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Published from Srinagar, May 2017, Volume 18, Issue 05.

“As long as you are pure of heart, you speak the truth.”

Umar Ibn Al Khattab

P.O. Box: 974, GPO Srinagar, 190001, Kashmir, India.



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RADIANT REALITY

Regd. No.: JKENG/2000/4174,

Published From Srinagar. May. 2017. Vol.18, No: 05.

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.

Editor, Printer & Publisher:
Maulana Hamidullah Lone

Printed at: Afaq Printing Press,
Jamia Masjid, Srinagar.

*Correspondence should be addressed to the Editor.

*The Editor reserves the right to abridge letters and any other material received for publication.

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Mailing Address:
Editor In-Charge,-
Radiant Reality
P.O. Box 974
G.P.O. Srinagar,
J&K, 190001,
India.

Subscription:

Yearly: Rs 240/-
+ Postage:
Rs. 60 (Normal Post)
Rs. 240 (Regd. Post)

Contact:
siteadmin@islamkashmir.org



+918491895043

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Question Answer

Question

Should the Khutbah of Jumuah be longer than the Jumuah Salaah or should the Jumuah Salaah be longer than the Khutbah of Jumuah?

Answer

There is consensus of the Ummah that it is Sunnah to shorten the Jumuah Khutbah and lengthen the Jumuah Salaah comparatively. By doing so contrary to the above, one will be acting against the Sunnah. (Al-Fiqhul Islaami Wa Idillatuhu)

Sayyiduna Abu Waa'il Radhiyallahu Anhu reports that Sayyiduna 'Ammar Radhiyallahu Anhu delivered the sermon to us. It was short and eloquent. When he descended (from the pulpit), we said to him: "O Abal-Yaqzaan, you have delivered a short and eloquent sermon. Would that, you had lengthened (the sermon)." He said: "I have heard Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam saying: The lengthening of Salaah by a man and the shortness of the sermon is the sign of his religious understanding. So lengthen the Salaah and shorten the sermon, for certainly some speech have an effect of magic (upon the listeners)." (Muslim)

Note: Gross negligence has been witnessed in this regard in the Masaajid. Therefore, in keeping with the Sunnah, a clear distinction should be made regarding the lengthening of the Salaah and shortening of the Khutbah at time of Jumuah.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

If a woman had more than one husband, with which husband will she be with in Jannah?

Answer

There are two views in this regard:

a) a woman will be with the last man she married in this world

b) a woman will be given the choice to choose with whom she wants to be with in Jannah.

This is not an issue that one should delve into nor be too concerned about. Bear in mind that a person in Jannah will have no worries or regrets. They will be in an everlasting state of happiness and joy.

*Mufti Ismaeel
Mufti Ismaeel*

Question

I know that interest based loans are Haraam but what if the interest rate is fixed? Is it still Haraam?

Answer

Interest bearing loans are Haram irrespective if the interest rate is fixed. By way of an example, if A took a loan of R100 from B on the condition that A returns R150 to B on a fixed interest rate of 10 % monthly or annually, it will constitute interest and it will be Haram. This is because A returns R50 in excess of R100 which is interest and not because the interest rate is fixed. Hence, in this case, the fixing of the interest rate will not affect the nature of it being Haram in any way.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

Is there any Dua to read when going to the Masjid?

Answer

Sayyiduna Ibn Abbaas Radhiyallahu Anhu-
ma reports that when the Muazzin called out
the Azaan, Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasal-
lam would proceed to the Masjid whilst reciting
the following DuAnswer

*Transliteration: 'Allahummaj'al Fi Qalbi
Noora, Wa Fi Lisaani Noora, Waj'al Fi Sami'
Noora, Waj'al Fi Basari Noora, Waj'al Min
Khalfi Noora, Waja'l Min Amaami Noora,
Waj'al Min Fowqi Noora, Wa Min Tahti Noo-
ra, Allahumma Aatini Noor*Answer'

Translation: "O Allah, place light in my
heart, and in my speech, and place light in my
hearing, and place light in my vision, and place
light behind me, and in front of me, and place
light above me, and light beneath me, O Allah!
Grant me light." (Muslim)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

Can I prevent my wife from visiting her par-
ents?

Answer

A husband should allow his wife to visit her
parents at least once a week. This is the mini-
mum requirement of the wife which the hus-
band should take into consideration. On other
days and occasions such as Eid or family gath-
erings, this may be discussed mutually between
husband and wife. (Hidaayah 2/289)

In any event, the laws and requirements of
Hijaab, Mahram (if required) will still apply.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

I used to own a watch repair shop. I closed
it down now but I have a few watches of my old
clients. I tried my level best to find my old cli-
ents who left their watches by me for repairs
but I cannot find them. A few years have passed
now and I cannot keep it anymore. Can I sell it
and use the money for myself?

Answer

If you cannot locate your clients who left
their watches by you for repairs, then you may
dispose of it by giving it in charity to poor and
deserving people. It will not be permissible for
you to sell or benefit from it unless you your-
self are poor and deserving of it. If, however, the
owners of the watches are located, then it will
be your responsibility to return the value of the
watches to them if you disposed it of or if you
sold it or benefited from it. (Hidaayah 2/418)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

Should a widow's iddat period be calculated
by the Islamic months or the western calendar
months (ie. August, September, etc.)?

Answer

The iddat period of a woman whose hus-
band passes away is four (lunar) months and
ten days. This law will apply to the case where
the husband passed away on the 1st of the lunar
month. If he passed away on the 2nd or any time
during the month, the iddat will be 130 days.

Mufti Zakaria

Question

My wife and I are experiencing marital
problems. She is demanding a divorce from me.
According to the legal system of the country
where I reside, in the case of divorce, she has
the right to claim 50% of my assets. I have not
yet paid her her mahr. She is now demanding
50% of my wealth as well as her unpaid mahr.
If she takes advantage of the legal system and
takes me to court claiming 50% of my wealth,
will this wealth be halaal for her according to
Shariah and will I still have to give her the out-
standing mahr?

Answer

This system is alien to Islam. Islam does not
recognise this kaafir system. In Islam, whatev-

er belongs to each spouse is his and the other spouse does not have any right over it. Therefore, if you did not give your wife her mahr, you should give it to her as this is her haQuestion However, she does not have any right to claim 50% of your wealth. Despite this system being recognized by the government, it will not make the 50% halaal for her in the sight of Shariah. Furthermore, if she obtains 50% of your wealth, she will be depriving your heirs of their rights (as this 50% wealth taken unjustly will form part of your estate after your demise and will have to be distributed among your heirs according to the stipulated shares of inheritance) and she will be answerable for this in the Hereafter. If you are forced under government law to give 50% of your wealth to her and her mahr amount was less than 50% of the wealth you gave her, you will not have to give her the mahr as it is included in the 50% which you had given her.

Mufti Zakaria

Question

If a woman has the means to perform Hajj but does not have a mahram to accompany her, will Hajj be compulsory upon her?

Answer

It will not be compulsory upon her to go for Hajj. She should perform her Hajj when she has a mahram. However it is necessary for her to make a bequest that if she passes away without performing Hajj then Hajj-e-badl should be done on her behalf from one-third of her wealth.

Mufti Zakaria

Question

A sister in Islam knows the command of Allah regarding purdah/niquaab, yet she feels she isn't ready. She does not want to be a hypocrite so she refuses to wear it till she is ready.

Her parents are forcing her to wear it. Is this ok or are they just supposed to warn her and let her choose? Are they getting sin for forcing her?

Answer

In order to easily understand the correct position, turn the issue the other way. Imagine that a person is, Allah Ta'ala forbid, involved in zina, gambling, drugging, drinking and a host of other vices. He is encouraged, instructed and even being forced to give up his life of sin. His response is that since he isn't ready to stop, he does not want to feel like a hypocrite? Will this argument be acceptable?

Just as it is sinful to involve oneself in the vices mentioned above, it is likewise sinful to not adopt purdah. A person does not become a hypocrite merely because of being forced.

It is reported in a hadeeth that Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) said: "Instruct your children to perform salaah when they are 7 years old and punish them for omitting it when they reach the age of 10." It is obvious that when parents are going to warn a child of 10 years that if he does not perform salaah he will be punished, the child will be forced to comply and perform the salaah. The parents are in a way forcing the child, but they will be rewarded for this.

Children are under the jurisdiction and responsibility of the parents. Hence they must do what is in their power to bring the child onto complete deen. As for those who are not under one's jurisdiction, one should merely encourage them.

However, together with insisting on her wearing purdah, they should also educate her and explain its importance to her. This could be done by giving her good literature and lectures of reliable 'Ulama in this regard.

Uswatul Muslimah Panel of 'Ulama

Question

If a person can offer Salaah on a namaz bed by facing his legs towards the qiblah, then should he offer Salaah like this or by sitting on a chair?

Answer

If one is unable to perform the Salaah standing and carrying out all the postures in the correct manner with sajda on the ground and similarly one is unable to perform the Salaah sitting on the ground and making sajda on the ground, then one may perform the Salaah with signs while sitting on the chair or while sitting on the bed facing the qiblah.

Mufti Zakaria

Question

It has been decided that a gathering of Qurraa will be held here, in Delhi, wherein famous, recognized Qurraa as well as prominent, notable people will attend. Different Qurraa have been appointed to recite, and judging by their recitation, they will be awarded prizes. What is the ruling of participating in such a gathering?

Answer

The Hadith has encouraged as well as given glad tidings to the one who recites the Qur'an Kareem in a melodious tone. The Muhaddith-een have explained this (reciting in a melodious tone) to be in reference to the person who recites the Qur'an Kareem while his heart is filled with the reverence of the Qur'an and while reciting he is overcome by fear and humility and his heart trembles out of the awe of Allah Ta'ala. Similarly, while reciting, such a person visualizes the promises and warnings of the Qur'an and imagines that he is reciting to Allah Ta'ala thereby resulting in tears flowing from his eyes. Through reciting the Qur'an in such a manner, there is great spiritual effect and reward and Allah Ta'ala becomes greatly pleased. This method was practiced among the Sahaabah (radhiyallahu 'anhum), that one of them would recite the Qur'an Kareem while the rest of them would listen attentively and refresh their Imaan.

Earning money and fame should never be the objective and purpose of reciting the Qur'an. Allah forbid, but for the Qur'an Kareem to be made a means of earning money,

whether in the guise of conveying reward to the deceased, sitting on the mimbar and competing with other Qurraa to win prizes, or for the Qur'an Kareem to be recited for the purpose of gaining name and fame, or for the Qur'an Kareem to be recited according to the laws of music, wherein the one reciting adheres to certain high notes and low notes, then certainly there is absolutely no permission for any of these things and grave warnings have been sounded in their regard as well. Three people have been mentioned in the Hadith Shareef who will be among the first groups of people to be thrown into Jahannum, and Jahannum will be fuelled by them. One of the three is the Qari who would recite so that people praise him for his beautiful recitation and melodious voice and say that he is a good Qari. In the light of the above, you people now decide the nature and ruling of the gathering you wish to hold. (Fataawa Mahmoodiyah 7/198)

Mufti Mahmood Hassan Gangohi (ra)

Question

Can I give extra Zakaat after I give my Zakaat for the current year? If I can, would it be counted as Zakaat for the following year or would it be counted as optional charity?

Answer

It is permissible for a person to discharge Zakaat for the following lunar year after discharging Zakaat for the current lunar year. This is subject to the following conditions:

- a) a person possesses the Zakaat Nisaab amount at the time of discharging Zakaat.
- b) a person's financial condition remains such that he is liable to pay Zakaat for the following year.

If a person did not fulfil the above mentioned conditions, then the extra amount given as Zakaat will not be counted as Zakaat. It would be counted as optional charity. However, if the above conditions were fulfilled, then the extra amount given as Zakaat for the following

year would be counted in the following years Zakaat. (Hindiyyah 1/176)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

My wife passed away. I have three daughters from my wife, 4,5 and six years old. I am aware that if I pass away, my mother, 2 brothers and 2 sisters will be my legal heirs and they will inherit from the house that I only own. I would like to give my house to my three daughters equally during my lifetime so they will have a roof over their heads after I pass away. But I do not have sufficient money to transfer it onto their names. How do I go about giving the house to them?

Answer

The basic principles of gifting/donations entails a) an offer from the donor to the donee of the gift/donation b) an acceptance of the gift/donation by the donee c) the donor granting the donee full rights and responsibilities of the gift/donation. These are the general principles and conditions that apply to gifting/donation.

However, in the case of a father gifting/donating to his minor children, the father may gift/donate to his minor children without giving them full rights and responsibilities of the gift/donation. This is simply because the father is a guardian of his minor children and his ownership on behalf of his minor children is sufficient.

Therefore, in the enquired situation, even though as a father, the gifting/donating of the house to your three daughters in equal proportion would be valid without giving them full rights and responsibilities or transferring the title deeds etc. onto their names during your lifetime, this gift/donation to your children should be fully documented, witnessed, signed and if possible transferred onto their names during your lifetime. This is to ensure that there is no confusion or dispute after your demise. (Shaami 5/694)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

Upon which wealth does a person have to pay zakaat?

Answer

Zakaat will be paid on the following:

Cash (including the balance of your bank deposits).

The market value of the merchandise contained in the share of the company i.e. one will be obligated to discharge the Zakaat of the company's Zakaatable assets (merchandise) contained in the share excluding the non-Zakaatable items e.g. fixtures and fittings, transport vehicles, etc. which are not part of the merchandise of the company. The value of all these things will be evaluated in the share and will not be taken in account when discharging the zakaat. If it is difficult to differentiate between the zakaatable and non-Zakaatable assets of the company, then as a precautionary measure one should discharge the Zakaat on the market value of the entire share.

Face value of the financial papers like bonds loaned to the government, etc. It should be noted that when the loan is paid back by the government, it will only be permissible for one to retrieve the original amount of the loan given. The interest amount paid out by the government will be impermissible. It will have to be given in sadaqah without the intention of receiving reward. Similarly, it should be known that it is impermissible for a believer to deal in any form of interest (usury) whether it be receiving or giving an interest bearing loan.

