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# RADIANT REALITY

Published from Srinagar, Nov 2015, Volume 16, Issue 11.

Understand  
*the value*  
of every moment

You are only  
born with  
*a number of breath*

Make every breath  
*count*

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# RADIANT REALITY

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*This magazine is dedicated to the greatest and the last Prophet Sayyidna Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) on whom the succession of Prophethood ended and got sealed forever.*

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<i>*Correspondence should be addressed to the Editor.</i>	1. Editorial - The Doctrine of Tawheed 2
<i>*The Editor reserves the right to abridge letters and any other material received for publication.</i>	2. Question Answer 3
<i>*Published articles do not necessarily reflect the views of Radiant Reality.</i>	3. Lesson from the Qur'an 9
<i>*Articles may be reproduced free of charge with due acknowledgement.</i>	4. Lesson from Sahih al-Bukhari 11
	5. Finding God 14
	6. Un/Happy Ever After 18
	7. Are My Intentions Alright? 20
	8. Patience 23
	9. The Pleasures of Paradise 27
	10. Tip of the Iceberg 29
	11. Islam is the Solution 33
	12. Preparing for Death 35
	13. From Hate to Love 39
	14. The Companions and the Dawah Paradigm - 2 43
	15. When You Think People Judge You 46

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## EDITORIAL

*All thanks for Almighty, the most Merciful and Exalted*

# The Doctrine Of Tauhid A Source of Peace in Human Life

*Tauhid*, the most fundamental doctrine of Islam, is not a mere theory, but the only effective way of making man a man in the real sense of the term - it is his first and last refuge and the panacea for all his ills. For the essence of this doctrine is that every possible change in the physical universe, its very birth and death is subject to the will of the One and Only Being, and a manifestation of His wisdom. When this doctrine takes hold of a man's mind and heart, and becomes his permanent state, all dissension ceases to exist and the world itself changes into a paradise for him, as he knows that the enmity of the foe and the love of the friend equally proceed from Allah who rules over the hearts of both. Such a man lives his life in perfect peace, fearing none and expecting nothing from anyone: shower him with gold, or put him in irons, he would remain unmoved, for he knows where it comes from.

This is the significance of the basic declaration of the Islamic creed, *La-ilaha il-lal-lah* or (there is no

God but Allah). But, obviously, it is not enough to affirm the Oneness of God orally; one must have a complete certitude, and must also have the truth always present close to one's heart, for *Tauhid* is to see God as one, and not merely to say that He is one. Today, the number of those who can respect this basic formula of the Islamic creed runs to millions all over the world - far more than it ever did, but mostly it is just an expense of breath: their lives do not show the colour of *Tauhid*; or otherwise, they should have been like their forefathers who were daunted neither by wealth nor by power, awed neither by numbers nor by pomp and show to turn their back upon the Truth - when a prophet could all by himself stand up against the world, and say: "So try your guile on me, then give me no respite" (17:195). If the blessed Companions and their successors came to dominate the world in a few years, the secret lay in this *Tauhid*, correctly understood and practised. May Allah bless all the Muslims with this great gift!

# Question Answer

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## Question.

The Fajr azaan at our masjid goes at 4.30am, so what time is the sehri?

## Answer.

The Azaan does not necessarily signify the commencing time of the Salaah time. The Azaan is called out within the Salaah time frame, generally at the time when the largest congregation can be achieved. Therefore, the Azaan should not be considered an indication of the Salaah time entering.

One should refer to a Salaah timetable for the commencement of the Salaah times. The Fajr time on the Timetable marks the end of the time of Tahajjud and the commencement of the time of Fajr.

*Mufti Suhail*

## Question.

If Your husband ask you to carry out a sin as his wife do you have to listen & do it? Also would his wife be accountable for that sin?

## Answer.

Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam) has stated: "There is no obedience to the creation in the disobedience of Allah." (Mujamul Kabeer)

Thus, if a husband commands his wife to commit a sin, she should not obey him. It is not permissible for her to obey him in committing a sin. If she commits the sin, she will be accountable as well

as her husband for he incited her towards that sin.

*Mufti Moosa*

## Question.

My brother is offered a job to work as a driver for a liquor store business. Can he take the job . Would his earnings still be Halaal?

## Answer.

No, it is not permissible for him to take this job and his income will not be Halaal. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alayhi Wa Sallam) has cursed the one who transports wine in the following Hadith,

*"Allah has cursed wine, the one who drinks it, the one who serves it, the one who sells it, the one who purchases it, the one who presses it, the one who manufactures it, the one who transports it and the one to whom it is delivered."* (Abu Dawood, #: 3676, Narrated by Abdullah bin Umar)

*Mufti Suhail*

## Question.

What exactly are the Islamic views on putting nail polish when a lady is not reading Salaah? Also is it advisable for ladies to keep long nail?

## Answer.

It is permissible for a female to apply nail polish as a means of beautifying herself for her husband. However, it should be noted that nail polish will prevent the Wudhu from being valid and it

must be removed before making Wudhu.

It is not permissible for a person to grow his/her nails for more than 40 days as stated in the Hadith. (Sahih Muslim)

It is an emphasized Sunnah and part of Fitrah that the nails are kept short. It is unbecoming of a Muslim to keep long nails, apart from it being unhygienic.

*Mufti Suhail*

### Question.

Many years ago a lady had a fall and fractured her second toe in her right foot. It was left unattended. Now the toe is inactive and causing calluses under the foot and a great deal of discomfort when shoes are worn.

In her advanced age Doctors have suggested that only an amputation of the affected toe will provide total relief. Under these circumstances is it Islamically permissible to remove the toe? If permissible how should the amputated toe be disposed of?

### Answer.

Amputation of the toe will be permissible if this is the only way to relieve her from her discomfort. (al-Fatawa al-Hindiyyah, Vol: 5, Pg: 360)

The amputated toe should be buried.

*Mufti Suhail*

### Question.

My sister felt that she is affected with blackmagic so she went to a person who deals with such matters. I had accompanied her but to our surprise, this amil insisted that he needs to see my sister alone. We did not feel comfortable so we left. Did we do the right thing?

### Answer.

You had acted correctly by leaving. (Vol.16, Issue: 11)

ing the premises of the fraudulent Amil. It is not permissible for him to be in seclusion with your sister. The fact that he requested to be alone with your sister is a strong indication that he is an impostor and has ulterior motives. How can he draw Allah's assistance in his treatment whereas he is violating the laws of Allah at the same time? Your sister should make it a habit of reciting the last three Surahs thrice each every morning and evening as well as Ayatul Kursi after every Salaah.

On this note, Ulema advise the public to apply caution with regards to seeking treatment from Amils (people who deal in removing the effects of jinn and witchcraft). Whilst there are Amils who are genuine and sincerely adhere to the laws of Shari'ah, there are many who are out there to take advantage of people, either by soliciting funds or sexually abusing vulnerable females. There have been numerous reports regarding the unbecoming behaviour of some Amils; especially with females. The best and safest is to adhere to reciting the verses of the Qur'an and Duas mentioned in the Hadith for protection against witchcraft and evil. If there is a need to go to an Amil for treatment, females should ensure that they are always accompanied by their husband or Mahram male relative. Under no circumstance should a female allow an Amil to beguile her into being alone with him.

*Mufti Suhail*

### Question.

Recently someone told me that instead of performing our sunnat and nafl salaah at every namaaz, it is better to perform the fard qaza that we have missed, as we are no saint even though we try to read all, we do miss salaah now

and then. Please advise if this is permissible

**Answer.**

The Qadha Salaah will hold priority over the Sunnah Ghair Mu'akkadah and Nafl Salaah. Therefore, if you have outstanding Qadha Salaah, you should ensure that these are completed and the Nafl and Sunnah (ghair Mu'akkadah) Salaahs may be omitted and the Qadha performed instead. You should not omit the Sunnah Mu'akkadah Salaah as these are emphasized in the Shari'ah.

NB. The above does mean that one should neglect Nafl Salaah like Tahajjud, Ishraaq etc. due to having unperformed Qadha Salaahs. A person should still make an effort towards performing the Nafl Salaah whilst also giving due attention to the Qadha Salaah.

*Mufti Suhail*

**Question.**

Whilst performing Fardh ghusl, ones wudhu breaks. Does that invalidate ghusl, wudhu, or both?

**Answer.**

Only the Wudhu will be invalid. The Ghusl does not become invalid. Subsequently if during the Ghusl the limbs of Wudhu are washed, the Wudhu will be renewed.

