortal like you, but it has been revealed to me that your God is One. Take the straight path to Him and seek His forgiveness. Woe to the idolaters [41:6]

Religion is mercy, benefit, and felicity

God the Exalted is not in need of His servants or the rest of His creation. He is not in need of their belief, worship, or actions. He is neither benefited by obedience nor harmed by disobedience. All He wants by His religion and path is for people to be upon that which is more exalted and purified, as well as that which is better for them and more merciful, bringing them felicity and tranquility. Therefore, praised be He does not want difficulty for them or hardship. Rather, he wants the complete opposite of that.

It was only as a mercy that We sent you to all people [21:107]

A Messenger has come to you from among yourselves. Your suffering distresses him: he is deeply concerned for you and full of kindness and mercy towards the believers. If they turn away, say, 'God is enough for me: there is no god but Him; I put my trust in Him; He is the Lord of the Mighty Throne [9:128-129]

Ta Ha. It was not to distress you that We sent down the Quran to you [20:1-2]

Whoever follows My guidance, when it comes to you, will not go astray nor fall into misery, but whoever turns away from it will have a life of great hardship. We shall bring him blind to the Assembly on the Day of Resurrection [20:123-124]

Who follow the Messenger – the unlettered prophet they find described in the Torah that is with them, and in the Gospel – who commands them to do right and forbids them to do wrong, who makes good things lawful to them and bad things unlawful, and relieves them of their burdens, and the iron collars that were on them [7:157]

We sent Our messengers with clear signs, the Scripture and the Balance, so that people could uphold justice [57:25]

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