The market rate of the balance of stock in trade (including raw material).

Receivable amounts i.e. debts owed to a person, monies loaned to people, etc.

Foreign currencies.

Gold and silver.

Mufti Zakaria

Bibery & its Evil Consequences

Eaters of the Suht (unlawful) (5:42)

This part of the verse 42 of Suran Ma'idah mentions an evil trait of disbelievers by calling them: (translated here as) 'eaters of the unlawful' making 'the unlawful' to stand for the word, 'suht' in the text. The literal meaning of Suht is to uproot or destroy something totally which is the sense in what the Qur'an says in: , that is, (do not forge lies against Allah) lest He destroy you with a punishment - (20:61)). But, at this place in the Qur'an, Suht denotes bribe. Sayyidna 'Ali (RA), Ibrahim Nakha'ii, Hasan al-Basri, Mujahid, Qatadah and Dahhak and other leading authorities in Tafsir have explained it as bribe.

The reason for equating bribe with Suht (total destruction; also - unlawful earning, detestable enough to be shunned) is that it not only destroys its givers and takers alike but also goes on to uproot the whole country and community and destroy public peace and tranquility (by causing rise in illegal gratification and fall in avenues of honest earning). When bribery gains currency in a country or a department, law freezes and bribery stays hot. As for the law of a country, it is the only power which maintains peace and stability. When law and order stand suspended, nothing remains safe, life or property or honour, nothing. Therefore, by calling it Suht, the Shari'ah has declared it to be gravely

Haram, forbidden and unlawful. Moreover, to block all possible doors of bribery, even the gifts given to officials or leaders or dignitaries of a country have also been classed as Suht or bribe in an authentic Hadith, and has been declared to be Haram. (Jassas)

The Holy Prophet (SAWS) has said in a hadith:

Almighty Allah causes His curse to fall on the giver and taker of bribe - and on him too who acts as a broker between them. (Jassas).

The Islamic Legal definition of Rishwah (meaning bribery) is the taking of compensation for something the taking of which would not be legally correct. For example, a person doing a job, the doing of which is included within his duty, and the fulfilling of which is mandatory on him, cannot take any compensation for it from any party. If taken, that is bribe. Functionaries of governments, officials or clerks, higher or lower, are all obligated to do their duties by virtue of being paid employees of the government. If they take something from the person whose case they are handling, that will be a bribe. The father and mother of a girl are responsible for the marriage of their daughter. They cannot take any 'compensation' for doing that. If they take

Cont'd on page 11

Lessons from Sahih Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

Chapter 43 : One who receives an invitation in the mosque to eat and he accepts it there.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Muhaddith Shah Waliullah Delhvi mentions:

“By establishing this chapter Imam Bukhari’s purpose is to convey that it is permissible to have Mubaah (permissible and preferable according to Shariah) talks in the Masjid”.

Hadith No. 411

Narrated Anas

I found the Prophet in the mosque along with some people. He said to me, “Did Abu Talha send you?” I said, “Yes”. He said, “For a meal?” I said, “Yes.” Then he said to his companions, “Get up.” They set out and I was ahead of them.

Comments

A hadith says:

“Indeed the Maasjid are setup for Zikrullah and Salaah”.

According to this hadith it is permissible to have Mubaah (permitted) talk in the mosque as is evident from the fact that Rasulullah (SAWS) was invited for meals which he accepted right in the mosque itself.

Chapter 44 :Giving judgements, and li’an

between men and women, in the Masjid.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

As per Imam Abu Haneefa, Imam Maalik, Imam Ahmad and the majority of Ulema, it is permissible and even preferable for a judge to sit and settle the disputes and other cases of people in a grand mosque. According to Imam Shaafa’ee, it is not, however, preferable to make it a routine matter. Imam Bukhari, in this regard supports the view held by the majority. (Nasrul Baari)

Hadith No. 412

Narrated Sahl bin Sa’d

A man said, “O Allah’s Apostle! If a man finds another man with his wife, (committing adultery) should the husband kill him?” Later on I saw them (the man and his wife) doing Lian in the Masjid.

Comments

A man asked Rasulullah (SAWS), if someone finds another man committing adultery with his wife, should he kill him, remain patient or get witness against him in the court of law.

It is quite difficult to manage such a situation because if the person kills the perpetrator he may also have to face Qisas (retribution);

if he does nothing and resorts to patience, it is against one's self-esteem; and if he tries to find witness against him and his wife, that is also shameful. So, what should be done in such a situation. To solve the issue, the Shariah has decreed the commandment of 'Li'aan' (oath of condemnation).

What is 'Li'aan' (oath of condemnation)?

The Qur'an says:

Those who accuse their wives (of adultery) while they have no witnesses except their own selves, then the evidence of one of them would be to swear four oaths by Allah that he is truthful. (24:6)

If a man alleges his wife of adultery but fails to take the oath of condemnation, he will be awarded with the punishment of Hadd-i-Qadhf. If he takes the oath, then his wife will be asked to swear four times that her husband is speaking a lie and on the fifth occasion she will have to say—let the wrath of Allah be on her if he is truthful. If she fails to do so, she will be forced to either accept the allegation or deny it. In case she accepts, the punishment against committing an adultery will be awarded to her, and if she denies, then the 'Li'aan' will be complete. After 'Li'aan' both, husband and wife, will become haraam to each other. If the man divorces her it will take its effect, otherwise the judge will forcefully pass a decree of separation between the two.

Chapter 45 : When someone enters a house, should he offer Salaah wherever he likes or where he is told to do so. And he should not nose around.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Here Imam Bukhari wants to convey that a person who offers salaah in someone's house should not make unnecessary enquiries like, whether the place is ritually clean or not etc. If there is no visible filth around, the place is

primarily clean to prayers.

Hadith No. 413

Narrated Itbaan bin Maalik

The Prophet came to my house and said, "Where do you like me to pray?" I pointed to a place. The Prophet then said, "Allahu Akbar", and we aligned behind him and he offered a two rak'ats.

Comments

Rasulullah (SAWS) once visited the house of Itbaan bin Maalik and asked him where Itbaan would like him to offer salaah so that he (Itbaan) may designate that place specific for prayers. In this instance Rasulullah (SAWS) was also accompanied by Sayyiduna Abu Bakr and some other Companions, and when he set to offer salaah, they also aligned behind him. This was not any fardh salaah but a nafl. Putting forward this hadith as proof some people argue that it is permissible to offer a nafl salaah in congregation. According to Allaama Ayni, it was by chance that they offered a nafl salaah in congregation, and not a pre-organised arrangement for the purpose. This is why the jurists hold the opinion that it is permissible to offer nafl salaah in congregation if there is no pre-organised arrangement of assembling people for the salaah.

Chapter 46 : Mosques inside houses.

Al-Bara' ibn Azib offered congregation salaah in his mosque inside his house.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

According to the learned scholars, Imam Bukhari in this chapter tries to reveal the desirability of specifying a particular place in one's house for salaah and other devotional acts, as it helps in performing the acts with concentration. If someone designates a room in his house for prayers and offers a congregational salaah there, he will get the reward of praying in congregation (Jamaat), but lose the reward of offering salaah in a mosque, because the Shariah does not

grant the status of a mosque to a prayer-room.

Mosque - in technical terms of the Shari'ah

A mosque in technical terms of the Shara'ee is not anyone's property and as such cannot be inherited. It is not permissible for a junub (ritually impure person) to enter a mosque. On the other hand a prayer-room in a house has its owner, can be inherited, and entered into without in a state of ritual impurity.

With regard to Sayyiduna Baraa bin Aazib's offering a congregational salaah at home, the learned scholars are of the opinion that possibly he might have missed the congregational salaah held in the official mosque, that is why he offered it in his house.

Hadith No. 414

Narrated Itbaan bin Maalik

who was one of the companions of Allah's Apostle and one of the Ansar's who took part in the battle of Badr: I came to Allah's Apostle and said, "O Allah's Apostle I have weak eyesight and I lead my people in prayers. When it rains the water flows in the valley between me and my people so I cannot go to their mosque to lead them in prayer. O Allah's Apostle! I wish you would come to my house and pray in it so that I could take that place as a Musalla. Allah's Apostle said. "Allah willing, I will do so." Next day after the sun rose high, Allah's Apostle and Abu Bakr came and Allah's Apostle asked for permission to enter. I gave him permission and he did not sit on entering the house but said to me, "Where do you like me to pray?" I pointed to a place in my house. So Allah's Apostle stood there and said, Allahu Akbar', and we all got up and aligned behind him and offered a two-Rak'at prayer and ended it with Taslim. We requested him to stay for a meal called "Khazira" which we had prepared for him. Many members of our family gathered in the house and one of them said, "Where is Maalik bin Al-Dukhaishin or Ibn Al-Dukhshun?" One of them replied,

"He is a hypocrite and does not love Allah and His Apostle." Hearing that, Allah's Apostle said, "Do not say so. Haven't you seen that he said, None has the right to be worshipped but Allah' for Allah's sake only?" He said, "Allah and His Apostle know better. We have seen him helping and advising hypocrites." Allah's Apostle said, "Allah has forbidden the (Hell) fire for those who say, None has the right to be worshipped but Allah' for Allah's sake only."

Comments

In the previous hadith this narration of Sayyiduna Hibaan was mentioned briefly and here it is produced in detail. Sayyiduna Hibaan bin Maalik used to lead the congregational salaah in the local mosque. When he grew old, his eyesight as well as his physical strength deteriorated. At times, during the rainy season, water would flow in the valley between his house and the mosque, and it used to become difficult for him to attend the mosque. He requested Rasulullah (SAWS) to visit his house and offer a salaah there so that he take that place as a Musalla (prayer place. Some narrations suggest that he did not put forward his request personally to Rasululah (SAWS) but sent a messenger. Rasulallah (SAWS) accepted his invitation and went to his house along with Sayyiduna Abu Bakr. When the news of local Rasulallah's (SAWS) visit spread among the people they also assembled there. Rasululah (SAWS) offered a two rak'at nafl salaah there, and the people also aligned behind him. As already stated, an occasional nafl salaah can be offered in congregation if no prior invitation has been sent for it. After offering the salaah, Rasulallah (SAWS) was offered a special Arabic dish called 'Khuzairah', which he ate.

One who testifies Kalimah is a believer

It is narrated that during this incident all the people of the locality assembled at the house of Hibaan bin Maalik except Maalik bin al-Dhakhsham. Someone, enquiring about him,

was informed that he (Mallik bin al Dhakhsham) was a Munaafiq (hypocrite). Forbidding the person against making such a comment, Rasulullah said that since Maalik bin-al-Dhakhsham recites the Kalimah he should not be labelled a hypocrite. According to some narrations Rasulullah (SAWS) also said, “Did not he participate in the battle of Badr”. There is a consensus in the Ummah that the Companions who participated in the battle of Badr are the most distinguished people with whom Allah has declared of having earned His pleasure.

Lessons from the hadith

1. Weak, old and sick people can congregate to offer salaah at home.

2. It is permissible to invite and request a saintly person (Waliullah) to offer salaah at some place in a house, and take it as a Musalla to offer salaah there.

3. If one is invited to offer salaah in someone's house, it is better to offer the salaah first, and then eat something if offered, as Rasulullah (SAWS) first offered the salaah at Hibaan's house and later ate what was offered to him.

4. If one is invited for meals then it is better to have meals first, and offer salaah if requested as has been mentioned in the hadith quoted by Umm Sulaim.

5. It is permissible to offer a nafl salaah in congregation at some instance, but not make it a habit.

6. It is permissible (i.e., it is not backbiting) to inform the head or a religious leader about a person's religious deficiencies with the intention of reforming him.

7. One should not frame a bad opinion about someone as per his apparent behaviour. Faith is a matter of heart which is known to Allah only.

8. One should honour his guest with some special dish, but there should be no extravagance. Hibaan offered just one dish to Rasulullah (SAWS).

Cont'd from page 7

any 'compensation' from the person who will have the hands of their daughter in marriage, that is a bribe. Sawm (fasting), Salah (prayers), Hajj (pilgrimage) and the Tilawah (recitation) of the Qur'an are 'Ibadah' (acts of worship) with which Muslims have been obligated. The taking of any 'compensation' from anyone is a bribe. However, the duty of the Teaching of Qur'an and the duty of leading Salah as Imam are exempt from this (as ruled by later Muslim jurists).

Then, a person who takes bribe and does someone's job as it should rightfully be done, he commits the sin of taking bribe and the money or material he has 'earned' is 'suht', and unlawful for him. And should he do it as it should have not been done rightfully, then, this becomes another grave crime, that of wastage of what was right and that of changing an express command of Allah, in addition to the initial one. May Allah keep all Muslims safe from this curse.

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

Cont'd from page 21

thing about what they are saying. Those who hear them are finding out the truth. And what they are learning is that Islam has been in the West for over a millennium, that the Renaissance would not have happened without Islam.

They are learning that Islam is not as seen on TV, that it is a way of life that demands dignity for every human being, that it is in tune with nature, and demands that its adherents obey the laws of the land in which they live. People are learning that Islam is about spiritual awakening and a remembrance of where we all came from and where we are going.

The answer to the question: why Islam is spreading in the West? Lies in the seeds sown by its opposition. Why? Because:

They plan, and Allah plans. And Allah is the best of planners. [Surat Al-Anfal, 8:30]

From 30 Degrees to 45 Degrees

Syed Iqbal Zaheer

In times of internal schism within the Muslim world, the definitive agenda of the rebels has been in their effort to deflect the movement of the Ummah along the safely trodden path of the Salaf, the earliest predecessors. This deflection has almost always meant the diluting of the importance, significance and relevance of the Fiqh and the Faqih of Islam. The article presented hereunder throws ample light on this age old trend that is of equal concern today as in all centuries past.