*Mufti Suhail*

**Question.**

Is the "hate the sin, not the sinner" mantra an all-encompassing principle in Islam? When is it permissible to hate a person for the sake of Allah? I would imagine there are such extreme cases where this is allowed, such as hating a kaafir who fights vigorously against Muslims etc.

Is it permissible to hate a faasiq, or the one who constantly mocks the

Sunnah?

**Answer.**

The attitude, hate the sin not the sinner is understood from the following Hadith:

Abu Hurairah (RA) says that I heard the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) saying, "If a slave-girl of yours commits illegal sexual intercourse and her illegal sexual intercourse is proved, she should be lashed, and after that nobody should blame her, and if she commits illegal sexual intercourse the second time, she should be lashed and nobody should blame her after that, and if she does the offense for the third time and her illegal sexual intercourse is proved, she should be sold even for a hair rope." (Bukhari)

It is clear from the above, we distinguish between a sin and a sinner. A sinner will suffer the consequences of his/her sin. However that does not give us the right to humiliate a sinner more than the specified punishment. In doing so, one will be assisting Shaitan. Consider the following Hadith:

Abu Hurairah (RA) narrates that when a man who had drunk wine was brought to the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: Beat him. Abu Hurairah (RA) said, Some struck him with their hands, some with their garment. When he turned his face, some people said: Allah put you shame! The Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: Do not say like that and help the devil to get power over him. (Bukhari)

However, it is important to also differentiate between not humiliating a sinner and using it as a mantra in a specific context, for example, in defence of

associating oneself with a sinner to the extent that one suffers the evil effects of the sin. It is incorrect to use the statement hate the sin, not the sinner as a mantra in such a context or in similar contexts.

While it is prohibited to humiliate a sinner more than the stipulated amount, it is equally important to protect oneself from the evil effects of a sinful person and his company.

*Ml. Huzaiyah*

### Question.

As salaam mu Alaikum What happens if the deceased has quadha salaah and does not have money in the estate to pay fidyah.?

### Answer.

The heirs should do Istighfar (seek forgiveness) on his behalf. If the heirs wish to give any charity on his behalf, they may do so as a voluntary gesture.

*Mufti Suhail*

### Question.

When going to Masjid we make wuzu at home when we enter masjid we pray taitul Masjid and then we pray Sunnat before Faraaz nimaz. Sometimes we make wuzu at the Masjid then we pray taitul wuzw and then we pray Sunnat. We would like to know wether we have to pray two seperate namaaz, taitul wuzu and taitul Masjid or one namaaz can cover both and what niyaat I should make?

### Answer.

Multiple intentions can be made for one set of Nafl Salaah, if the Nafl Salaah is prescribed during that time. For example, when performing the Sunnah Salaah, the intention of Tahiyatul Musjid may be made if one had just entered

the Masjid.

The intention of Tahiyatul Wudhu may also be made if you had made Wudhu just before entering the Musjid. (ad-Durrul Mukhtar, Vol: 1, Pg: 440)

*Mufti Moosa*

### Question.

What is your view regarding the so called halal nail polish. Is it permissible to use even though it maybe waterproof? Nabi saw haduth – he who imitates a nation is one of them .. In this regard would nail polish be permissible to use.

Nowadays trend of wearing a lot of makeup, what advise can I give to my fellow sisters about this issue ?

### Answer.

We are not aware of any halaal nail polish. A test was conducted on some nail polish which claimed to be water permeable. However the results proved otherwise.

Wudhu is the prerequisite for the validity of salah. One should exercise extreme precaution in ensuring the wudhu is valid. Shari`ah permits a woman to adorn herself and in fact encourages her to do so for her husband. See the following;

There is no sin on them (the wives of the Prophet and all Muslim women) for (speaking socially to and being seen by) their fathers, sons, their brothers, their sons brothers, the sons of their sisters, their fellow women and their slave women. (However) they should fear Allah (and still cover the necessary parts of their bodies). Indeed Allah is Witness over everything. (Ahzab:55)

Abu Hurairah (RA) narrates that the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) was asked: 'Which woman is best?' He said: 'The one who makes him happy when he looks at her (Nasaie), obeys him when he commands her, and she does not go against his wishes with regard to herself nor her wealth.'" (Dar-i-Qutni)

However in doing so, it must be within the limits of the Shari`ah. Hereunder is a list various items used for beautifications, with their respective rulings.

### Permissible items

- Hena
- Eyeliner
- Surma
- Nose piercing and earrings (When performing wudhu, ensure water reaches the pierced area) Note: It is impermissible to pierce any other part of the body besides the ears and the nose.
- Fragrance only for the husband (when the alcohol is not made from grapes or dates)
- Removing facial hair such as beard/moustache (only for women)
- Nail polish (should be removed for wudhu)
- Fake nails (should be removed for wudhu)
- Lipstick (on condition there are no impurities in it)
- Creams and powders (on condition there are no impurities in it)
- Fake eyelashes (permissible as long as they are not made from human or pig hair)
- Eyeshadow (on condition there are no impurities in it)
- Mascara (on condition there are no impurities in it)
- Hair extensions (permissible as long as

they are not made from human or pig hair)

- Hair dye (permissible besides black)
- Wigs (permissible as long as they are not made from human or pig hair and not worn for deception)
- Coloured contact lenses (permissible for beatification, not for deception).

Note: if any of the above items represent fashion and style of immoral people, then it is impermissible

### Impermissible items

- Cutting hair in layers
- Shaping eyebrows

### Disliked items

- Long nails (disliked, they are against fitrah)
- Following trends and fashion (disliked)

*Mufti Ebrahim*

### Question.

If a person intends going on a journey for a month then should he read Qasar salaah from the inception of his departure or does he wait for 15 days to pass first and read full salaah then commences with qasar after the 15 days?

### Answer.

Enroute to one's destination, one will read Qasar. When he reaches his destination, he will read full Salaah as he immediately becomes a Muqem due to his intention of residing in that place for more than 15 days. He will not wait for 15 days to pass to start reading full Salaah.

*Mufti Suhail*

### Question.

Is it permissible to cancel a phone call or switch off the phone without seeing it or much movement, especially while praying in a congregation, please provide shar'i evidences for your stance?



**Answer.**

Salaah is a means of communicating with Allah. One should therefore display the greatest amount of respect in Salaah. It is for that reason, Shari'ah has emphasised on concentration (Khushoo') in Salaah.

Allah says:

*"Surely the Believers have succeeded, those Believers who maintain concentration in their Salaah" (Mu'minoon:1)*

Before performing Salaah, one should ensure his cell phone is completely off to ensure khushoo' and avoid distraction.

Apart from internal concentration from the heart in Salaah, the physical external concentration is a requirement for the validity of the Salaah.[2] In explaining the extent of the external concentration in Salaah, the Fuqahaa have explained that a major action عمل كثير in Salaah invalidates the Salaah.

A major action is defined as such an act wherein an observer would think that one is out of Salaah.

For example: putting both hands to do something which is not a part of Salaah or repeating that act.

If a musalli uses both hands to switch off his cell phone or continues doing so, this will constitute a major action عمل كثير which will invalidate the Salaah.

Accordingly, if a person's cell phone rings in Salaah, he should switch it off with one hand and as swiftly as possible.

*M. Maaz*

**Question.**

Due to financial restrains and being over committed this year, we don't have full money for atleast one qurbaani. Is it possible, we and our kids join and

pay to do one Qurbaani?

**Answer.**

Qurbani is only Wajib (obligatory) on a person who is:

- 1) Of sound mind - mature (has reached the age of puberty),
- 2) Muqem (i.e. he is not a Shar'i traveller)
- 3) Possesses the amount of 612.36 grams of silver or wealth equivalent to that value (Value as of 1st Zul-Hijjah 1436: R 4 168.52) which is in excess of one's basic needs and debts, on any of the three days of Qurbani. It is not necessary that this amount be in one's possession for a complete year.

Therefore, only if a person meets the criteria which necessitate Qurbani will Qurbani be compulsory on him/her.

A sheep, goat or ram can only be sacrificed on behalf of one person's Wajib Qurbani. Similarly, a share in a camel, cow, bull or buffalo can only discharge the obligation of one person.

*Mufti Moosa*

**Question.**

Does paying taxes count as part of zakaat?

**Answer.**

Paying taxes does not count as part of Zakaat. Zakaat is an Islamic obligation which has specific rules and regulations in regards to its calculation and disbursement. Zakaat bears no resemblance to government taxes.

*Mufti Abdullah*

*"If a son of Adam were to own a valley full of gold, he would desire to have two. Nothing can fill his mouth except the earth (of the grave). Allah turns with mercy to him who turns to Him in repentance".*  
(Bukhari)

# Lesson From The Qur'an

***“Those who believe and have emigrated (to the home of Islam in God’s cause), and strive in God’s cause with their wealth and persons are greater in rank in God’s sight, and those are the ones who are the triumphant.”  
(At-Tawbah 9:20)***

While the Qur’ān talks about jihād (striving in God’s cause) and the sacrifice for jihād, except in a few verses, it always mentions sacrificing with “wealth” prior to sacrificing life. It seems to me that human beings tend to revere wealth more than life throughout their lives in this transient world. The hadīth, “Whoever is killed while defending his wealth is a martyr” (Bukhari) refers to this inborn tendency of humanity; in addition to that, it expresses a legal conclusion. The Turkish proverb, “Wealth is the fire of life,” expresses the same fact.

Nevertheless, there are some people who renounce the world in spirit, rather than renouncing it by way of working and earning one’s living. That is, without setting their heart on the world and adopting it as the goal of their life, they work and earn with lawful ways and spend in God’s cause and for the needy. Among the Prophet’s Companions, Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, and ‘Abdur-Rahman ibn ‘Awf were such kind of people. There are also others who possess nothing in the name of the world except their lives. Therefore, they are ready to

sacrifice it, especially if they are fully aware of the worth of life.

Truly, to believe and change sides because of belief and fulfill what is required by belief are not easy and simple things to do. Changing sides and embracing a new faith after having lived a long life in adherence to certain habits or creeds or ideologies is very difficult. When human nature is considered in addition to this, it can be understood more easily how difficult this is. It must be much more difficult for one who has accepted a new faith to be able to sacrifice wealth and life so easily. Hamza (RA) hesitated for a couple of days before he converted to Islam even though he was the uncle and foster-brother of God’s Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings. Instead of being angry, we should come to the aid with prayer and close concern when we see people who linger between belief and unbelief and hesitate about sacrificing their wealth and life in God’s cause after they have come to belief.

Indeed, if “believing” means overcoming the first obstacle of Satan,

“leaving one’s tribe, community, and relatives in order to immigrate to a different land for the sake of belief” is surmounting another obstacle which is as powerful as the other. Without being content with leaving one’s native land and relatives, “striving in order to exalt God’s Word in the new land to which one has immigrated” means destroying a third, great barrier. One who has overcome all of these obstacles or barriers has conquered his or her own carnal self and attained salvation.

## The World – The Prison for a Mu’min

*A buzug once passed by a Hindu yogi who had denounced the world. The yogi told him that the hadeeth says that the world is a prison for a Muslim and a paradise for a kaafir, but then look at my condition; I do not have proper clothing, a proper home, etc. On the other hand, look at yourself; you have so many attendants and so much of wealth, etc. Allah Ta’ala allowed the buzug to perform a karaamat and he told the yogi to place his foot over his. After some time, he asked the yogi, “What did you see?” He replied that he saw Jannat and Jahannum. So he asked the yogi, “Is Jannat better or that which I am enjoying now? He replied that what you have, seems to be like a prison compared to Jannat. He then asked the yogi, “And what about Jahannum compared to what you have?” He replied that what I have seems to be like paradise compared to Jahannum. So this is a relative thing. Hazrat Moulana Thanwi (rahmatullahi ‘alaih) explains this hadeeth in a different way. He explains that Jannat is a place where there is no anxiety, stress, and worry, etc., and Jahannum is a place where there is stress, fear, etc. Hence, a Mu’min is not relaxed in this world. He is not familiar with its surroundings. It is like when you visit someone who is not hospitable to you. You will feel uneasy and unfamiliar, and you will want to get out of there. Similarly, a Mu’min does not experience total satisfaction and comfort, even if he is in the height of his sin. He understands that he is not supposed to be around there because he knows that he does not belong there. On the other hand, a kaafir feels extremely relaxed and complacent of the world. The focus of a Mu’min is totally different compared to the focus of a kaafir. This can be compared to a prison. One is the prisoner who is behind bars and the other is the warden. Both are in the same place, but the prisoner is uneasy and tense, and the warden is at total ease. Hence, in whichever situation a Mu’min is, he will not get total satisfaction. This world was never faithful to anybody. Sometimes, in one go it takes a person by surprise and leaves him without anything. Therefore, a Mu’min does not need to worry if he does not feel relaxed and easy.*

# Lesson From Sahih al-Bukhari

*Dr. Rafiq Ahmad*

## *The Book of Salaah*

*Cont'd from previous issue*

### **Was Me'raj a physical or spiritual experience?**

There is a consensus amongst the learned scholars of Ahle Sunnah wal Jama'at that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was taken for Me'raj both physically as well as spiritually. Some research scholars like Allaama Anwar Shah Kashmiri believe that the incident of Me'raj took place twice with Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), once during a dream and the second time while awake.

### **Brief description of the incident of Me'raj**

There is a difference of opinion amongst the learned scholars about the timing of Me'raj. There are about ten different opinions about it. Some say it took place 1 year before Hijra (migration to Madinah from Makkah), some say 3 years before Hijra while some others say only 6 months before Hijra etc. Allaama Anwar Shah Kashmirs is of the opinion that it took place 1 year before Hijra i.e., 12th year of the prophethood. It so happened that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was sleeping in the house of Umm-i-Haani bint Abi Taalib after Isha

Salaah. Umm-i-Haani bint Abi Taalib was the cousin sister of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) that is why he called her house as his own. Jibra'eel (AS) came along with a group of angels and they did not enter the house through the main door but descended through the roof to give an indication that some unusual things are going to take place. They took him to Masjid-i-Haraam and there they opened his chest and washed his blessed heart with the water of Zam-Zam and then put it back at its own position. Then Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) rode the Buraaq (resembling a horse but smaller than it and a little bigger than a mule) and was taken to Baitul Maqdis (in Jerusalem) from Baitul Haraam. Here Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) descended from the Buraaq and Jibra'eel (AS) tied it to an anchor outside the gate of Baitul Maqdis. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) entered the mosque where all the prophets and the angels were waiting standing in rows (just like in Salaah). Jibra'eel asked Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) to lead the Salaah of all those present (Zarqaani, Nasrul Baari). Then a ladder (Me'raj) was brought which as per Zarqaani was

lowered down from Jannatul Firdous (Ibn S'ad) with the help of which Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and Jibra'eel (AS) ascended to the heavens where the door of the first sky was thrown open. According to this view the Buraaq was left at Baitul Maqdis and the Me'raj took place with the help of a ladder (Nasrul Baari). On the first sky, Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) met Adam (AS) and on the second he met Isa (AS) along with his cousin Yahya (AS); then he met Yousuf (AS) on the third sky, Idrees (AS) on the fourth, Haroon (AS) on the fifth, Musa (AS) on the 6th and Ibraahim (AS) on the 7th sky. After this, Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) entered Baitul Ma'moor—the Qibla of angels which is being circumambulate daily by a group of seventy thousand and replaced by new group every day until the day of Qiyaamah. This Baitul Ma'moor is on the 7th sky under the Throne (Arsh) and straight up and above Khana Ka'ba. It is of same status in the skies as is Ka'ba on the earth. From this point, Jibra'eel (AS) took Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) to Sidratul Muntahaa (a tree engulfed by divine Nur and surrounded by angels on all sides). It is the final station for those who ascend or descend. It is the abode of Jibra'eel; the Kiraaman Kaatibeen ascend only upto this point and not beyond it. At this point Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) saw Jibra'eel in his original appearance with six hundred wings. It was here that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) entered into the Jannat where he saw that the domes were built of pearls and the clay was of musk; the reference made by Allah in this verse:

*Indeed he saw him another time by Sid-*

*rat-ul-Muntahaa (the lote-tree in the upper realm), near which there is Jannat-ul-Ma'waa (the Paradise of Abode), when the lote-tree was covered by that which covered it. (53:13-16)*

This verse indicates that Jannat is near Sidratul Muntahaa and here Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) saw the Hawdh-i-Kawthar which Allah has promised to bestow him with. (Zarqaani)

The four streams which are mentioned in the Qur'an also flow from the roots of Sidratul Muntahaa.