There have been, as there are – with numbers increasing – several movements among the Muslims aimed at cutting the new generation from its root and branch. Here is one which works under the shibboleth: ‘Follow not but the Qur’an and Sunnah.’ There is another which wages war on the Fuqaha’ with the rallying cry ‘Back to Hadith.’ Then there is one which works under the ‘Qur’an-only’ slogan. To match them is the movement away from the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama`ah – in the very name of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama`ah. Not to be left behind, there is a group, a pretty large one, which promotes innovations of all kinds. They have the skill to replace every Sunnah with a Bid`ah, doing it with ‘love of the Prophet’ as the pretext. Then, of course, there are those who are after the Mus-

lim clergy with a dagger, but their true object of kill is the `Ulama – of all times, present and past. Not to ignore, there has been a vociferous movement, which remains quietly loyal to besmirching the Companions on grounds that some of them weren’t as true to the chair as they should have been.

Combinedly, they all do the work that various deviated sects have left unaccomplished. The predecessors did such a thorough job that in consequence these deviated sects had to walk out of the Ummah circle.

Those who left the work unaccomplished, left the Ummah as an accomplishment, and those who are striving to compete with them, are now so prominently active, and so easily identifiable, that the West has learnt to draw giggling pleasure from using them to run their gun against the mainstream Sunni Muslims.

Sunnis are encircled. And the circle is tightening. Alarmingly, within the circle is now coalescing armies of ‘hate-your-past’ young, computer-generated digital Muslims. They are armed with degrees in ignorance, and as angry as a pussy cat under attack if ever told how ignorant they are. They are likely to set up morchas for a better organized onslaught on the “ghurabaa” once their loose organization is organized

and a charismatic disbelieving-believer rises to lead them to paradise: “The thirsty imagines it water.” (Qur’an, 24: 39)

We receive letters every now and then that contain a jibe or two at the Fiqh schools. Their jibe contains in quoting a hadith from Bukhari or Muslim, which, according to them, contradicts a Fiqhi rule. That follows with gleeful claim that the Fuqaha’ did not know even a simple hadith. For example, they vie to cut young men away from their Fuqaha’ by saying that a hadith clearly says, “He who does not pray, committed Kufr.” But the Fuqaha’ say, “He who did not pray, did not commit Kufr.” So, if the Fuqaha’ did not know a famous hadith, they claim with a smile from ear to ear, “Can we trust the schools of Fiqh? Shouldn’t the schools be abolished?”

Ignorance of our past history, (actually a complete blank, and a mind [and soul] as bright as patches of night) leads many young men to such appalling conclusions as which make the hair of many scholars stand on ends. “Allah’s mercy,” they ask themselves, “what will their children be like?”

From no quarter the young men seem to have learnt that the barbers who cut the hair of the Fuqaha’ of the earliest times knew more Hadith than the street evangelists of today, in fact, even more than the Shuyukh of the evangelists. They do not realize that their belief implies that Bukhari and Muslim invented the Hadith, echoing the Jewish and Christian allegation that the Hadith discipline was invented 200 years after the Prophet.

Interestingly, one of the Hadith scholars of the modern times who – we are sure – inadvertently lent this meaning through some of his writings, ultimately committed such errors in Fiqh matters that his one time passionate lovers abandoned him altogether, not only in Fiqh matters, but, sadly, in Hadith matters too.

A glance – and no more than a glance – into the history of the early years of Islam will tell a man that the times of the Fuqaha’ were times of

Hadith. They heard Hadith, they spoke Hadith, they dictated Hadith, they wrote Hadith, they drank Hadith, they ate Hadith, they discussed Hadith, they taught Hadith, they spread Hadith, they dreamt Hadith, they memorized Hadith, they collected Hadith, they explained Hadith, they used Hadith to make the Law; and, what’s to be especially noticed, they passed on the Hadith to those who took upon themselves to codify the Hadith – men like Bukhari, Muslim, and others. In those days, the Qur’an was memorized by every child, but, in adult life, there was nothing in their lives except Hadith.

Hadith collectors on the other hand, do not belong to the age of the Hadith. They belong to the “age of Hadith codification.” It is the Fuqaha’ who belong to the “age of Hadith.”

Our young men who are led to a 30 degrees turn away from the mainstream Islam, need to inform the street robbers that there was no other literature during the time of the Fuqaha’ except Hadith. There was, in that society, neither written Qur’anic commentaries, nor Seerah, nor history, nor geography, nor poetical works, nor anything like story books, nor anything else – but Hadith. Was that the time when the Hadith dominated the Muslim society? No, that was not the time when Hadith dominated Muslim society. It was the time when there was nothing in the society but the Hadith. There was nothing else in the society for the Hadith to dominate. It was as if Allah willed that the first two hundred years of Islam should be the centuries of Hadith. That was the time during which the Fuqaha’ appeared; because, after the Qur’an, it was on Hadith that the Fuqaha’ relied for generating the Law.

These street evangelists and sect-creators need to be hammered on their heads that there was absolutely nothing else – yes, absolutely, and categorically – nothing whatsoever, by way of literature but Hadith in the Muslim society of the times of the Fuqaha’.

To believe that the Fuqaha’ did not know

Hadith, is to believe that scientists do not know mathematics. To believe that the Fuqaha' did not know Hadith is to believe that Milton, Shelly, Keats, Wordsworth and others did not know grammar. To believe that the Fuqaha' did not know Hadith is to believe that Bukhari or others brought their Ahadith from the moon. To believe that the Fuqaha' did not know Hadith is to believe that the farmers brought out grain without seedlings. To believe that the Fuqaha' did not know Hadith is to believe that those who wrote the Indian Constitution did not know Law.

To believe that the Fuqaha' did not know Hadith well enough is an outrageous example of ignorance bordering on mental imbalance. We can't find an alternative word for a man of such opinion, if that happens to be his well-thought opinion, and not a line received from others, and parroted.

Who came first: Hadith collectors or the Fuqaha'? Yes, of course the Fuqaha' preceded Hadith collectors by about a century. Who laid the unquestionable rules about acceptance and rejection of Hadith? It was the Fuqaha' who declared that a hadith narrated by a Faqih narrator, he from a Faqih narrator, he from a Faqih narrator, was more trustworthy than another hadith, if narrated by non-Faqih, from a non-Faqih, and he from a non-Faqih – no matter in how many Sahih collection it appears. And they pointed out a hadith to demonstrate the strength of their position. Hadith scholars gave the Ummah the Hadith. The Fuqaha' gave them the Qur'an. Whenever it was said, "Hadith says this, Hadith says that," the Fuqaha' reminded, "The Qur'an says this."

Who was Imam Malik who laid the foundations of Maliki Madh-hub? Primarily, a Mu-haddith. His collection called Muwatta has been thought as the most trustworthy book after the Qur'an – a statement more widely attributed to Bukhari's collection. Who was Ahmad b. Han-bal, the founder of Hanbali madh-hub? Primarily, a collector of Hadith. His Musnad has 30,000

Hadith. Who was Imam Shafe`i? He was the one who had memorized the Muwatta' before taking up Fiqh.

Who was Abu Haneefah, the originator of Fiqh School, who gave the first principles to his disciples? He was not a Hadith collector. He was a Faqih, and that of the highest order. Who is a Faqih? A Hadith collector is a collector of Hadith. He is not too concerned with the meaning and explanation of Ahadith he collects. He could not afford to attempt that. None of the collectors has, therefore, explained the Ahadith of his collection, requiring voluminous commentaries of later times. A Faqih on the other hand is one who understands and explains every aspect of the Hadith – especially the legal. He who has a collection of Hadith, has to go out and look for someone to explain and expound the Hadith for him. That someone is called a Faqih.

If we name some scientists as the Father of Science, then Abu Haneefah was the Father of the Fiqh discipline. His students were the masters of Bukhari and Muslim. He was the one who laid down the principles of Law, that the Western world has no equivalent of – so that, they have the Law, but not the principles of Law. He was the one who laid the uncompromising principle that in Fiqh matters, the Qur'an will prevail; who insisted that the Qur'an will not be violated in view of a Hadith however famously known; who declared that in the absence of a Qur'anic direction, and a trustworthy hadith, he would prefer a weak hadith over his personal opinion.

Every Islam-denier from within the body of the Ummah, relies on Hadith to deny, to deflect, to create dissension. The Fuqaha' defeat every such person and every sect's purpose by saying, "The Qur'an refutes what you are saying. Go and search for the proper meaning of the Hadith you are quoting. The Qur'an and Prophetic words cannot contradict each other. The Qur'an will judge a hadith: whether it is Sahih or not. It is not the narrators who will judge. It is the

Qur'an." They declared that if a hadith clashes with a Qur'anic statement, then either the hadith is (a) incomplete, (b) has been taken out of context, (c) is abrogated, or, (d) has not been understood properly. That is how the Fuqaha' established the supremacy of the Qur'an. They said, "The Hadith is on our eye-lids. But the Qur'an is in the eye."

So, if someone said, "There is no Salah without Surah al-Fatihah," Abu Haneefah maintained, "Look for a proper meaning of the Hadith of your quote because the Qur'an said, 'Recite (in the Prayer), whatever you can easily do.'" When some others said, "There is nothing as Zakah on agricultural product for less than five measures," Abu Haneefah objected, "Give it a second thought because the Qur'an said, 'And give out its due, on the day of Harvest.'" If some people maintained in view of the hadith (in Bukhari), that: "Two men dealing with each other have the choice to withdraw so long as they remain in the same assembly," Abu Haneefah demanded a better understanding of the subject because the Qur'an said (5: 1), "Believers! Fulfill the contracts."

Asking why Abu Haneefa did not compose a Hadith book, is like asking why Bilal, having been with the Prophet for 23 years narrated no more than 25 ahadith whereas those who embraced Islam two decades after him narrated hundreds. To question why Imam Bukhari or Muslim did not codify Fiqh, is to demonstrate one's lack of thinking power. Every individual is different from another in everything he does, including what he thinks is the best career for him. To expect everybody to become a doctor is a vain idea.

To ask why Abu Haneefa did not compose a Hadith work is to ask why a famous cricket

player did not write a book on cricket. The answer is, he knew what cricket is, and played it properly. His scores, either as a batsman or as a bowler, are evidence of his knowledge of cricket. A "googly" is to be played, not explained. Similarly, Abu Haneefa was busy working out Laws from the Hadith. He had no time, nor was there any need, to compose a book on Hadith.

Abu Haneefa's insight into Hadith amazes people even now. When he was asked about some muazzin clearing throat before saying the Iqamah for Salah, he answered that perhaps its origin is in a hadith which reports `Ali as saying that when he went up to the Prophet's house to see him, and the Prophet could not answer because he was in Prayer, he would clear his throat and `Ali got the signal that he was in Prayer. Similarly, these muezzins clear throat before Iqamah to indicate that they are about to say the Iqamah.

Abu Haneefah drew Fiqh-rules from ahadith that others did not think could be containing the meaning he derived. He was informed that a man claimed to be a Prophet and people were asking him to produce a sign in proof of his claim. Abu Haneefa ruled, "Those who sought a sign from the claimant committed Kufr." They were startled by the answer. He explained, "The Prophet has said, 'There will be no Prophet after me.' He who doubted this statement, committed Kufr."

This is not an article in defense of Abu Haneefah. His madh-hub has the largest following, and following is what the deflectors need; therefore, he is their special target, although the ultimate target is abolition of Fiqh madhahib in order to convert the 30 degrees turn of the digital generation into 45 degrees.

YMD-Nov-13

Do not depend too much on anyone in this world because even your own shadow leaves you when you are in darkness. ~ Ibn Taymiyah

Approaching Ramadan

Zaid Shakir

The Blessed Month of Ramadan is approaching; we pray that this blessed month is a time of spiritual renewal for all of you, a time when you are able to fully benefit from the many Divine Gifts that have been offered to the worshiper during this most special season. Those who have failed to take advantage of the months of Rajab and Sha'ban to prepare for the blessed month of Ramadan should be especially careful to take full advantage of the latter month. Reflect on the poet's words:

Harken! O you who was not content to sin throughout Rajab.

His rebellion against his Lord had to continue the duration of Sha'ban.

The month of fasting has now come to shade and shelter you,

Do not transform it also into a month of sinning.

Recite the Qur'an and glorify [God], with diligent assertion.

Indeed! It is a month for glorification and the Qur'an.

Deny your bodily appetites, seeking your soul's salvation.

Eventually, the earth will consume the body.

How many deceased people have you known who fasted?

Amongst your family, neighbors, and brothers.

Death has erased them, leaving you behind.

Get serious [about your religion], for the living

are quite close to the dead!

You take delight in the 'Eid outfits being cut out now for the festival.

But soon they will be your burial shrouds.

How long will the person be happy with his worldly home?

Knowing that his ultimate home is the grave.

[Lata'if al-Ma'arif]

We pray that this month is a means for our spiritual ascension. When our spirits are ascendant, and our carnal lusts retreat, we will be able to engage in the type of fast described by one of our righteous forebears when he advised: Fast your entire lifetime. Make death your 'Eid! Life itself is a fast for the righteous. Their fast is from all forbidden lusts. When death comes to them their fast has ended. At that time they find the new moon of 'Eid. [Ibn Rajab]

We encourage all of the believers to try to adhere to all of the Sunans of Ramadan. Even though the days are still relatively short and cool, everyone should attempt to take the pre-dawn meal (Sahur), no matter how small, and hasten to break the fast, once the sunset has been confirmed. The purpose of the month is to grow in obedience to the Lawgiver. This is facilitated by scrupulously adhering to all of the rulings related to the fast.

O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those who preceded

you; that perhaps you will be mindful of God.
(2:183)

We encourage everyone to be especially generous during this blessed month. Our beloved Prophet (SAWS), was normally exceedingly generous. In Ramadan, he was even more benevolent.

Ibn ‘Abbas (RA) relates:

“The Prophet (SAWS) was the most generous of people. He was even more generous in Ramadan when Gabriel would meet him and review the Qur’an with him. Gabriel would come to him every night of Ramadan to review the Qur’an. During these times, the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) was more generous than the freely blowing wind.” (Bukhari and Muslim)

We encourage everyone to read through the Qur’an at least once. Those who can read the Arabic script should do so in Arabic, even if they do not fully understand what they are reading. They should also try to read through the English translation. Those who are unable to read Arabic, should try to read through the entire English translation. Ramadan is, among other things, a celebration of the Qur’an. We should join the celebration by reading the Book of God much during this blessed month. Our Imams, Abu Hanifa, Malik, al-Shafi’i, and others (raa) would cease teaching Hadith and Jurisprudence during Ramadan and devote themselves exclusively to the Qur’an.

God says, concerning His Majestic Book: The Month of Ramadan in which the Qur’an was revealed, a guidance for mankind, [containing] clear proofs of guidance, and the criterion of distinguishing right from wrong. Al-Qur’an 2:185

We encourage everyone to refrain from all of the ruinations of the tongue during Ramadan. In his seminal work, “Quickening the Religious Sciences,” Imam al-Ghazali mentions them as the following:

- Speaking in matters that do not concern one.
- Excessive speech.

- Speaking about sinful matters.
- Disputation and contestation.
- Argumentation.
- Excessively embellished speech.
- Lewd, insulting, or crude speech.
- Invoking the Curse of God on someone.
- Singing indecent songs, or relating immoral poetry.
- Excessive joking.
- Sarcasm and ridicule.
- Revealing secrets.
- False promises.
- Lying and false oaths.
- Backbiting and slander.
- Instigating tense relations between people.
- Being two-faced.
- Praising someone who is either undeserving, or unable to remain humble when praised.
- Speaking about involved subjects and ideas one lacks the necessary knowledge or eloquence to adequately convey.
- Ordinary folk speaking in subjects that are the domain of specialists.

May God spare us from these ruinations both during and after Ramadan.

The Prophet (SAWS) said:

“Whoever fails to leave off ruinous speech, and acting on it [during Ramadan], God does not need him to leave off eating and drinking.”
(Bukahri)

We encourage everyone to avoid all arguments, disputes, and unnecessary worldly entanglements during this blessed month. This is a time for deep devotion and dedication to Allah.

We encourage everyone to work to restore any severed relations or kinship ties they may be experiencing. This is a time when the gentle breezes of Divine Facilitation are blowing. Any good we endeavor during this blessed month will come to bear its proper fruits, Insha Allah.

We encourage everyone to eat simply during this month. One should try to make a vow to give up unnecessary, and generally unhealthy

fare during this blessed month. Pizza, ice cream, fast food, pastries, and soda should all go. We should make our solidarity with our suffering brothers and sisters in other lands real, and not something confined to speeches and pamphlets.

If one is in the habit of watching television, or listening to commercial music, one should also try to give these things up for Ramadan. They are things that divert us from the remembrance of God in any case.

During this special month when every letter we recite from the Majestic Qur'an is tremendously rewarded, we should busy ourselves with recitation, and drop frivolous pastimes.

Married couples should encourage each other to engage in spiritual pursuits during this month, i.e. reciting the Qur'an, attending Tarawih, etc.

Those in the habit of hosting extravagant dinners in Ramadan should try to avoid doing so, especially if they involve burdening cooks with long hours in the kitchen at a time when everyone should be increasing acts of worship. Usually, the womenfolk are disadvantageously affected in this regard. While it is certainly virtuous to provide the wherewithal for the believers to break their fast, dates, water, and simple, easily prepared dishes suffice.

Everyone should endeavor to pray the Tarawih Prayers. This is practice that should not be left without an excuse. The Prophet (SAWS) mentioned, "Whosoever stands for prayer during the nights of Ramadan will have his/her prior sins expiated." Al-Bukhari and Muslim

The prayer is the symbol of our devotional life. Ramadan is a great time to rediscover the power of the prayer, and to renew our commitment to our Lord through the prayer. These are some of the things we wanted to convey to you.

Hopefully, they will prove of benefit. Please take this message in the spirit with which we have conveyed it, as sincere advice.

Again, we wish you a very successful Ramadan and would like to thank all of you for past, present, and future support.

Zaid Shakir is amongst the most respected and influential Muslim scholars in the West. Born in Berkeley, California, the second of seven children he accepted Islam in 1977 while serving in the United States Air Force.

A Golden Guarantee

Rasulullah (SAWS) has mentioned, "Whoever guarantees me (that he will safeguard and protect) that which is between his jaws and that which is between his legs, I will guarantee him Jannah." (Bukhaari) Safeguarding that which is between one's jaws refers to two things. It refers to one being cautious in his speech i.e. abstaining from backbiting, lying, vulgar speech, speaking of things that are futile, etc., and it also refers to one ensuring that he only consumes halaal. Safeguarding that which is between one's legs refers to one safeguarding his private parts i.e. abstaining from zina and all other sins of lust. (Mirqaat) If we have to ponder and reflect, we will realize that many, if not most of our sins and problems are related to either our speech or lust. Hence, if a person can exercise control over these two aspects, he will be able to eliminate most of the sins in his life and will thus be guaranteed Jannah by none other than Rasulullah (SAWS).

The ‘Islamification’ of the West

Theresa Corbin

Islamification (a verbal noun) is a word made up by the far-right conspiracy theorists and Islamic vilification factory which means that Islam—not actual Islam, but the myth invented by Islamophobes themselves—is taking over a region.

It happened when self-proclaimed terrorism expert, Steve Emerson, falsely claimed on Fox News that “a number of Muslim no-go zones existed in areas of the U.S., England, France, and other western countries. [...] ‘Sharia law’ essentially overrode the laws of the countries in which said zones were located, and local police avoided interceding in the affected areas.” The term “Islamification” took off.

But is there any truth behind the claim? Absolutely. Olivia Rudgard, religious affairs correspondent for The Telegraph writes, “Islam is the only religion growing faster than the world’s population.” A major area of growth: The West.

But this growth, this “Islamification,” has looked so little like the Fox “News” fever dream that it tries to sell to the American public. The spread of Islam has not come with tribunals or the oppression of women or the abuse of other faiths. It has come instead with education, modesty, finance, and -not surprisingly- big appetites.

Considering the facts of Islam’s Western

growth in terms of conversion rates, the media perennially publishes stories wondering who, why, how, this could be ... Why Islam?

The ever-confused media has done everything to understand this phenomenon, except one thing: actually understand Islam. But this is exactly what their audience is doing. And the more Islamophobic the media message is, the more so-called terrorism experts are invited on news segments to preach alternative facts about Islam, the more people come to Islam.

Because —truth be told (pun intended)—the formula is simple. The louder the Islamophobes ‘cry wolf’ (read: spreads misconceptions about Islam/equates un-Islamic Muslim behavior with Islam itself), the more people are intrigued to learn the truth of this seemingly taboo religion.

Dale Jones, data analyst and mapping specialist for Religion Census speculates “that the burst of anti-Islam sentiment after the 9/11 attacks could have done more to grow the religion’s presence in the U.S. than slow it,” Jones says. “Rarely is opposition a very effective tool in stopping the growth of a movement.”

And so, Islam grows by some strange reverse psychology that the Islamophobes don’t even know they are propagating. The more something is in the news—even when it is negative or

perhaps because it is negative, the more people are curious about it.

When Islamophobic, Dutch politician, Arnaud van Doorn, converted to Islam in 2013, it was because for the first time, he sat with and listened to actual Muslims. He learned something real about Islam, something beyond the heavily biased news reports and the Islamophobic government lobbies, the conspiracy theorists, and centuries old myths.

As Swiss politician and former proponent of a Swiss minaret ban, Daniel Streich, said after he converted in 2005,

Islam offers me logical answers to important life questions.

This was true also for Shariffa Carlos, who writes,

The story of how I reverted to al- Islam is a story of plans. I made plans; the group I was with made plans, [...] to destroy Islam.” Carlos, after studying Islam with the intent to “help” Muslim women apostatize, found, “Once I started learning, however, I began to be intrigued by this message. It made sense. [...] I knew it was the truth.

As media vilification and Islamophobic lobbying intensifies, many people of conscience and curiosity in the West wish to understand more. This was the case with Laura, who writes,

A Canadian newspaper had published a series of articles attacking Islam by using examples of anti-Islamic behavior of some Muslims in an attempt to vilify Islam itself.

Laura continues,

Non-Muslims tend to judge Islam on the basis of the behavior (even when it is not Islamic) of Muslims. I was not yet a Muslim but the articles were so outrageous that I sent a letter to the editor in defense of Islam. I became curious about Islam. [...] So after familiarizing myself with what Islam is basically about and what are the duties and proper conduct of a Muslim person, as well as thinking and reflecting, I felt ready to accept Islam and live as a Muslim.

But as to the phenomenon of “Islamifica-

tion” —that is, individuals embracing Islam coming in the wake of Islamophobia—this process goes beyond simply their learning what is behind the vilification of Islam. That vilification, to be effective, also has to do with making taboo, in the public media forum, Islamic practices which are actually psychologically and socially positive and life-affirming. And shining light on those practices tends to lead to a favorable view about Islam and Muslims.

As opposition to anything that smacks of Islam get louder and louder about innocuous and arbitrary things like hijab, multitudes of people ask, sincerely, “Why do Muslims do that?” In the case of hijab, what they are discovering is that in most cases this dress code has little to do with Muslim women being oppressed and more to do with the empowerment of rejecting objectification and shutting down the male gaze.

And so curiosity ushers in an age where major department stores, luxury and athletic clothing lines have begun designing and selling modest clothing and even hijabs. As CNN reports, “modest dressing is a global cultural movement on the rise.” The tide is definitely turning.

Some may never embrace Islam, but yet embrace the Islamic concept of modesty. While others are coming to Islam through hijab like Jessica Rhodes who’s curiosity started with a “one-day experience of wearing hijab [and] has led a 21-year-old Briton to read more about Islam and eventually embracing the religion.”

With the growth of Islamic modesty, a variety of other Islamic ideas and ethics have taken root in the West. Halal food has been popularized with the advent of ethically treated meat and the massive success of The Halal Guys in spite of or perhaps because of the halal meat hysteria. Islamic finance is growing in popularity. The beard has been normalized for men from all walks of life.

The ignorant can shout ‘Sharia take over’ all they want without ever understanding the first

Cont’d on page 11

Sa'id ibn Aamir al-Jumahi (RA)

Preface: This is only a summary of the life of Sa'id ibn Aamir al-Jumahi (RA) and does not cover all the points of his life story. It is not intended to be a biography, but rather a glimpse of the main incidents of his life so that we can get an idea of his character. For ease of reading, we have not inserted "May Allah be pleased with him (RA)" each time his name or the name of each Companion is mentioned, but please take it that the salutations apply to all of them, may Allah be pleased with them all.

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 SAW, 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 SAW in all his expeditions and battles, for as a believer, he could not lag or turn his back on Allah's Prophet SAW in peace or war time. Shortly before the Conquest of Khaybar, Sa'id submitted himself to Islam. Ever since

he embraced Islam and gave his allegiance to the Prophet SAW), 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, appearance 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 evaluation 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 fur-

niture, 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 ablution 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 SAW 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 be-

stowed on those outstanding men! What an excellent instructor Allah's Prophet SAW 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 kinfolks' 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 SAW 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 his Prophet SAW and 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
by Khalid Muhammad*

Good Opinions of Others

Moulana Maseehullah Khan Saheb (ra) never harboured ill feelings or evil thoughts about others. In fact, he would go to the extreme in covering up for that person's action.

He said on one occasion. "A story after all is a story. For every story there are a thousand different versions. Even if one sees something with one's own eyes, then as far as possible, interpret the action in a good manner because many a times, our sight could be in error. As in the case of a train, it appears to be moving but in reality it is stationary. The reality is that it is the other train that is moving."

His good opinions of others were such that it became well known to people that he never entertained evil opinions of others. One of his attendants mentioned that he heard him say on numerous occasions: "We entertain only good opinions of others."

(Hazrat Moulana Maseehullah Khan Saheb [ra] – A Brief Biography, pg. 126)

'Decolonizing the Mind'

Using Hollywood Celebrities to Validate Islam

Dr Ramzy Baroud

When Terry Holdbrooks Jr., converted to Islam in 2003, he was inundated with death threats and labeled a 'race traitor.'

If a religious conversion ever deserves to be admired, Holdbrooks' conversion does, and not because Islam has 'won' yet another convert, but because the new convert was assigned the very rule of subjugating his Muslim prisoners.

Yes, Terry Holdbrooks was a US army employee entrusted with guarding Guantanamo detainees.

The Muslim prisoners in Guantanamo, held for years and tortured without due process and in violation of the most basic tenants of human rights and international law, mostly subsisted on faith.

I had the pleasure of meeting one of the freed prisoners in 2013 during a brief stay in Qatar. Torture had partially impaired his mental faculty, yet when he led a group of men in prayer, he recited verses from the Quran in impeccable language and melodic harmony.

The faith of these prisoners had awakened something in Holdbrooks, who has toured the country dressed in traditional Muslim garb, conveying to audiences the 'truth about Gitmo.'

Of course, this is not about Islam as a religion, but the power of faith to cross fences, prison bars and unite people around ideas that are vastly more complex and meaningful than that of mili-

tary domination.

Despite its profundity, the story of Holdbrooks' conversion to the religion of his prisoners only received scant mention in the media and in Arabic media, in particular.

Lindsay Lohan's interest in Islam, however, has been an obligatory media staple for months.

The actress of 'not-so-family-friendly movies' is hailed by Arab and Muslim media and numerous social media users as if some kind of a cultural and religion savior.

Lohan's interest and possible conversion to Islam has branched into all sorts of areas of discussion. Like Holdbrooks, she is also branded as if a 'race traitor,' and has been, according to her own depiction, 'racially profiled' during a recent trip to the United States.

Conflating between race and religion is quite common in western, especially American, society. Let alone that one cannot change his race however hard he or she tries, Christianity itself was born in the Middle East region. But it seems that cultural appropriation has, at least in the minds of some, foolishly designated certain religions to be western and other religions to be 'ethnic,' 'colored' and 'foreign.'

While Lohan is still making up her mind about whether to join the Muslim faith or not, she recently announced that she will be launching a new fashion line.

The announcement on Instagram was accompanied by a photo in which the actress was covering her head and part of her face with a crystals-embellished scarf. Many, including some in the media, are deducing that the fashion line is that of the modest, Muslim variety.