In it there are rivers of water, never spoiling, and rivers of milk the taste of which would not go bad, and rivers of wine, delicious to the drinkers, and rivers of honey, fully purified. (47:15)

Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) saw all these four rivers at this point. After this, he was shown the hellfire where he witnessed the wrath of Allah. Then Rafrat was brought before him and Jibra'eel (AS) asked him to mount on it and move on with the angel who had brought it. Here Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) asked Jibra'eel to accompany him to which he refused by saying, "If I take a single step ahead, I will burn down; and for each of us there is a defined destination; and Allah Ta'ala has invited you to show you His signs" (Zarqaani). Here Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) left Jibra'eel behind and moved forward on Rafrat along with the angel who had brought Rafrat. After travelling some distance, he reached to a higher place where he heard the sound of the pens writing Divine commandments and destinies. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) says that he saw a shining cloud surrounded him and here the angel

who was accompanying him left behind. After certain distance, the sounds of the angels which he was listening to, ceased to reach his ears and he reached close to the throne of the nearness of Allah . The Qur'an says:

*"Then he drew near, and came down, so as he was at a distance like that of two bows (joined together), rather even nearer. Thus He (Allah) revealed to His slave what He revealed."* (53:7-9)

Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) says, "at the stage of 'Dhana' and 'Tadalla', Allah talked and decreed Salaah on me 50 times a day. When I returned after meeting Allah I was sent back by Musa (AS) with the request of reduction in the number of Salaah, which was accepted by Allah ". As such the total count of Me'raj reached to ten. Seven to each sky, eighth to Sidratul Muntaha—where Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was bestowed with the meeting and conversation with Allah . Then Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) returned to Baitul Maqdis on Buraaq and from where he returned to Makkah before morning and offered Fajr Salaah there. After this, Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) announced all this to the people of Makkah which was believed by some and refuted by others. (Nasrul Baari)

### **At the gate of the first sky**

Scientists are yet to prove the nature of sky. They do confess that the major part of the universe is yet unex-

plored. Every now and then new galaxies and constellations and explored. In our solar system itself some planets are excluded from its definition while some others are being included. So on the possession of such a little knowledge of the universe it will be too simplistic to believe that there are no skies. Not having the substantial proof of something does not prove that such a thing does not exist. Scientific facts are relative truths. It is well said. "What was truth yesterday, if not true today, was never a truth". On the other hand, the truths revealed to a truthful prophet through divine inspiration are absolute in nature.

In this Hadith it is said that Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was taken by Jibra'eel (AS) to the first sky where its gate was found closed and the angel posted as its gatekeeper asked for introduction. Jibra'eel (AS) introduced himself as well as Sayyiduna Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). The angel again asked if Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was invited? Jibra'eel (AS) replied in affirmation.

The learned scholars have given different reasons regarding the angel questioning Jibra'eel, viz., It is said that skies were specially decorated that night to show the angels the elevated status of Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam); they were informed about the ascent of Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) to the heavens but not its exact timing; the angel at the gate was not knowing when and from which gate Jibra'eel (AS) had descended.

*"The finest act of goodness is that a person should treat kindly the loved ones of his father". [Muslim].*

# Finding God

*Syed Iqbal Zaheer*

Credit to the shallow Western way of life, builders of the body and extinguishers of the soul, doubts about God, His existence, His functions, mankind's need of Him, etc. are growing: "Does He exist? What is He doing up there? Shouldn't He answer when we call Him? If He is there, and is of qualities attributed to Him, why is there any suffering on the earth? What is His role in situations of human crisis?" Such are the doubts and such are the taunts. He is under attack. The Field Commanders are Scientists, half-baked intellectuals, and influential men and women of motley colors: especially those of the West. At the moment, affluence is of the highest order in the West, and so is arrogance:

*"Nay. But Man transgresses all bounds, that he sees himself self-sufficient." (Qur'an, 96:6-7)*

The issue is large and questions to be answered many. We propose to deal with only one aspect of it: How to discover God? What kind of guidance does Islam offer?

In truth, finding God should not be as daunting a task as disoriented philosophers, half interested seekers, and casual three-minute musers make it appear. The Creator and Sustainer of all that exists is a big reality. It is not a mi-

nor issue that can be waved away as some imbecile thought which has a funny way of recurrently popping up at the surface of the mind. It is a reality that persistently reminds us of its presence, for, God persists. One of His names is Al-Qaa'im. A major problem is that He is hidden from us. But, is He the only reality hidden from us?

A close parallel is in an electronic doll that we make. It has the ability to talk, and, if fitted with a chip, can talk intelligently too. Yet, although its creators, we are hidden from it. It cannot locate us or communicate with us, far from understanding us. Its limit is set by the electronic chip. So we humans are – in relation to our Creator. Are we any better than electronic dolls when set against Him in similitude?

If we consider ourselves as mere matter, or, at best, living matter, in the classification of animals, then, that be it. (The humanity can wait the emergence of the beast at the shores of the Middle-east). But, if we are higher beings, possessed with mysteries called mind, heart, and a soul from God, then the case is beyond laboratory equipments and scientific jargons. From this wide vantage we should be able to meet with greater success in efforts to understand our Creator. We cannot of course talk to Him. That is

because He has decided against talking to anyone except a chosen few. Those few came and went. The last one said, "There might be a few pretenders after me. But remember, I am the Last One." (Have you heard of any after him?) So, there can be no communication at the physical level. But the door to spiritual communication is not shut. Admittedly though, it is heavy.

Islam has never asked us to find God in the material sense of finding or perceiving Him, or get to, sort of, feeling Him. But rather, has shown us a more practical and less ambiguous way: a way which has the double purposes of improving the world while ridding us of the pollutants. We are asked to work our way to Him through two channels: one created, the other uncreated. The created world has the animate, (topped by the humans), and the inanimate (all the rest that is there). The uncreated is the Revelation. In other words, we are to know Him by His Attributes; and His Attributes abound in His creations as they abound in His Revelation: the Qur'an. (The Gospels have, in the main, attributes of Jesus Christ, Torah has the attributes of the Jewish race, the Qur'an has the Attributes of God – if you wish to know the difference).

The process of knowing God "the Imperceptible" is in a way similar to knowing everything else that is imperceptible. E.g. sound waves. They are imperceptible. They cannot be located, and stored. You cannot fill a box with sound waves and say, "Here is 10 kg. of it." You cannot converse with them either. If you said, "Hullo! Are you there?" you will not hear back, "I am right here." We know these imperceptibles – countless number of them – by their attributes. In case of

sound waves: they are of such and such a pitch, measurable in so many decibels, which travel at such and such speed, etc. We experience them, can even catch them, but will never see them. Their creator has decided against us seeing them. That's the end to it. He creates, and He decides. The chip in us has its limitations.

Allah too is not perceptible. He cannot be communicated with. He does not come and reside in a heart to say from within, "Lo! Here I am, in your own heart." He has made His existence known to our hearts and has informed us that we can understand Him and get closer to Him by following methods sanctioned by Him.

If you do not believe in a reality called "sound waves," you are not going to know it. It starts with a hypothesis. When you hear a sound you wonder: How did it get through to me? There must be a means and a medium. You investigate, conduct experiments, work at the project for decades, until you learn that it is waves which emanate from the point of origin. Then you learn to catch them and find that there are varieties of them, that they have a fixed speed, but pitches that vary; some are ultrasonic, and so on. In this fashion you arrive at the attributes, and you discover the unknown with the help of the known. You still do not know the nature of the sound waves, their reality, their essence. You cannot hold them in your palm and stare at them. They do not come in red, blue or pink colors. They have been placed among the invisible. You know these invisibles through their attributes. The creator of these invisibles decided that you will not see them. But, it does not mean you shall never know what a



sound wave is.

The method is more or less similar when the search objective is God, except that sound waves, electrical energy, magnetic power, and other invisibles do not assist you as you try to discover them. But Allah does. He interacts with you as you work with increased vigorousness, plodding up on the path of submission, charity, study and application. He gets closer and closer to you, as you strive, as you struggle, as you sacrifice your hours, your energies and your wealth, until, "I become the hand with which he holds, the feet with which he walks." Your high degree of submission allows Him (since He does not force Himself upon the self-sufficient) to move your hands and feet, in complete harmony with His will. You do not become Him, nor He you. But rather, you become His instrument with which He expresses His will. You become a sign of God. Hence a Prophetic statement, "A true believer is one who, when you look at him, reminds you of God."

### Through the Attributes

After belief and submission to Him, the directives given by Allah have something to do with His Qualities. You acquire them and live them. You take a Quality of His, say generosity. In the beginning it is tough. But you practice, and little by little, you learn how to do it; how to make it a part of your personality for it to emanate from you without any effort from you, almost automatically? Then you take on another Quality: patience. And then others: knowledge, service to the poor, love of the good, and so on. With practice you learn and improve the skill. You expand, improve, and gain proficiency. You can take several Attrib-

utes of His in parallel. Just as the DNA strand duplicates itself at several places, while issuing commands for manufacture of proteins, all at the same time. Similarly, you take several qualities for practice, and go on, maybe for decades, until your acts are like His acts. You do His will. "Allah has ninety-nine names," says a Prophetic tradition, "one less than a hundred. Whoever took good care of them entered Paradise."

### The Created World

Another way to find Him is to come out of our habit of taking things granted: just as many people take sound transmission for granted, and never inquire about what it really is. As we look at the created world, we need to ask ourselves not only how, which scientists explore and explain, but also why, which no scientist can answer, unless he can give up relating himself to animals. He has to start as human being, from a state of humility, admitting his limits, his dependence (even for moving his finger) and acknowledging other facts of existence. If he thinks he is too clever – the electronic doll – and can work out everything through the chip he is endowed with, he will end up without moorings, without directions and without orientation.

Whether it is the emergence of a child, birth of a plant, rising of the sun, circling of the planets, twinkling of the stars, or images from the depth of the universe, they are all loaded with mystery: mysteries which each of us can unravel for himself by connecting them with the bigger reality. There has to be someone behind these. And that someone has to be One. And He has to be omniscient and omnipotent. And He has to be

endowed with immense wisdom and mercy. There is no escape from these conclusions. One can take a leaf, cut it through and look at it with a microscope. A world opens up: there is protoplasm, photosynthesis, the Golgi Complex, the tiny power houses called Mitochondria, and so on. There are so many thousands of the organelles within a single cell; each deepening the mystery. Now you can spend a few years studying it, provided, yes, provided you learn a few things more: chemistry, physics, electronics. As you advance in your learning of the leaf, you discover that you have to learn a few more of the sciences, including, surprisingly, mathematics. The more you learn other sciences, the more you apply to the leaf, the more you learn amazing things. At one point you exclaim, "Probably, the mounting mysteries will never be unraveled." But the study does reveal meaning. It connects the leaf to the tree, the tree to the outside world, and to the life-cycle. Remove the leaf, and there will be no life. Remove Mitochondria, and there will be no leaf. Remove electronics, and there will be no Mitochondria. It goes on. It is a chain and a cycle where each atom dances its role. You conclude that the whole thing couldn't be out of accident: there is design, calculation, chemical reactions, renewal, death. There has to be someone behind it.

In its unparalleled beauty and brevity the Qur'an said (50: 6-11):

*"Have they not considered the heaven above them how We have built it and adorned it, and it has no cracks? And the earth – We stretched it forth, and cast thereon firm mountains, and produced therein every kind of joyous growth in pairs: an insight and a reminder to every penitent slave. And We sent down out of*

*heaven water: blessed; and We produce therewith gardens and grain for harvest; and tall palm-trees, with spathes one over another; provision for the slaves; and We revive therewith dead land: thus (will be) the issuing forth (from the graves)."*

## Revelation

Qur'anic passages are of similar nature. You cut through one of the passages, and a world of meaning opens up: intriguing words, insinuations, nuances, relationships, laws and principles. Now you can spend a few years studying it, provided, yes, provided you learn a few other disciplines: language, Prophetic traditions, logic. As you advance in your learning of the passage, you discover that you need to know more of other sciences, including, surprisingly, maybe, geology, or botany. The more you learn other sciences, the more you apply to the passage, the more you learn amazing things. You learn that the passage is related in many ways to the rest of the text, that the text is related to human existence, and that to spiritual life. At one point you exclaim, "Probably, the mounting mysteries will never be unraveled." You also know that the passage could not be from a human. Just like the leaf. There is design, poetry, meaning, and soul elevating experience, provided, yes, as against the study of the leaf, there is application. What you learn, you apply. You do that and qualify for higher learning. Failing application, you are discarded.

## Time and Places

One should also know when he or she can be closest to God. Says a

*Cont'd on page 45*

# Un/Happy Ever After

There is no denying the fact that our community faces a crisis with the alarming rate of divorces. Marriages are ended for trivial reasons with Talaqs issued in outbursts of anger. The fact that Talaq is the most hated of permitted acts in the sight of Allah ought to give us pause. The fact that the enormity of Talaq is such that its utterance causes the Arsh of Allah to shake ought to make us seriously consider. Instead we find a blatant disregard for the seriousness of this matter and Talaqs fly around as if it is the order of the day.

There are many issues contributing to the breakdown of our marriages. One of the most worrying issues is the incorrect mental conditioning of the spouses in regards to the reality of marriage. This conditioning develops through television, magazines and the various forms of media that assail us every day. The sad part is that we invite the moral and social destruction of our children by embracing these media wholeheartedly turning a blind eye to its disastrous consequences.

From this mental conditioning, the demand for extravagant wedding emerges. The "dream wedding day" image that is now ingrained in the mind after watching hundreds of weddings on the television must be achieved at any cost. At times, the poor groom who is Hafizul Quran is forced to endure the agony of being paraded in the women's section

because of his bride's insistence on the same. The catchphrase: "You're only a bride once!" rings in the bride's mind. Little realising that with today's divorce rate, the chances of being a bride again are far from slim.

Added to the challenge of unshackling ourselves from this mental conditioning is the added pressure that society exerts on our lives. The need to live up to societal expectations and to show that we are also someone, are hurdles that not many of us are willing to surmount. At times, the bride being blessed with Islamic understanding, wishes for a simple wedding only to be overruled by parents who are more concerned about what society thinks than their own daughter's happiness.

In stark contrast to this thinking, is the Hadith of Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam, "The marriage with the greatest blessings is the one with easiest expenditure." (Ahmad) Note the actual words of the Hadith, "easiest expenditure". This does not denote quantity but rather the avoidance of difficulty. A person may spend on their wedding but not at the expense of the wedding becoming a financial burden. Rather, the wedding must fit comfortably within each person's financial budget. Even for those with the financial ability to comfortably afford lavish weddings, moderation is required. The Hadith teaches us, "Being moderate in spending is half of

living.”(Shuabul Imaan) Further, the Quran warns us, "Do not be extravagant, for Allah loves not those who are extravagant." (Surah 7, Verse 31)

A recent paper published by the Emory University's Department of Economics titled 'A Diamond is Forever' and Other Fairy Tales, is one of the first studies to statistically evaluate the wedding industry's marketing strategy that an expensive wedding leads to a longer-lasting (successful) marriage. An excerpt from this paper provides interesting reading on how clever marketing has successfully fleeced people of billions in unnecessary expense: In 2014, wedding industry revenues are projected to exceed \$50 billion in the United States. According to a national survey conducted annually by the top wedding website, [TheKnot.com](http://TheKnot.com), the average wedding cost was \$29,858 in 2013.

The wedding industry has grown substantially throughout the twentieth century in part due to the rise of consumerism and industry efforts to commodify love and romance. One example of this was the emergence of bridal magazines, especially *Bride's*, which played an important role in developing a platform for many service providers to reach consumers and in promoting the necessity of a lavish wedding for a fairy tale marriage.

In 1959, *Bride's* recommended that couples set aside 2 months to prepare for their wedding and published a checklist with 22 tasks for them to complete. By the 1990s, the magazine recommended 12 months of wedding preparation and published a checklist with 44 tasks to complete.

Another example of industry efforts to commodify love and romance is

that of marketing campaigns for diamond engagement rings. Several of the most well-known campaigns were by De Beers, the global diamond company. In the late 1930s, De Beers created the slogan "a diamond is forever," which was rated the number one slogan of the century by Advertising Age (1999). The campaign aimed to link the purchase of a diamond engagement ring to the hope of a long-lasting marriage. In the 1980s, De Beers introduced another influential campaign, which sought to increase the standard for how much should be spent on an engagement ring with slogans such as "Isn't two months' salary a small price to pay for something that lasts forever?" These marketing efforts were effective. Prior to World War 2, in Western countries, only 10% of engagement rings contained a diamond. By the end of the century, about 80% did. In 2012, total expenditures on diamond rings were roughly \$7 billion in the United States."