Concurrently, a most recent death toll estimate of war-torn Syria has reached a new high (and a new moral low). According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights 321,000 people are confirmed dead as a result of the war, while a further 145,000 are still missing.

While outside powers are responsible for many of these deaths, much of the carnage has been meted out by Muslims against their fellow Muslims.

The sense of false pride generated by the probable conversion of a Hollywood actress is, perhaps, an escape from the grand shame of a bloodbath being perpetuated by Muslims against their own brethren.

But it is more complex than this.

The issue is far more telling than that of Lohan's faith and is a repeat of previous such collective jubilation similar to the sense of euphoria and unmistakable sense of validation wrought by the marriage of Arab-British lawyer, Amal Alamuddin to one Hollywood celebrity, George Clooney.

Although Amal Clooney refused to investigate Israeli war crimes in Gaza – likely so as not to create an uncomfortable situation for her husband considering his strong Hollywood ties – Arabs continued to celebrate her as if her marriage to the famous actor is a badge of honor and a validation for a whole culture.

Sadly, the opposite is true. Such hype over inane occurrences is an indication of a greater ailment, the continuing western cultural hegemony over Muslim nations.

The issue is not that of religion. Far from being a vanishing religion, Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world, the only religion growing faster than the world's population, and one which is slated to be the largest in the world by 2070.

These are some of the outcomes of a thorough demographic analysis conducted recently by the US-based Pew Research Center.

So, the enthusiasm over Lohan's possible conversion – like the intrigue created by Angelina Jolie wearing a Muslim headscarf (hijab) during a visit to a refugee camp – should be entirely removed from the religious component of the discussion.

Thousands of such conversions are reported in Africa, South America and Asia annually; numbers that receive little cultural and media attention in Arab and Muslim countries.

Neither is it an issue of celebrity Muslims per se, for there are many famous black entertainers who are also Muslims, some even devout Muslims. They rarely register on Arab and Muslim media radars as earth-shattering events.

While racism might play a role, it is not the dominant factor.

The possible conversion of a western, Hollywood celebrity, white actress is a whole different story. For these aspects – cultural, status and race – are the most manifest representation of western, cultural hegemony. A conversion of this caliber is celebrated as if a symbolic defeat of the very system that has demonized Arab and Muslim culture for generations.

In other words, the conversion of Lindsay Lohan would be measured against the resentment Muslims hold against western tools of military subjugation, political domination and cultural hegemony.

Yet in the process of conjuring up this false sense of cultural triumph, Muslims, in fact, further feed into their own unfortunate sense of inferiority, one that is rooted in hundreds of years of slavery, colonization, neocolonialism and military occupation intervention.

If Lohan, or anyone else, truly wants to appreciate the Islamic faith, a religion that has appealed to the poor, the slaves and disenfranchised throughout history, and has withstood hundreds

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The Loss of Reverence and Blessings

Mufti Shuaibullah Khan

Abu Hurairah (RA) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) said:

“If the people of my community ever come to attach a lot of significance to this material world, the awe-inspiring effect of Islam will be taken away from them. And if they ever abandon the task of enjoining what is good and forbidding what is wrong, they will be deprived of the blessings of divine revelations. And if they start to curse one another, they will be degraded in the sight of Allah.”

Deprivation of Awe and Reverence

In this hadith, three types of crimes and consequently three punishments for them have been put forth. The first is that when this Ummah begins to attach much significance to this world and material possessions become a token of love and respect, then the awe and glory of Islam will be snatched from them. Hakīm al-Tirmidhī comments:

The first condition of Islam is to surrender oneself to Allah Almighty, and surrendering to Allah means to sacrifice oneself for the pleasure of Allah (SWT). If a person instead attaches importance to a thing that is really low in the sight of Allah, then one’s status of being a true servant of Allah ends and such a person would never be able to sacrifice oneself for Allah Almighty. When the inner self becomes contaminated due to such emotions, the awe and respect will continue vanishing. The reason is that when a person looks upon the world with respect, then he naturally prefers the rights of worldly affairs to those of Allah Almighty. The respect towards the rights of Allah and the respect towards the mundane affairs may not be combined

in a single person’s heart. However, the person who surrenders himself to Allah with all his concentration and starts sacrificing it for him, then he becomes of the servants of Allah, His dear and near servants and chosen friends. As a result, awe and dignity [emanate from him] just as a chosen servant of a king attracts awe and dignity for his deep relation to the king. In the same manner, dignity, awe, and respect are clearly seen on the faces of the chosen servants of Allah. However, when one ceases to revere the rights of Allah giving extra preference to the material things, then awe will be taken away from them for they no longer remain the true servants of Allah; rather they are servants of their desires and enslaved to materialism and lust. (Nawādir al-Usūl fī Ma’rifat Ahādīth al-Rasūl, 2:270)

In brief, when the Muslim Ummah is enslaved to riches and materialism, and start to attach much more importance to mundane affairs, then the awe of Islam will be taken away from them. The reason is that they no longer remain true servants of Allah due to their glorifying of worldly possessions. Awe is conferred upon the

true servants of the king who are attached to him. And this virtue may only be obtained when one deems the king as great and supreme, and by ignoring everything except the king. But when this Ummah contrarily deemed the worldly affairs as great and significant, it naturally committed a violation in its relationship with Allah. Therefore it no longer remains as chosen and dear to Him. The punishment inflicted upon it – as a result of this – is becoming degraded and imprecated by others and being deprived of all glory and respect.

Dear Muslims, you should think seriously. Is not the majority of the Ummah glorifying wealth and riches deeming it to be the standard of respect and disrespect? Are not the worldly posts and offices, certificates and degrees, being given more importance and considered to be the criterion of lowliness and greatness? Is not the majority of our community involved in obtaining material benefits by hook or by crook and satisfying their lusts like the unbelievers do from morning till evening? Even the prayer is not given importance by the Muslims. When the Muslims ceased to give proper respect to the rights of Allah, they were made [targets of insult] and deemed ignoble in the eyes of the other nations. This is the sum of the prophecy of the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) as mentioned in the hadith.

Deprivation of the Blessings of Revelation

The second point mentioned in the hadith is that when the Muslim Ummah ceases to fulfill the duty of enjoining good and forbidding evil then it will be left deprived of the blessings of revelation.

In fact, the duty of enjoining good and forbidding evil is something with which the prophets were tasked. The progress of the religion completely depends upon this. On account of enjoining good, the commandments of religion and its beautiful teachings remain safe and intact, whereas the duty of forbidding evil keeps the human society free from ills, innovations, alterations, and interpolations. If this duty is unful-

filled, then neither the beauties of religion will be brought to the notice of the public nor the religion could be preserved. When the duty of enjoining good and forbidding evil ceases, insight into religion is lost and the light of the heart dims. The sense of distinguishing the right from the wrong disappears. Even the sense of distinguishing Īmān from kufr, Sunnah from bid'ah, the right from the wrong no remains. Hakīm al-Tirmidhī further states:

Even though a person will recite the Qur'an and revelation, nothing will of its true teachings will enter his ears and he will be left deprived of its true understanding. He will have a good knowledge of the lexicon, high expertise in the commentary of the Qur'an, well versed in the fine subjects and subtle points, but despite all these he will be completely careless of the promises and punishments mentioned within them. These are the blessings of revelation which he will be deprived of. (Nawādir al-Usūl, 2: 271)

In brief, people will be unable to draw lessons from the Qur'an in order that they be delighted with glad tidings and fearful of the punishments.

Curse and Abuse – A Cause of Being Degraded by Allah

The last prophecy mentioned in the hadith is that when the individuals of this Ummah begin to curse each other, they will be degraded in the sight of Allah.

The reason is that cursing and abusing each other comes as a result of hatred and spite towards each other and [competing with one] another in worldly affairs. These are the things that degrade a person in the sight of Allah. And the person who is degraded in the sight of Allah is precluded from the protection of Allah which directly or indirectly results in many religious and worldly tribulations. (Nawādir al-Usūl, 271:2)

It is a pity that this tribulation has gripped our society and everyone feels free to abuse and curse others which has resulted in their degradation in the sight of Allah.

The Sound Mind

J. Idrees

Mind and its reasoning function are an essential part of Islamic thought and legislation. One could not exist without the other. What exactly do we refer to when we talk about the mind? There are two kinds of reasoning by the mind that have been identified.

The first is innate reasoning that includes: the universal, inborn human capacity to comprehend, make sound conclusions, form speech, and behave respectfully and sensibly. The second kind is culture-based reasoning, acquired from observing and taking part in our group's environment and social order; such as the things we have been taught or become familiarized with.

Natural Reason

I shall discuss innate reasoning for it is what Allah has granted to all, and it is what makes us accountable for our behavior. One who does not possess a mind or has lost his mind cannot be fully responsible for what he does.

Often, a person will have a good mind, and then choose not to use it, or he restrains it from thinking logically when it comes to matters of religion and faith. He will end up being one of the unfaithful and will be held accountable for his ignorance in religion:

And it is not for any soul to believe, except by the leave of Allah, and He lays abomination

on those who have no understanding. [Sûrat Yûnus, 10:100]

It is no wonder that the punishment of those who do not believe is equivalent to that of those who do not understand:

Whoever Allah wishes to guide, He expands his chest to Islam, and whoever He wishes to leave astray, He makes his chest narrow and constricted as if he were climbing up to the sky. So Allah lays abomination on those who do not believe. [Sûrat Al-Ançâm, 6:125]

These two verses point out that one cannot possibly purify his heart unless he puts his mind to work, allowing faith and security into his heart.

The Understanding Mind

The Quran refers to the mind in different ways depending on the nature of the task being dealt with:

The mind is able to understand and process speech: Do you (Muslims) expect that they (Jews) will be believers, while some of them used to listen to the revelation of Allah (Torah), then intentionally tamper with it while they understood it and knew it was the Truth? [Sûrat Al-Baqarah, 2:75] We have revealed it an Arabic Quran, that you may understand. [Sûrat Yûsuf, 12:2] The reason the Quran was revealed in Ar-

abic was so that the minds of the people upon whom it was descended would be able to grasp it and appreciate its meanings.

The mind is able to project coherent and non-conflicting thoughts: O people of earlier scripture! Why do you argue about Ibrâhîm, when the Torah and Injil were not revealed until after him? Do you not have minds? [Sûrat Âl'Imrân, 3:65] Those who claim that prophet Ibrâhîm was a Jew or a Christian are contradicting themselves, since both Judaism and Christianity came long after the time of Ibrâhîm. The Quran also refers to the Jews contradicting themselves: And they did not attach the proper esteem to Allah when they said, 'Allah has not revealed anything to any human.' Say, 'Who then sent the Book which Moses brought as a light and as a guidance to people, which was divided into fragments, part of which you show to the people, and most of which you hide from them, and you were taught knowledge which neither you nor your fathers had possessed.' Say, 'It is Allah,' then leave them to churn in their vain discourses. [Sûrat Al-Ançâm, 6:91] The verse points out that the Jews cannot claim to believe in the prophecy of Moses, and in the Torah, then go on to say that Allah did not reveal anything to any humans, because those are contradicting thoughts.

The mind is able to understand proof and evidence of truth: He has set for you an analogy from your lives: Have you, among that which your right hands possess, partners in what We have bestowed on you sharing with you equally, and you fear them as you fear each other? Thus we make clear the signs for people who understand. [Sûrat Al-Ançâm, 6:28] Say, 'If Allah had pleased, I would not have recited the Quran to you, nor would you have had any knowledge of it, indeed, I have already lived among you for a lifetime before it, do you not understand? [Sûrat Yûnus, 10:16].

Actions must correspond to words: Do you enjoin the performance of good deeds on the

people and neglect it yourselves, while you read the Scriptures? Do you not have any sense? [Sûrat Al-Baqarah, 2:44] This verse is reprimanding the people – not for encouraging others to adhere to the way of Allah, for that is always a virtue – it is rather pointing out the contradiction of the people who are giving good advice but not taking it themselves. In any case, how the giver of good advice behaves [badly] does not reduce the value of the advice, such as a smoker or an alcoholic warning his children against the harms of those behaviors. It is far better than encouraging them to take on such harmful habits and better than not giving them any useful advice at all. Still, it does not make much sense to recognize the value of behaving in a certain way, and encourage others to do so, while acting in an opposing manner. For this reason, the good prophet in Sûrat Hûd, 11:88, said: He said, 'O my people, just consider, if I stand upon clear proof from my Lord, and He has provided me with sustenance good and pure, and I do not wish to differ with you about that which I forbid you to do. I only desire to reform you as far as I am able. My success in that rests only with Allah, and in Him I put my trust and to Him I turn.

The mind enables the person to make intelligent choices about what is good for him and what is harmful and should be rejected: And the worldly life is no more but play and diversion, surely the last abode is better for those who are pious, then will you not understand? [Sûrat Al-Ançâm, 6:32] Surely we have revealed to you a Book in which is a message for you, will you then not understand? [Sûrat Al-Anbiyâ', 21:10]

People of mind are able to give up immediate, short-lived benefits in favor of eventually gaining more valuable, eternal joy: Whatever you have been given of things, they are only the worldly possessions of this life and its glitter, but that which is with Allah is better and everlasting. Have you then no sense? [Sûrat Al-Qasas, 28:10] In other verses, there is no direct mention of sense, but it can be inferred that sensible

people will be able to choose to wait for what is further away, yet more meaningful. For example: O you who believe, what is amiss with you, that when it is said to you 'March forth in the cause of Allah (to fight)', you cling excessively to the earth. Are you content with the life of this world, rather than the Hereafter? Yet joy on this world, compared to the Hereafter, is but little. [Sûrat Al-Tawbah, 9:38]

People of mind are able to learn valuable lessons from the events of life. In Sûrat Al-Ankabût, 29:35, Allah tells us that the remains of the town formerly inhabited by the people of prophet Lût remained in order to remind people and teach them that rejecting the teachings of Allah and committing atrocities will always have regrettable consequences: And we have left a clear sign of it for people who possess minds. This is also referred to in Sûrat Al-Furqân, 25:40: And surely they must have passed by the town that was rained on by an evil rain. Did they not see it? But they were hoping not to be raised again (from the graves).