Alarming, the research also found that as the expenditure of the wedding increased, so too did the likelihood of the marriage to end in divorce.

We must endeavour at all costs to ensure the success of our marriages. No one gets married intending to get divorced but at times we make wrong decisions that unwittingly put our marriages at risk. The wedding day is the foundation of the marriage. With a strong foundation even the tallest of buildings will stand while even a hut will collapse on a shaky foundation.

Let our weddings be built on the foundations of Imaan, Taqwa and the Sunnah of Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam and then see the reality of 'Happily Ever After'.

# Are My Intentions Alright?

*Habib & Saad Quadri*

If you look through many books of hadith, the first hadith the compiler often uses is the hadith on intention:

*"Verily, actions are (rewarded) by intentions."*

As a side note, when a compiler of hadith begins to write his book, the compiler is not writing a new book. Rather, he is compiling a book of ahadith he has selected from the treasury of the statements of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). So when the author places a hadith in the beginning of the compilation, it is done intentionally to deliver a specific message and lesson to both the author and the reader. Many authors place this specific hadith, out of the many ahadith that exist, at the beginning of their compilations, to show the importance of this hadith and the message it relays - the basis of everything we do must have the proper intention.

The Prophet reminded us that all actions are by intentions. Some scholars have analyzed this hadith and have come to the conclusion that without the correct intention an action cannot even exist! But putting this technical discussion aside, the main point to note is that intentions are essential to our daily lives. Sometimes we do an action, and although that action may seem pure, our intentions end up spoiling it. At the

same time, we may be involved in an action that may seem mundane, but with the proper intention that action becomes an act of worship.

In essence, when we look at an act of worship, that act is not too different from any other action in our lives. For example, when Sa'ad used to cut weight (a term wrestlers use to indicate losing large amounts of weight) before a meet, he would often not eat the preceding day. The act of not eating for a day does not carry any reward on its own. But, if Sa'ad were to make an intention to fast that particular day, then the entire day of not eating becomes worship. Another example of intentions, and one that we may be able to relate to more, is that of going to school.

As students, we spend a large amount of our day in the classroom or studying for classes. We often spend over ten hours of our day related to school work. As a result, we complain about being unable to focus more on our religious growth. What if we could change all those hours spent studying and in class to worship? Obviously we would all be interested, and the solution is simple. If when we wake up, we tell ourselves in our heart we are going to school in order to please Allah through gaining knowledge to benefit the *din* (religion) -

be it through teaching that knowledge, getting a job through that knowledge and serving the din, earning money with that job and knowledge to spend on the din (which includes providing a *halal* (lawful) income for the family) - then those hours are no longer just "for school," but are now for the sake of pleasing Allah. Hence these actions become worship. In the same manner, we can also spoil our intentions.

When we turn our actions away from being solely for the sake of Allah, we spoil our intentions. The most common example of this is our prayer. There is a famous story of a young man who was praying in the *masjid* (mosque) when two individuals walked in. Upon seeing this young man praying with *khushu'* (intense focus and concentration), they began to comment about how pious this man must be, complimenting him and his prayer. The young man, realizing this, prolonged his prayer and began to perfect it even more, which drew even more compliments. Upon completing his prayer, the young man turned to the men and told them that he was also fasting. The prayer and the fast were no longer being performed with the proper intention, to please Allah, but were now being done to receive praise from the men. This story, though humorous, highlights an important example of how easily an intention can go awry and no longer remain solely for pleasing Allah. On the flip side, Allah is so merciful that He is quick to forgive and reward a changed intention.

As mentioned by Shaykh Yassin Roushdy in his book, *The Heart, the Tongue, Their Sicknesses and Cures*:

There are four stages that a person goes through before committing a sin. The first

stage is when the idea crosses your mind - and most of the time Shaytan insinuates this idea. You are not held accountable for this stage. In the second stage you feel the desire to do the action. For example, a person is fasting and while he is walking in the street he smells a certain kind of food that he loves and automatically feels the pangs of hunger and the desire to eat. This is a feeling which you cannot control and hence you are not punished for it.

During the third stage you become inclined to commit the sin. In the fourth stage you intend to commit the sin - you have made up your mind. At this stage you are judged by Allah as the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) explained:

*"Actions are only judged according to intentions."*

It is always good to check our hearts when we are doing anything. At many times we know in our hearts when we are doing something wrong. When reading about the prophets (AS) and the great Muslims of the past it is amazing to note how much time they took in reflection, soul-searching in order to pinpoint even the most miniscule of negative actions and thoughts - they were always self-improving and maintaining their piety in the process.

This is very important, especially when we are young and building a foundation for how we practice the din. Iblis does not like this, so if he knows we are following the commandment of Allah, he will try to persuade us to change our intentions. For example, we might go to the masjid for prayer and notice people there saying, "*masha'Allah* (literally, what Allah wills), you have come to the masjid for prayer, if only other kids would be like you." After such comments, if we begin coming to the masjid hoping that

people will compliment us again, we have cheated ourselves of the opportunity to be rewarded by Allah for this action.

This example should inspire us to check if our intentions are pure. If, when we do something such as help out at the masjid or give a talk, we find ourselves waiting for someone to say something to us or waiting around for someone to recognize us doing that good action, then we know our intention is impure. If, even before we do a good act, we are already thinking about what people would say or which people will see us then, again, our intention needs to be put into check. Shaytan will always try to confuse us. The best thing for us to do before conducting a good action is to take a few seconds and supplicate to Allah asking for purity of intention so that our good actions will be accepted and our mistakes can be forgiven.

In a *hadith qudsi* (a hadith in which the Prophet relates, in his own words, a statement of Allah the Prophet told a story about what will happen to three individuals - a scholar, a wealthy man, and a martyr - on the Day of Judgment. The scholar will be called forth for questioning and will be reminded of the favors that were bestowed upon him. He will be asked what he did with those favors. The scholar will respond by saying he gained knowledge in order to propagate the din and teach people for the sake of Allah Allah will tell him that he has lied and that his intention was for people to call him a knowledgeable man, and he was called a knowledgeable man. Thus, he received the reward of his intention in this world and will be thrown into the hellfire.

The second individual to be called

forward will be a man of wealth. He will be reminded of the various blessings that were bestowed upon him and will then be asked what he did with his wealth. The man will respond by saying he donated his money for the sake of Allah. Allah will tell this man that he has lied and that his intention was for people to call him a generous man, and he was called a generous man. Thus, he received the reward of his intention in this world and will be thrown into the hellfire.

The final individual who will be called forward will be a martyr. He will be reminded of the various blessings that were bestowed upon him and will be asked what he did with these blessings. The man will respond by saying he fought in the battlefield for the sake of Allah and made the ultimate sacrifice, giving his life up for the din. Allah will tell this man that he has lied and that his intention was for people to call him a brave man, and after his death he was called a brave man. Thus, he received the reward of his intention in this world and will be thrown into the hellfire.

This hadith highlights the importance of keeping our intentions purely for the sake of Allah. Here we had three individuals who did great actions, but their intentions were impure. As a result, they may have done what seemed to be extremely righteous deeds, but they did not achieve the ultimate goal - the pleasure of Allah We should remember this story and try to keep ourselves from falling into the same fate.

*Before any action, especially worship, make your intentions clear to yourself and purify them.*

*After completing any action, ask Allah to accept your actions.*

*Cont'd on page 38*

# Patience

*Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jeelani (ra)*

Endure with patience the harm of the creatures and neighbors, for there is much good in patience. All of you are commanded to show patience and are responsible for yourselves and your flock. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has said: "Each one of you is a shepherd and responsible for his flock." Be patient with destiny until suffering transforms into bliss, patience is the foundation of good. The angels were tested with afflictions and they endured them with patience, and the prophets were tested with afflictions and they endured them with patience. You are following in the footsteps of the people of Allah, so emulate their deeds and endure the afflictions with patience.

When the heart has become sound, it will not care anymore for one who disagrees with it and one who agrees with it, one who praises it and one who dispraises it, one who gives it and one who deprives it, one who draws it near and one who keeps it at a distance, one who accepts it and one who rejects it. The sound heart becomes filled with belief in the oneness of God, trust, certitude, faith, and nearness to Allah (mighty and glorified is He). It sees all creatures in light of their powerlessness, humiliation; and poverty, but it does

not show arrogance even to the young child. It becomes like a lion at the time of meeting the disbelievers, hypocrites, and disobedient ones — because of its zeal for Allah (high is He); and it shows humility and homage toward the righteous, the pious, those who practice pious restraint. Allah has described the people who have these attributes saying: "Hard against the disbelievers, merciful among themselves" (from 48.29). when the servant becomes like this, he becomes beyond the comprehension of the creatures, outside their domain of control, victorious, and a manifestation of those described in the following words of Allah (mighty and glorified is He):

*"And He creates what you do not know" (from 16.8).*

All of this is the fruit of the belief in the oneness of God, sincerity, and patience.

When our Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) endured what came his way with patience, he was raised up to the seventh heaven, where he saw his Lord (mighty and glorified is He) and drew near to Him. This edifice was erected for him after he firmly laid the foundations of patience. All good things are obtainable by patience, which is why Allah (mighty and glorified is



He) mentioned it and stressed its importance as the best Speaker said: “o you who believe, be patient, urge each other to be patient, remain steadfast, and be pious to Allah so that you may succeed!” (3.200). O Allah, make us among those who are patient, perfectly following them in word and work, in our private and public lives, in appearance and in essence, in all of our states, and “give us good in this world and good in the hereafter and protect us from the torment of the Fire.”

Endure with patience the rulings of the Law so that Knowledge will be unveiled to you. The True One (mighty and glorified is He) has commanded you to be patient, so be patient. He ordered His Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) in particular and you in general to be patient. The command is for him and for you also. He (high is He) has said: *“Then be patient [O Muhammad!] as the messengers of determination were also patient”* (from 46.35).

[He meant:] “Be patient with Me, O Muhammad, as they were patient with Me and endured My decrees and My destiny about their families, property, and children, as well as the harm that the creatures caused them.” They confronted all that with endurance, but how little endurance you have! I do not see among you anyone who would bear a word from his mate or excuse him. Learn from the Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) his good manners and deeds in the outset so that comfort will come to you in the end-

Woe to you! Remember the hunger of the starving, the nakedness of the naked, the illness of the

ill, and the imprisonment of the prisoners and then you will find that your affliction has become easier to bear. Remember the terrifying ordeal of the dead on the Day of Resurrection. Remember the foreknowledge of Allah (mighty and glorified is He) about you, His caring for you, and His foreordination for you and then you will feel a sense of shame in His presence. If you find yourself in anguish, remember your sins, repent from them and say to your lower self: “It is because of your sins the True One (mighty and glorified is He) has distressed you.” If you repent from your sins and be pious to the True One (mighty and glorified is He), He will provide for you an outlet from every grief and an exit from every distress. Allah (mighty and glorified is He) has said:

*“And whoever is pious to Allah He will appoint for him a way out, and He will provide for him from whence he did not expect. And whoever puts his trust in Allah, He will suffice him. Allah will attain His purpose”* (from 65.2-3).

The sensible person is one who is truthful and is distinguishable from the liars by his truthfulness. Adhere to truthfulness instead of telling lies, steadfastness instead of running away, advancing instead of backsliding, patience instead of impatience, thankfulness instead of ingratitude, satisfaction instead of dissatisfaction, compliance instead of disputation, and certitude instead of suspicion. If you comply and do not dispute, thank and do not show ungratefulness, be satisfied and do not be discontent, and be calm and do not have doubts then:

*"Is Allah not sufficient for His servant?" (from 336)*

O you who are poor, endure your poverty with patience and then affluence will come to you in this world and the hereafter. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is reported to have said: "The poor who endure their poverty with patience are the companions of Allah (mighty and glorified is He) on the Day resurrection." Those who bear their poverty with patience are the companions of Allah, today [in this world] by their hearts and tomorrow [on the Day of Resurrection by their bodies. As for those who are in need of Allah (mighty and glorified is He) only, who accompany Him with patience, and who are indifferent to anything other than Him, their hearts are reassured, attracted [to Him], and do not accept anyone other than Him. The case is similar to what Allah (mighty and glorified is He) said about Moses (AS):

*"And We had caused him to refuse the wet-nurses" (from 28.12).*

There is no believer who will not, at the moment of death, have the veil removed from his eyes so that he can see what is his in Paradise. The houris and young servants will wave to him and fragrances from Paradise will reach him, so death and its sturpor taste good to him. The True One (mighty and glorified is He) will do to him as He did to Pharaoh's wife Asya (AS). Pharaoh subjected her to all kinds of torture before thrusting iron spikes into her hands and feet. The veil was then removed from her eyes and the doors of heaven were opened wide for her so she saw Paradise and

its contents. She saw the angels building a house in Paradise, so she said:

*"My Lord, build for me a house in Paradise in Your presence!" (from 66:11)* She was told: "This is yours," so she laughed. Pharaoh said: "Have I not-told you that she is crazy? Do not you see how she laughs in the midst of torture?" The same happens to the believers who see at the moment of death what they have with Allah (mighty and glorified is He). Some of them come to know this before death; they are those who are brought near, singled out, and wanted.

Woe to you! How can you tell others to endure with patience when you are impatient? How can you tell him to give thanks in return for the favors when you have given up thankfulness? How can you tell him to be satisfied with the divine decree when you are dissatisfied? How can you tell him to renounce this world when you are full of desires about it? How can you tell him to yearn for the hereafter when you have renounced it? How can you tell him to trust Allah (mighty and glorified is He) when you have relied on other than Him? You are hated by the True One (mighty and glorified is He), the angels, and the hearts of the truthful and the righteous of His servants. You must have heard this poetry by one of them:

*Do not advise people to avoid a certain action only for you to commit it.*

*This would be a great shame on you.*

You are filled with concerns with the creatures and filled with hypocrisy so no doubt you weigh lighter than the wing of a mosquito in the sight of Al-

lah. You are with the hypocrites in the lowest level of the Fire.

The truthful person offers thanks for the favors he receives, endures with patience the punishments, carries out the commandments, and keeps away from the prohibitions. This is how the hearts are developed. Offering thanks for receiving favors increases them, and enduring with patience the punishments removes and mitigates them. Endure with patience the death of your children and other family members, the loss of property, being dishonored, the failure of worldly interests, and the harm caused by the creatures and then you will receive a great deal of good. When you thank for being in easy circumstances and show patience in hard times, the wing of your faith will become fully fledged and strengthen and your heart and innermost being will fly to the door of your Lord (mighty and glorified is He).

How can you lay claim to faith when you have no patience? Have you not heard this saying of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam): "Patience to faith is like the head to the body"? If you do not have patience, then your faith is without a head, so its body is worthless. If you know the One who sends the affliction, you will bear His affliction. If you know this world, you will not fall into disobedience by seeking it. O Allah, guide everyone who has gone astray, forgive every disobedient person, give patience to every afflicted person, and guide to thankfulness everyone who is free of afflictions. Amen.

Be pious and be patient. The head of religion is patience and its body is action. This is why the Prophet (Allah's prayer and peace be on him) has said: "Patience to faith is like the head to the body." No action can be completed without having patience with the decree of Allah (mighty and glorified is He). Be patient, be steadfast, and practice pious restraint. Practice pious restraint both in your public and private lives, renounce the allotted worldly shares of others, and turn away from yours.

O young man, when your standing at the door of the True One (mighty and glorified is He) has lasted long enough, your greed and desires will diminish and your politeness will increase. Patience removes the lustful desires. Patience eradicates the person's habits, eliminates his reliance on means, and overthrows the false gods. You are under an illusion. You are ignorant of Allah (mighty and glorified is He), His messengers, His saints, and the elite of His creatures (Allah's prayer and peace be on them). You lay claim to renunciation, yet you long for this world! Your renunciation has no foundations. How can you long for this world and to the creatures but do not yearn for your Lord (mighty and glorified is He)? Think well [of me] and cultivate good behavior so that I may guide you to the door of your Lord (mighty and glorified is He), show you the path to it, strip you of your clothes of arrogance, and vest you with clothing of humility.