The mind enables us to learn from the lessons of history: And We have not sent before you, any but men from among human beings, to whom We revealed. Have they not traveled in the land and seen how was the end of those before them? And the abode of the Hereafter is better for those who fear Allah. Do you not then understand? [Sûrat Yûsuf, 12:109]

The mind enables us to understand and appreciate the signs of the Creator while here on earth: Surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth, in the disparity of the night and the day, in the ships that course in the sea with that which benefits people, in the water that Allah sends down from the sky, reviving with it the earth after it was barren, in His spreading in it all kinds of living things, in the changing of the winds and of the subjected clouds between the sky and the earth, indeed are Signs for people who have understanding. [Sûrat Al-Baqarah, 2:164] For you, Allah subjected the night and

the day, and the sun and the moon, and the stars are in subjection to His command. Surely in this are signs for people who understand. [Sûrat Al-Nahl, 16:12]

Sensible people treat others with respect, particularly in their dealings with God's prophets. Sûrat Al-Hujurât refers to people who harassed the Prophet  : Surely those who shout out at you [disrespectfully] from behind the chambers, most of them do not possess minds. [Sûrat Al-Hujurât, 49:4]

We Are Called to be People of an Understanding Mind

The qualities of the mind discussed are fairly indisputable and it is accepted by most people that a person who lacks these qualities will be seen as unreasonable or lacking in important ways. Thus the Quran has reminded us that certain behaviors are inconsistent with an intelligent and sound mind.

We must remember also that there are many verses of the Quran that do not specifically mention the mind but that indicate that thoughtful and reasonable people will be able to follow the way of Allah, making good use of their God-given gift: the mind.

Cont'd from page 26
of years of colonization and oppression, she ought to study the relationship between faith and resistance in Gaza, between faith and hope among Syrian refugees, and between faith and liberation in Algeria.

Finding a common ground between true Islam and Hollywood is certainly doomed to fail, for they both represent values that stand at the extreme opposites of one another.

As for Muslims who are feeling validated by mere celebrity interest of their religion, they ought to 'decolonize their minds', first by refusing to define themselves and relationships to the world through the west and its ever-sinister tools of cultural hegemony.

The Light of the Believer

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jeelani (ra)

If the believer is endowed with a light by which he sees, how could the same not be true of the truthful person who is drawn near? The believer has a light by which he sees, therefore the Messenger (SAWS) has warned of his sight saying: "Beware of the insight of the believer for he sees by the light of Allah (high is He)". The knower

who is drawn near is also given a light by which he sees his nearness to his Lord (mighty and glorified is He) and the nearness of his Lord (mighty and glorified is He) to his heart. He also sees the spirits of the angels, the souls of the prophets, the hearts and souls of the truthful, and their spiritual states and spiritual stations. All of this happens deep in his heart and in the purity of his innermost being. He is always in happiness with his Lord. He is a mediator, taking from Him and distributing to the creatures. Among them (the people of God) there are those who are knowledgeable with both tongue and heart and there are those whose hearts are knowledgeable but their tongues are inept.

The ambition of the worshipful ascetic is for miracles in this world and for gardens of Paradise in the hereafter, whereas the ambition of the knower is for his faith to remain intact in this world and for salvation from the Fire in the hereafter. His ambitions and desires will continue to be for these until his heart is told; "What is this? Calm down and be steadfast. Faith is firmly established in you and from you the believers can take a light for their faith. Tomorrow (on the Day of Resurrection) you will be asked to intercede and your word will be accepted. You will be a cause for the salvation from the Fire for many creatures. You will be in the presence of your Prophet (SAWS) who is the master of intercessors. So, switch your concern to something else." This is a sealed assurance of the permanence of faith, knowingness, safety in the hereafter, and walking in the company of the prophets, messengers, and the truthful who are the elite among the creatures.

The truthful person sees by the light of Allah, not by the light of his eye or by the light of the sun and the moon. This is the general light from Allah and he is given a special light also. Allah has given him this light after mastering the second light of Knowledge. O Allah, grant US Your Law, Knowledge, and nearness and "give us good in this world and good in the hereafter and

protect us from the torment of the Fire!”

When someone acquires knowledge and puts it into practice with sincerity, both the flint and the fuel will come to be in his heart. A light from Allah (mighty and glorified is He) will come to be in his heart which he and others use for illumination. Turn away, O sons of babble, O sons of pages composed by lower selves and passions! Woe to you! You dispute what is written and predestined? You will lose and perish, whereas His writings will not change. How can the foreordination and foreknowledge be changed by your effort? Be believers, Muslims. Have you not heard His following words: “Those who believed in Our signs and were Muslims” (43.69)?

O young man, you have not established Islam firmly, so how can you be a believer? You have not perfected faith, so how can you have certitude? You have not established certitude firmly, so how can you be a knower, saint, or spiritual substitute? You have not established knowingness, sainthood, and spiritual substitution firmly, so how can you be a lover and extinct to yourself and existing through Him only? How can you call yourself a Muslim when both the Book and the Sunna have delivered their laws concerning your affairs yet you have not applied these laws or followed them? The person who seeks Allah (mighty and glorified is He) will find Him and the person who strives for His sake will be guided by Him because He said in the manifest verses of His

Book: “And those who strive in Our cause. We will certainly guide them to Our ways” (from 29.69). He is not a wrongdoer and He does not love wrongdoing. He (high is He) does not wrong the servants. He gives things in return for nothing, so how much more would He give in return for something? The Invincible One has said; “Is the reward of goodness anything but goodness?” (55.60). Whoever does good in this world, Allah will do him good in this world and in the hereafter.

V[^]ijshipping is the closest thing to the believer. Performing prayer is the closest thing to himself. He sits in his house, while his heart waits for the

muezzin, who is the caller of the True One (mighty and glorified is He). When he hears the prayer call, happiness fills his heart and it flies to the mosques and places of prayer. He feels happy when a beggar comes to him, and if he has anything he gives it to him. He does so because he has heard the words of the Prophet (Allah’s prayer and peace be on him): “A beggar at the door is a gift from Allah (mighty and glorified is He) to his servant.” How could he fail to rejoice when His Lord (mighty and glorified is He) has come asking him for a loan through the hand of the poor man? The Prophet (Allah’s prayer and peace be on him) is reported to have said: “Allah (mighty and glorified is He) will say to His faithful servants on the Day of Resurrection: ‘You have preferred this world to the first world and you have preferred worshipping Me to your lustful desires. By My invincibility and exaltation, I have not created Paradise but for you’”. This is what He will say to the former, whereas He will say to the lovers: “You have preferred Me to all My creatures, the first world, and this world, and you have evicted the creatures from your hearts and removed them from your innermost beings. Therefore, My face is for you. My nearness is for you, and My intimacy is for you. You are My true servants.”

O young man, when someone does good works, they become a light in front of him and a riding animal beneath him. The deeds of his heart appear on his face and his face becomes like the full moon. He becomes like an angel who is drawn near. His heart feels happy because of what he sees of Allah’s generosity to him. His deeds bring him the good tidings of what Allah (high is He) has prepared for him in Paradise. The good works assume a form and say to him: “I am your weeping, patience, piety, faith, certitude, prayer, fasting, striving, longing for your

Lord (mighty and glorified is He), knowingness of Him, Knowledge of Him, good action, and good conduct and behavior in His (mighty and glorified is He) presence.” Thus, his burden will be lifted from him, his fear will turn into security, and his hardship into prosperity. As for one who did no righteous works and waged war against his Lord (mighty and glorified is He) with the gravest of sins, he will carry the weight and burden of his acts of disobedience on his back, will have hunger and thirst inside, and fear and humiliation will show on him. The angels will drive him from behind while he crawls and drags himself until he attends the parades of the Resurrection. Then he will be subjected to interrogation and reckoning. He will receive a severe reckoning and then he will be cast into the Fire to be tormented. If he is one of the people who believe in the oneness of God, he will be punished in proportion to his evil deeds and then Allah (mighty and glorified is He) will save him from the Fire by His mercy. But if he is one of the people of disbelief, he will be left forever in the Fire with those of his kind.

The believer knows the creatures. He is able to recognize signs in them. His heart is sensitive. He can see by the light of Allah (mighty and glorified is He) who placed the light in his heart. The real light is the light of the hearts and the real cleanness is the cleanness of the hearts, innermost beings, and private lives. If your heart and private life are unclean, what would the cleanness of your outward benefit you? Even if you bathed yourself a thousand times each day, nothing of the dirt of your heart will disappear. The acts of disobedience have a nasty smell that is recognizable by those who see by the light of Allah, but they keep what they know about the creatures to themselves and do not expose them.

Woe to you! You are lazy. No doubt you will not achieve anything. Your neighbors, brothers, and relatives traveled and searched so they found treasures. They made a profit of ten or twenty silver coins and returned with their earnings,

whereas you have been sitting in your place. The little that you have will soon finish and you will start begging from people. Woe to you! Strive on the way of the True One (mighty and glorified is He) and do not rely on His destiny. Have you not heard His following saying: “And those who strive in Our cause. We will certainly guide them to Our ways” (from 29.69)?

Strive and then guidance will come to you. It will not come to you because of you, yet you have to be involved. It will not come about through you alone. Make a start and others will then come and complete your work for you. Everything is in the hand of Allah (mighty and glorified is He), so do not ask for anything from anyone else. Have you not heard Him say in His Book: “And there is not a thing but with Us are its storehouses; and we send it down only in a known measure” (15.21)? Is there anything else to be said after this verse? O seeker of the gold coin and the silver one, they are nothing! They are both in the hand of Allah (mighty and glorified is He) so do not try to obtain them from the creatures. Do not ask for them with the tongue of your attribution of partners to Allah and your reliance on means. O Allah, O Creator of the creatures, O Creator of all means, save us from the fetters of associating Your creatures and means with YOU and “give us good in this world and good in the hereafter and protect us from the torment of the Fire!”

Each one of you will soon remember what he achieved in terms of believing in the oneness of God and attributing partners to Him, in terms of hypocrisy and sincerity. On that day, the Fire of hell will be made visible to those who are sighted. All those who are present at the Resurrection will see it and become terrified of it except a few individuals. When it sees a believer, it dies away and subsides so that he can pass safely through. This is why the Prophet (Allah’s prayer and peace be on him) is reported to have said: “On the Day of Resurrection, the Fire will say: ‘Pass through, O believer, for your light has put out my flames’”!

It will call on him before he passes through it: "Hurry up, pass through, do not keep me back from doing my business, for my business is with others, not you." Passing through it is inevitable for the Muslim and the disbeliever, for the obedient one and the disobedient one. Once the foot of the believer has rested on the path that is stretched across it, the Fire will die away, subside, and say to him: "Pass through. Your light has put out my flames." Some of the believers will pass through it without even seeing it, so when they enter Paradise they will ask: "Has Allah (mighty and glorified is He) not said: 'And there is not one who will not come to it' (from 19.71)? We did not see it!" They will be told: "You passed through it while it was abating."

The believer keeps on affirming his faith until he becomes a knower of Allah (mighty and glorified is He), knowledgeable of Him, and near to Him. Once he has reached this stage, he will prefer Him over everything else and distribute his wealth on the entourage who are standing at the door, so entering the house of nearness will become his only concern. He will return the key to his castle in Paradise to its keeper. His innermost being will come to the doors of the gardens of Paradise and lock them up. He will shut the doors of the creatures and existence. He will throw himself at the door of the King, behave as if he was ill, and fall like a piece of motionless meat, waiting for the feet of subtle kindness to pass by and tread on him, waiting for a glimpse from the eye of mercy and for an extension of the hand of generosity and favor. While he is in this state, he will suddenly find himself in the chamber of nearness; on the lap of subtle kindness; in the hands of the Subtly Kind One, the Expert, who will medicate him, restore strength to him, entertain him, confer on him kingship, jewelry, and crowns, feed him from the food of favor, and offer him drinks of intimacy. Mercy will then have arrived at the house of nearness and happiness will have arrived at the balconies of attainment. All creatures will become beneath

him, whereas he looks at them with the eye of mercy and graciousness. He will acquire the attributes of the True One (mighty and glorified is He), because the hearts of those who attain to Him become filled with mercy to the creatures. They look at both the Muslims and disbelievers, common people and the elite, with the eye of mercy. They have mercy for all of them, but at the same time they demand from them observing the limits of the Law. They demand outwardly but have mercy inwardly. O servants of Allah, when you meet anyone of these people, serve him and listen to what he has to say for he gives you good advice!

The Islamic Etiquette at the time of Meals

Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (ra) once mentioned:

During meals, issues of a serious and intricate nature should not be discussed. Rather, light-hearted topics and things that do not require serious thought should be spoken about. The reason for this is that serious and intricate discussions require deep thought and thus can cause one to lose his appetite. As a result, one will not be able to enjoy his meal. At the time of meals, one's attention should be directed towards++ the food. While on the dastarkhaan, if someone has to speak of serious matters, then I do not pay attention to it, as listening to such a discussion prevents me from enjoying the food and causes me to lose my appetite.

(Malfoozaat Husnul Azeez pg.71)

Rajab and Shabab

Moulana Muhammad bin Haroon

With the sighting of the crescent of Rajab, Rasulullah (SAWS) would anticipate and begin preparations for the month of Ramadan. This is two months in advance! People “live to see” various accomplishments in their lives, but a Believer “lives for” and yearns to witness sacred days like these.

Rajab Du'a

Sayyiduna Anas Ibn Malik (RA) reports that Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) would recite the following supplication when the Month of Rajab would commence:

Allahumma barik lana fi Rajaba wa Sha'bana wa balligh na Ramadan

Translation: Oh Allah! Grant us Barakah (Blessing) during (the months of) Rajab and Sha'ban, and allow us to reach Ramadan.

(Shu'abul-Iman, Hadith: 3534, Ibnu Sunni, Hadith: 660, Mukhtasar Zawaid Bazzar, Hadith: 662, also see Al-Adhkar, Hadith: 549)

Hafiz Ibn Rajab (ra) says this narration is suitable to prove the merit of reciting this du'a -“istihbab. Lataif, pg.172. To declare this du'a as baseless is exaggerate. See here for more.

Sacred Months

Rajab is the second of the “four sacred months” in the Islamic Calendar which are referred to as: “Al-Ash-hurul hurum” (Surah Tawbah, verse: 36)

The others are: Zhul Q'adah, Zhul Hijjah and Muharram.

Explaining their significance the 'Ulama mention that during these months, good deeds are more virtuous and evil deeds are more de-

testable to Almighty Allah. (Lataiful-Ma'arif, pg.163)

A pious person once fell ill before Rajab. He made du'a to Allah that He allow him to live till Rajab (at least) because he had heard that Allah frees people from punishment in Rajab. Allah had accepted his du'a. (Latiful Ma'arif, pg.173)

Sha'ban

As for Sha'ban, authentic Hadiths describe special significance for the 15th night. (see detailed article here)

Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) is reported to have said: “Certainly Almighty Allah forgives everyone on this night besides those who ascribe partners to Him and those who harbor enmity for others”.

(Sahih Ibn Hibban; Al Ihsan, Hadith: 5665, Al-Targhib, vol. 3 pg. 459, Majma'uz Zawaid, vol. 8 pg. 65 & Lataiful-Ma'arif, pg. 194)

Imam 'Ataa Ibn Yasar (rahimahullah)- a distinguished Tabi'i- said:

“After Laylatul Qadr, there is no other night more virtuous than the middle (15th) night of Sha'ban.”

(Ibid, pg. 197)

Du'as are accepted

Imam Shafi'i (ra) has stated: “I have heard that du'as are accepted by Almighty Allah on five nights:

- 1) The night of Jumu'ah,
- 2 and 3) The nights of the two 'Eids,
- 4) The first night of Rajab,

5) The middle (15th) night of Sha'ban,

(Lataiful Ma'arif, pg. 196)

In fact, the experience of people prior to Islam even, shows that Allah Ta'ala would accept their du'as during the month of Rajab. Imam Ibn Abi Dunya (rahimahullah) has cited several examples of this in his book: "Muja-bu Da'wah". (ibid)

Specific forms of worship

There are no specific types of Sala'h etc. that are prescribed for the Month of Rajab or the 15th night of Sha'ban. One may engage in whatever form of 'ibadah one is comfortable with. (Lataiful Ma'arif, pg.168, Islamic Months by Mufti Taqi Uthmani, pgs. 63 and 79)

The Sahabah (RA) and the Tab'un (ra) would increase their Quranic recital during these months (especially in Sha'ban), i.e. in preparation for Ramadan.

(Lataiful Ma'arif, pg. 192)

The beginning of a new season

The crescent of Rajab actually signals the start of a "New Season". One of hope, mercy and forgiveness for a believer. This "season" only finishes three months later; on the day of Eid!

Shaykh Abu Bakr Balkhy (ra) says: "Rajab is a month in which we plant the seeds of good. i.e, by increasing our 'ibadah. In Sha'ban we water them, to cultivate (and reap the rewards) in Ramadan"

(Lataif, pg. 173)

Opportunities like these only come once a year. Fortunate are those who maximise their benefit there from.

Precious Gems

He who defends the honour of his Muslim brother, Allah will secure his face against the Fire on the Day of Resurrection. [Tirmidhi]

A Muslim who plants a tree or sows a field from which man, birds and animals can eat, is committing an act of charity. (Muslim)

If Allah guides a person through you, it is better for you than all that is on the earth. (Bukhari, Muslim)

If you expect the blessings of Allah, be kind to His people - Abu Bakr as Siddiq (RA)

A true friend is one who sees a fault and gives advice & who defends you in your absence. Ali Ibn Abi Taalib (RA)

Be careful of procrastination for it is the greatest soldier of Iblis. ~ Ibn al-Jawzi (ra)

Desires make slaves out of kings and patience makes kings out of slaves. ~ Imam al Ghazali (ra)

Whoever wishes that Allah will illuminate him, let him leave that which doesn't concern him. - Imam Al-Shafi'i (ra)

Modesty and belief are together. If one of them is removed, the other is removed. Ibn Umar (ra)

It is unfitting for a believer that his belly becomes his greatest concern, or that his desires dominate him. Malik bin Dinar (ra)

A person doesn't stop being knowledgeable so long as he seeks knowledge. The moment he thinks he knows, he becomes ignorant. Ibn al-Mubarak (ra)

Bilali Muhammad

The First Muslim-American Scholar

Firas al-Khateeb

The first and the foremost difference between the prophets and other leaders, which also marks them distinctly above all others, is that the knowledge, mission and message of the prophets are neither formulations of their incisive intelligence, intuition or wisdom nor are they reactions to the horrible conditions in which the prophets are born and spend their lives. Their preachings are always divine revelations, the messages communicated from On High for which they are specially selected. Therefore, as the history of religions and reformations tells us, other reformers, thinkers and leaders cannot be brought into comparison with the messengers of God. The former, unlike the prophets, are almost always either products of their circumstances, rebels against the decadent society of their time or exceptionally brilliant men who want to reform the society.

This basic but subtle difference is very often overlooked by those writers and scholars of the Muslim world who try to present an Islamic view of the life and social order with an eye to fight the cultural and political ascendancy of the West. Anyone who has made a deep study of the Qur'an and the Sunnah and is also aware of the forceful impact of modern thought and culture, but has had the moral and intellectual grit to steer clear of the contaminating influences of modernism, can easily detect the traces of Western ideology and thought in the writings of such Muslim reformers.

Attention may be invited to a marked difference between the thought and message of modern Muslim leaders working for renaissance of the Islamic world and revivalists of the old who had imbibed the true faith and spirit of Islam under the guidance of some God-moved soul. This consists of the objectives and the means the two groups adopt for achieving their ends. The former have, as their greatest objective, establishment of an Islamic state or capturing political power to that end while the primary aim of the latter was to win the pleasure of God, to achieve salvation in the Hereafter, to bring about reparation of faith and conscience and to disseminate truth among the people. It is for such persons that the Qur'an declares :

"As for the abode of the Hereafter We assign unto those who seek not oppression in the earth, nor yet corruption The sequel is for those who ward off (evil)". (38:83)

The fundamental aim and purpose for which the prophets are sent by God is also described by the Qur'an. God asks the Prophet of Islam (SAWS) to tell the people that:

"Say: If Allah had so willed I should not have recited it to you nor would He have made it kown to you. I dwelt among you a whole lifetime before it (came to me). Have you then no sense?". (10:17)

Again, God tells us in the Qur'an
You did not know what the Scripture was

before, nor (the laws of) faith. And We made it a light by which We show the way to those of Our creatures as We please; and you certainly guide them to the right path. (42:52)

God invites the attention of the Prophet (SAWS) in the same fact in another verse which reads:

“You did not expect that the Book would be given to you except by the favour of your Lord. So do not be the helper of unbelievers.” (28:86)

In yet another verse, the Prophet (SAWS) is told that he was not a witness to the happenings told to him with oracular certainty.

“You were not present on the side of Mount Sinai when We called. And all this (knowledge that you are given) is by the grace of your Lord so that you may warn a people to whom no admonisher had come before you, that they may take heed.” (28:46)

The divine sources of prophet revelations and the the purpose for which the prophets are raised is thus explained.

“He sends the angels with revelation by His command, to any of His creatures as He please, (saying): “Warn that there is no god but I, so fear Me.” (16:2)

This verse also brings out the reason why the prophets are not willing to turn to their inclinations nor are they guided by the environs and the climate of their society. Another verse of the Qur’an says about the Prophet of Islam:

“Neither does he speak of his own will. This is only revelation communicated.” (53:3-4)

Actually, no prophet is capable of changing the messages received by him or altering the commandments of God Almighty.

“Say (O Muhammad) : It is not for me to change it of my own accord. I only follow that which is inspired in me. Lo! if I disobey my Lord I fear the retribution of an awful Day.” (10:15)

God does not want His prophets to be complaisant in their mission. He puts this tendency under constraint and guards the prophets against toleration of falsehood.

“So do not comply with those who deny: They only want that you should relent, so that they may come to terms.” (68:8-9)

The prophets are even threatened with dreadful punishment in case they commit the mistake of ascribing anything wrongfully to God or adding or concealing anything of the message vouchsafed to them.

“It is a revelation from the Lord of the Worlds. And if he had invented false sayings concerning Us, We assuredly had taken him by the right hand. And then severed his life-artery. And not one of you could have held Us off from Him.” (69:43-47)

The prophets are charged to propagate faithfully, both in letter and in spirit, the divine revelations received by them.

“O Prophet, announce what has reached you from your Lord, for if you do not, you will not have delivered His message. God will preserve you from (the mischief of) men; for God does not guide those who do not believe.” (5:67)

Now, this is the fundamental distinctive mark setting the prophets apart from other teachers whose call represents the response of their own consciousness to the surrounding conditions, cultural debasement or social plight, or it is an outcome of the vexation of spirit prevailing among the thoughtful class at that time. The latter always take cognizance of the needs of their time and often reconcile to the situation even if it means giving up some of their principles.

They sometimes strike a bargain with their opponents and are not averse to a give-and-take. Most of them have faith in the maxim: Make hay while the sun shines.

Gentleness and Skill

Dr. Muhammad bin ‘Abd al-Rahman al-‘Arifi

When the Prophet’s influence extended after his conquests and Islam had spread far and wide, the Prophet (SAWS) began sending preachers to various tribes to call them to Islam. Sometimes he even had to send armies. ‘Adi bin Hatim al-Ta’i was a king and the son of a king. When the Prophet (SAWS) sent an army to the Tai’ tribe, ‘Adi ran away from the battle and took refuge in Syria. When the Muslim army reached Tai’ they found it easy to defeat them as they had neither a king nor an organised army. The Muslims would always treat people kindly in wars and respect their emotions, even during battle. The purpose of the battle was to prevent the plots of ‘Adi’s people against the Muslims and to display to them the Muslims’ strength. The Muslims captured some people from ‘Adi’s tribe, amongst whom was ‘Adi’s sister. They took the captives to the Prophet (SAWS) in Madinah and informed him about ‘Adi’s escape to Syria. The Prophet (SAWS) was surprised, thinking how could he have run away from the true religion? How could he have left his people behind?

However, there was no way for the Muslims to contact ‘Adi. ‘Adi himself did not enjoy his stay in Syria and was compelled to come back to the Arab lands. He then could not but help go to Madinah to meet with the Prophet (SAWS) and

make peace with him, or to create some sort of understanding. (It is also claimed that his sister went to Syria to bring him back to the Arabs).

‘Adi said whilst relating his story, “None from the Arabs disliked the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) as much as I did. I was a Christian and a king amongst my people. When I heard about the Messenger of Allah (SAWS), I despised him and left my people to go to Caesar of Rome. But I disliked staying there, too. So I thought that if I went to this man and he turned out to be a liar, then he wouldn’t be able to harm me, and if he was truthful, then I would know. So I decided to go to him.”

“When I arrived in Madinah, the people began to say, ‘This is ‘Adi bin Hatim! This is ‘Adi bin Hatim!’ I continued to walk until I reached the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) who said to me: ‘Adi bin Hatim?’

I said: ‘Adi bin Hatim.’” The Prophet (SAWS) became overjoyed by his arrival and welcomed him, even though ‘Adi had previously fought against the Muslims, ran away from the battle, despised Islam and sought refuge amongst the Christians. Despite all of that the Prophet (SAWS) met him with a smile and took him by his hand to his house. As ‘Adi walked alongside the Prophet (SAWS), he considered him to be completely

equal to himself, since Muhammad (SAWS) was the ruler of Madinah and its outskirts while 'Adi was the ruler over the Ta'i mountains and its outskirts. Muhammad (SAWS) was a follower of a heavenly religion - Islam, just as 'Adi was a follower of a heavenly religion - Christianity. Muhammad (SAWS) had a revealed scripture - the Qur'an, just as 'Adi had a revealed scripture - the Gospel. 'Adi thought that there was no difference between the two except in terms of power and military might.

While they were on their way, three things happened. As they were walking, a woman came and began to shout in the middle of their path, "O Messenger of Allah! I need your help!" The Prophet (SAWS) left 'Adi's hand and went to the woman to listen to what she had to say. 'Adi bin Hatim - who had witnessed many kings and leaders - as he watched this happen, began to compare this with what he knew of the actions of kings and ministers. He thought for a while, until it occurred to him that these mannerisms were not that of kings, but rather of the Prophets!

When the woman's need was fulfilled, the Prophet (SAWS) came back to 'Adi and they both continued to walk, and as they did, a man came to the Prophet (SAWS). What did he say? Did he say, "O Messenger of Allah! I have surplus wealth and am looking to give some to a poor person?" Did he say, "I harvested my crops and I have some extra fruit. What shall I do with it?" If only he were to have asked such questions so that 'Adi would have felt that the Muslims had wealth.

Instead, the man said, "O Messenger of Allah! I complain to you about hunger and poverty." The man was unable to find anything with which to abate his and his children's hunger, whilst the Muslims around him could barely get by, and hence, were unable to help him.

'Adi was listening as the man asked the Prophet (SAWS) his question. The Prophet (SAWS) then responded to him, after which he left. When they continued to walk, there came another man who said, "O Messenger of Allah! I complain to

you about highway robbers!" Meaning, "O Messenger of Allah! We have numerous enemies surrounding us and therefore cannot safely leave the walls of our city due to the disbelievers and thieves." The Prophet (SAWS) responded to him with a few words and continued. 'Adi began to think about what he had seen. He himself was honoured by his people, and he didn't have any enemies waiting to attack him. Why then were so many people accepting this religion whilst they were weak and poor?

They both reached the Prophet's house and entered. Inside there was only one couch available so the Prophet (SAWS) gave it to 'Adi in his honour, saying, "Take this to sit on." 'Adi gave it back to him and said, "Rather, you should sit on it." The Prophet (SAWS) said, "Rather, you should sit on it." 'Adi then did as he was told.

Then the Prophet (SAWS) began to break down all the barriers that existed between 'Adi and Islam. He said, "O 'Adi, accept Islam and you will be safe."

'Adi said, "I already have a religion."

The Prophet (SAWS) said, "I know more about your religion than you do."

He said, "You know more about my religion than I do?"

The Prophet (SAWS) said, "Yes! Are you not from the Rukusiyya?"

Rukusiyya was a sub-sect within Christianity with elements of Zoroastrianism. It was because of his skills of persuasion that the Prophet (SAWS) did not ask, "Are you a Christian?" Rather, he circumvented this fact and mentioned something more particular, i.e. the sub-sect of Christianity which he belonged to.

This is just as if you were to meet someone in a European country who said to you, "Why don't you become a Christian?"

And you were to say to him, "I already have a religion."

And he didn't reply with, "Are you a Muslim?" or even, "Are you a Sunni?" But rather, with, "Are you a Shafi'i or a Hanbali?" You would then real-

ise that he knows much about your religion.

This is exactly what the Prophet (SAWS) did with ‘Adi by asking, “Are you not from the Rak-usiyya?”

“Indeed, I am,” replied ‘Adi.

The Prophet (SAWS) said, “When you go to war, do you not share one quarter of your people’s gains?”

He said, “Yes, I do.”

The Prophet (SAWS) said, “This is not allowed in your religion.”

‘Adi admitted in embarrassment, “Yes.”

The Prophet (SAWS) said, “I know what is preventing you from accepting Islam. You think that the only people to follow this man (i.e., himself) are the oppressed people who have no strength: the Arabs have discarded them. O ‘Adi! Have you heard of al- Hira (a city in ‘Iraq)?”

‘Adi said, “I haven’t seen it but I have heard of it.”

The Prophet (SAWS) said, “I swear by the One who has my soul in His Hand, Allah will complete this affair, until a woman travels from al-Hira to make Tawaf around the Ka’bah, without fearing anyone.” Meaning: Islam will one day become so strong that a woman would be able to travel from al-Hira to Makkah without a male guardian and without any need for protection. She would pass by hundreds of tribes and no one would dare to harm her or take her wealth. This is because the Muslims will become so strong that no one would dare to trouble a Muslim from fear of other Muslims rushing to his or her help.

When ‘Adi heard this, he began to picture this in his mind - a woman leaving ‘Iraq and reaching Makkah, i.e. approaching from the north of the peninsula, and passing by the Ta’i mountains where his people reside.

‘Adi became amazed and said to himself, “What will the bandits do who terrorise us and the rest of our cities?!”

The Prophet (SAWS) said, “You will seize the treasures of Kisra bin Hurmuz.”

He said, “The treasures of Ibn Hurmuz?”

Yes, “Kisra bin Hurmuz, and you will spend it all in the path of Allah. If you live long, you would see a man offering a handful of gold or silver to others but none will accept it.” Meaning: wealth will be so plentiful that a rich man will look for someone to accept his charity but will not be able to find a poor person to give it to.

The Prophet (SAWS) then admonished ‘Adi and reminded him of the Hereafter. He said, “One of you shall meet Allah on the Last Day without anyone to translate the dialogue between you and Allah. He will look to his right and not see anything except Hell. He will then look to his left and not see anything except Hell.”

‘Adi remained silent and began to think. The Prophet (SAWS) abruptly said, “O ‘Adi! What is preventing you from saying: There is none worthy of worship but Allah? Do you know of a god greater than Him?”

‘Adi said, “In that case, I am a monotheist Muslim; I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, and I

bear witness that Muhammad is the Servant and the Messenger of Allah!”

The Prophet’s face became overjoyed.

‘Adi bin Hatim later said, “I have seen a woman riding a camel travelling from Al-Hira till it made Tawaf around Ka’bah fearing none but Allah, I have also been one of those who opened the treasures of Kisra bin Hurmuz. I swear by the One who has my soul in His Hand, the third prophecy will also be fulfilled, since Allah’s Messenger has said so!” (Muslim and Ahmad)

Contemplate the way the Prophet (SAWS) dealt with ‘Adi, how he welcomed him, something which ‘Adi no doubt felt. Think how all of his fine manners contributed to ‘Adi accepting Islam. If we were to practise these skills with people, we would also successfully capture their hearts.

A thought...

With gentleness and interpersonal skills, we can achieve our objectives.

The Meaning of Ramadan

M. Khalid Baig

Fasting during Ramadan was ordained during the second year of Hijrah. Why not earlier? In Makkah the economic conditions of the Muslims were bad. They were being persecuted. Often days would go by before they had anything to eat. It is easy to skip meals if you don't have any. Obviously fasting would have been easier under the circumstances. So why not then?

The answer may be that Ramadan is not only about skipping meals. While fasting is an integral and paramount part of it, Ramadan offers a comprehensive program for our spiritual overhaul. The entire program required the peace and security that was offered by Madinah.

Yes, Ramadan is the most important month of the year. It is the month that the believers await with eagerness. At the beginning of Rajab --- two full months before Ramadan --- the Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) used to supplicate thus: "O Allah! Bless us during Rajab and Sha'ban, and let us reach Ramadan (in good health)."

During Ramadan the believers get busy seeking Allah's mercy, forgiveness, and protection from Hellfire. This is the month for renewing our commitment and re-establishing our

relationship with our Creator. It is the spring season for goodness and virtues when righteousness blossoms throughout the Muslim communities. "If we combine all the blessings of the other eleven months, they would not add up to the blessings of Ramadan," said the great scholar and reformer Shaikh Ahmed Farooqi (Mujaddad Alif Thani). It offers every Muslim an opportunity to strengthen his Iman, purify his heart and soul, and to remove the evil effects of the sins committed by him.

"Anyone who fasts during this month with purity of belief and with expectation of a good reward (from his Creator), will have his previous sins forgiven," said Prophet Muhammad (SAWS). "Anyone who stands in prayers during its nights with purity of belief and expectation of a reward, will have his previous sins forgiven." As other ahadith tell us, the rewards for good deeds are multiplied manifold during Ramadan.

Along with the possibility of a great reward, there is the risk of a terrible loss. If we let any other month pass by carelessly, we just lost a month. If we do the same during Ramadan, we have lost everything. The person who misses just one day's fast without a legitimate reason, cannot really make up for it even if he were to

fast everyday for the rest of his life. And of the three persons that Prophet (SAWS) cursed, one is the unfortunate Muslim who finds Ramadan in good health but does not use the opportunity to seek Allah's mercy.

One who does not fast is obviously in this category, but so also is the person who fasts and prays but makes no effort to stay away from sins or attain purity of the heart through the numerous opportunities offered by Ramadan. The Prophet (SAWS) warned us: "There are those who get nothing from their fast but hunger and thirst. There are those who get nothing from their nightly prayers but loss of sleep."

Those who understood this, for them Ramadan was indeed a very special month. In addition to fasting, mandatory Salat, and extra Travih Salat, they spent the whole month in acts of worship like voluntary Salat, Tilawa (recitation of Qur'an), Dhikr etc. After mentioning that this has been the tradition of the pious people of this Ummah throughout the centuries, Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi notes: "I have seen with my own eyes such ulema and mas-haikh who used to finish recitation of the entire Qur'an everyday during Ramadan. They spent almost the entire night in prayers. They used to eat so little that one wondered how they could endure all this. These greats valued every moment of Ramadan and would not waste any of it in any other pursuit...Watching them made one believe the astounding stories of Ibada and devotion of our elders recorded by history."

This emphasis on these acts of worship may sound strange --- even misplaced --- to some. It requires some explanation. We know that the term Ibada (worship and obedience) in Islam applies not only to the formal acts of worship and devotion like Salat, Tilawa, and Dhikr, but it also applies to worldly acts when performed in obedience to Shariah and with the intention of pleasing Allah. Thus a believer going to work is performing Ibada when he seeks Halal income to discharge his responsi-

bility as a bread-winner for the family. However a distinction must be made between the two. The first category consists of direct Ibada, acts that are required for their own sake. The second category consists of indirect Ibada --- worldly acts that become Ibada through proper intention and observation of Shariah. While the second category is important for it extends the idea of Ibada to our entire life, there is also a danger because by their very nature these acts can camouflage other motives. (Is my going to work really Ibada or am I actually in the rat race?). Here the direct Ibada comes to the rescue. Through them we can purify our motives, and re-establish our relationship with Allah.

Islam does not approve of monasticism. It does not ask us to permanently isolate ourselves from this world, since our test is in living here according to the Commands of our Creator. But it does ask us to take periodic breaks from it. The mandatory Salat (five daily prayers) is one example. For a few minutes every so many hours throughout the day, we leave the affairs of this world and appear before Allah to remind ourselves that none but He is worthy of worship and of our unfaltering obedience. Ramadan takes this to the next higher plane, providing intense training for a whole month.

This spirit is captured in I'tikaf, a unique Ibada associated with Ramadan, in which a person gives up all his normal activities and enters a mosque for a specific period. There is great merit in it and every Muslim community is encouraged to provide at least one person who will perform I'tikaf for the last ten days of Ramadan. But even those who cannot spare ten days are encouraged to spend as much time in the mosque as possible.

Through direct Ibada we "charge our batteries"; the indirect ones allow us to use the power so accumulated in driving the vehicle of our life. Ramadan is the month for rebuilding our spiritual strength. How much we benefit from it is up to us.

From the Horse's Mouth

Amr bin 'Aas (RA) narrates the following:

An army of the Muslims, over whom I was appointed as leader, once set out to fight in the path of Allah. We continued to travel until we came to the city of Alexandria. On reaching Alexandria, the leader of the city announced to us, "Send someone from your army to me so that I may converse with him." When I heard this request, I immediately said, "Nobody but I will go to him." I thus emerged from the camp and went to meet him. With me was a translator, and the city leader had a translator with him as well. Two pulpits were placed for us and we thus sat. The following dialogue then ensued:

Leader of Alexandria: Who are you people?

'Amr bin 'Aas (RA): We are the Arabs. We are the people of thorns and acacia trees. We are the people of the Ka'bah. We are the people who had the smallest land and most difficult lives. We would consume carrion and some of us would attack and fight with others. We were living the most despicable lives that people could possibly live. This continued to be our plight until a man emerged from among us who was neither the most influential at that time and was neither the wealthiest. He said, "I am the messenger of Allah (SAWS)." He then began to prohibit us from the acts that we were perpetrating and which we found our forefathers per-

petrating. Hence, we resented him, belied him and rejected his message, until another group of people, besides us, came to him. They said to him, "We believe in you, we will follow you and we will fight whoever fights against you." He thus left Makkah Mukarramah and migrated to them, and we went after him. We thus fought against him, resulting in him killing us, defeating us and overpowering us. The other Arabs in the nearby areas also rose against him, so he fought against them until he conquered them. When the leader of Alexandria heard this, he began to laugh. He thereafter said:

Leader of Alexandria: Indeed, your messenger spoke the truth. Our messengers also came to us with messages similar to that which your messenger brought to you. We adhered firmly to their message and their teachings, until kings emerged among us. These kings would do as they pleased and they abandoned the teachings of the messengers. If you hold fast to the teachings of your Nabi, nobody will wage war against you except that you will defeat him, and nobody will rise against you except that you will overpower him. However, as soon as you do as we did, by abandoning the teachings of your Nabi, and you behave as we did by obeying your desires, then we will be left to each other (i.e. you will not enjoy the divine assistance of Allah). In that case, you are neither greater than

us in number and neither are you stronger and more powerful than we are.

‘Amr bin ‘Aas (RA) later remarked, “I never spoke to a man (from the disbelievers) as intelligent as him.” (Majma‘uz Zawaa‘id #10383)

Lessons

1. When the leader requested to engage in discussion with a Muslim, ‘Amr bin ‘Aas (RA) ensured that he personally went to him. The most probable reason for this was that the person who met this leader and conversed with him would, in reality, be representing Islam. His conduct, speech and the mindset that he portrayed would be construed as being the values and way of Islam. In a similar manner, each and every one of us is a flag bearer of Islam and a representative of Muslims at large. If we behave poorly, dishonestly, greedily, mercilessly, etc, then those who interact with us will inevitably reach the conclusion that ‘Muslims’ have these evil qualities. On the other hand, if we embrace the character of Islam, those around us will definitely be attracted to Islam and many of them will even embrace Islam.

2. The Muslim Ummah constantly faces tests and challenges of varying natures. Whether the challenge is in the form of a natural disaster, a war, xenophobia, financial troubles, political instability or civil unrest, the natural response of people is to try and find a solution to the problem. In this regard, some people feel that the solution is for the Muslims to have a strong political presence, others feel that the solution lies in empowering the youth with education, while yet others feel that the solution is for the Muslims to have military muscle and financial pull. However, the true solution can only be found when the root cause is correctly identified. In this incident, the disbelieving leader himself told the Muslims the solution – so long as they hold firmly to Islam and the sunnah of Rasulullah (SAWS), they will enjoy the divine assis-

tance of Allah and will be undefeated. However, if they abandon the teachings of Islam and Rasulullah (SAWS), remaining Muslims in name alone, they will lose the divine aid of Allah. On account of the Sahaabah (RA) enjoying Allah’s aid, even though they did not always have the apparent means, they achieved victory and success. Without this vital ingredient of Allah’s aid, even if we have the apparent means, it will be wishful thinking for us to hope that the Ummah can once again enjoy its former glory.

Source: uswatulmuslimah

Etiquettes of Speech

1. Speak clearly and in a manner that is easy to understand. Hence, do not speak ambiguously or unclearly. Similarly, be to the point and do not mumble.
2. Always speak to people from the front. Do not stand or sit behind them and speak to them.
3. When a person is speaking to you, give them your complete attention.
4. Do not interrupt a person who is speaking until he completes what he needs to say.
5. Think before speaking.
6. Be moderate in your speech i.e. do not exaggerate and do not speak more than is necessary.
7. Refrain from engaging in discussions which neither hold benefit for one’s Deen nor one’s dunya (worldly life).

Appeal

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Publisher:
Radiant Reality
P.O. Box 974
G.P.O. Srinagar,
J&K, 190001, India.

Subscription Charges : Rs. 300/= per year
Postage: Regd Rs 240/=, Unregistered Rs. 60/= per year

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