# The Pleasures of Paradise

*M. Abdus-Salam*

The reality of Paradise is something which people will never be able to understand until they actually enter it, but God has shown us glimpses of it in the Quran. He has described it as a place essentially different to the life of this world, both in the very nature and purpose of life, as well as the types of delights which people will enjoy therein. The Quran tells people about Paradise, which God offers to them, describes its great blessings, and proclaims its beauties to everyone. It informs people that Paradise is one of two ways of life prepared for them in the afterworld, and that every good thing will be theirs in Paradise to a degree that surpasses our present ability to imagine. It also shows that Paradise is a place where all blessings have been created perfectly and where people will be offered everything their souls and hearts will desire, and that people will be far removed from want and need, anxiety or sadness, sorrow and regret. Every kind of beauty and blessing exists in Paradise and will be revealed with a perfection never seen or known before. God has prepared such blessings there as a gift, and these will be offered only to people with whom He is pleased.

But what is the nature of these delights in Paradise, and how will it be different from the delights of this world? We will try to highlight a few of these

differences.

Pure delight without pain and suffering

While people in this world experience some delight, they also face much toil and suffering. If one was to scrutinize the life which they live, they will find that the amount of hardship they face is much more than the ease and comfort. As for the life of the Hereafter, there will be no hardship nor suffering in it, and people will live therein in pure joy and delight. All the causes of sorrow, pain and suffering which people experience in this life will be absent in the Hereafter. Let's take a look at some of these causes.

## **Wealth**

When one thinks of success in this life, they usually conjure the image of big houses, fine jewelry and clothing, and expensive cars; financial stability is seen to be the key to a happy life. To most people, success is inseparably related to wealth, even though this is the furthest from the truth. How many times have we seen the wealthiest of people living such miserable lives, that it sometimes even leads them to commit suicide! Wealth is something which humans in their very nature desire at any cost, and this desire has been created for a great and wise purpose. When this desire is not satiated, it causes some extent of

grief in a person. For this reason, God has promised the inhabitants of Paradise that they will have all that they imagined as far as wealth and belongings are concerned, both for those who were extremely poor, experiencing even hunger and thirst, to those well-to-do but who desired even more. God gives us a glimpse of this when he says:

“... there will be there all that the souls could desire, all that the eyes could delight in ...” (Quran 43:71)

“Eat and drink at ease for that which you have sent forth (good deeds) in days past!” (Quran 69:24)

“... They will be adorned therein with bracelets of gold, and they will wear green garments of fine silk and heavy brocade. They will recline therein on raised thrones. How good [is] the recompense! How beautiful a couch [is there] to recline on!” (Quran 18:31)

### Disease and Death

Another cause of pain and suffering in this life is the death of a loved one or disease, which are both non-existent in Paradise. None will feel any sickness or pain in Paradise. The Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said about the people of Paradise:

“They will never fall ill, blow their noses or spit.” (Saheeh Al-Bukhari)

None will die in Paradise. All shall live eternally enjoying the pleasures therein. The Prophet Muhammad said that a caller will call out in Paradise when people enter it:

“Indeed may you be healthy and never be sick again, may you live and never die again, may you be young and never grow feeble again, may you enjoy, and never feel sorrow and regret again.” (Saheeh

Muslim)

### Social Relationships

As for the remorse felt due to a rift in personal relationships, people will never hear any evil or hurting comments or speech in Paradise. They will only hear good words and words of peace. God says:

“They will not hear therein ill speech or commission of sin. But only the saying of: Peace! Peace!” (Quran 56:25-26)

There will be no enmity between people nor ill-feelings:

“And We shall remove from their breasts any (mutual) hatred or sense of injury (which they had, if at all, in the life of this world)...” (Quran 7:43)

The Prophet said:

“There will be no hatred or resentment among them, their hearts will be as one, and they will glorify God, morning and evening.” (Saheeh Al-Bukhari)

People will have the best of companions in the Hereafter, who were also the best people in the world:

“And whoever obeys God and the Messenger – those will be with the ones upon whom God has bestowed favor – of the prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth, the martyrs and the righteous. And excellent are those as companions!” (Quran 4:69)

The hearts of the people of Paradise will be pure, their speech will be good, their deeds righteous. There will be no hurtful, upsetting, offensive or provocative talk there, for Paradise is free of all worthless words and deeds. If we were to discuss all the causes for anguish in this life, we would surely find its absence or opposite to be true in Paradise.

*To be Cont'd*

# Tip of the Iceberg

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*Max Fisher*

The arrest of 14-year-old Ahmed Mohamed, who was treated as a threat by his own school and police for bringing in an electronic clock he'd made as an engineering project, was not an isolated event. This was completely in line with a problem that has been growing over the past year: Islamophobia, which is the fear-based hatred of Muslims, is out of control in American society.

To understand why a Texas school would arrest a 14-year-old student for bringing in a homemade clock, it helps to understand what came before: the TV news hosts who declare Muslims "unusually barbaric," the politicians who gin up fear of Islam, the blockbuster film that depicts even Muslim children as dangerous threats, and the wave of hatred against Muslims that has culminated several times in violence so severe that what happened to Mohamed, while terrible, appears unsurprising and almost normal within the context of ever-worsening American Islamophobia.

Many Americans might be totally unaware this is happening, even though they are surrounded by Islamophobia: on TV, at airport security, in our pop culture and our politics, and inevitably in our schools. Perhaps, then, Mohamed's arrest will be a wake-up call.

American Islamophobia has grown

so severe that, even looking just at the neighborhoods immediately surrounding Mohamed's Dallas suburb, one can see, in broad daylight, the climate of hostility and fear America's 2.6 million Muslims have been made to live in.

The trouble began in January, when American Muslim families did what is increasingly expected of them, what American media and politicians demand of Muslims every time there is a terrorist attack: They gathered to formally condemn violent extremism and to cultivate positive ties with their local communities. They did this by organizing an event in the suburb of Garland called "Stand With the Prophet Against Terror and Hate," to raise money for a center dedicated to promoting tolerance.

In response, thousands of protesters mobbed the event, waving anti-Muslim signs and American flags for hours, forcing local Muslim families who attended to endure a gauntlet of hate. "We don't want them here," a woman at the protests told a local TV reporter. One man explained, "We're here to stand up for the American way of life from a faction of people who are trying to destroy us." They were not grateful that local Muslim-Americans had taken it upon themselves to combat extremism, but rather outraged that Muslims-Americans would dare to

gather publicly at all.

A few weeks later, in early March, an Iraqi man who had just fled the Middle East to join his wife in Dallas stood outside their apartment photographing the first snow he'd ever seen when two men walked up and shot him to death. Police later ruled out the possibility that it had been a hate crime, but the murder drove home the fear among many Muslim-American families that they were unsafe.

Then, in May, a woman named Pamela Geller who is known for anti-Muslim hate speech organized an event with far-right political figures called the "Muhammad Art Exhibit and Contest," also in Garland, to encourage Americans to draw deliberately offensive cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed in a show of hostility toward Muslims. The event's organizers explicitly positioned it as "sounding the alarm about Muslim encroachment into Europe and America, and its potential impact on American culture," according to Breitbart.

When two gunmen tried to attack Geller's event (they were killed by police before they could harm anyone), some in the media compared it to the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, elevating Geller's hate speech into free speech advocacy.

And then there's the arrest, this Monday, of Ahmed Mohamed, a ninth-grader in the Irving Independent School District, also a suburb of Dallas. Mohamed, a student with a love of science, had assembled a simple electronic clock as a sort of engineering project. He brought it into school to show it off to his engineering teacher, who was impressed.

But when another teacher discovered the clock, school officials asked police to arrest Mohamed, handcuffing and hu-

miliating him in front of his fellow students. When he was first brought before police, an office remarked, "Yup. That's who I thought it was." Even after it became clear that the clock was just a clock, police grilled the boy, accusing him of trying to build a bomb, and the school suspended him for three days. On Tuesday, the school sent out a letter to parents that blamed Mohamed for the incident, suggested he had broken the student code of conduct (against clocks?), and urged families to look out for any other "suspicious behavior."

But this is not a story about Dallas. Rather, it is a story about widespread American problems that are playing out across the country, that occur regularly and repeatedly, and that have created the climate that made this incident and many others possible.

This Islamophobia did not come from nowhere; the story of America's resurgent Islamophobia is in many ways a media story. Over the past year, much of the media has treated the rise of ISIS in the Middle East as an indictment of Islam itself, a sign that Muslims are somehow less human and more violent.

This media coverage plays into precisely the narrative that groups such as ISIS wish to set, in which Islam and its 1.6 billion worldwide adherents are conflated with a tiny minority of extremists — even though it is Muslims who are by far the most likely to be killed by extremist groups, and who are the most likely to take up arms against them. But such coverage also promotes openly bigoted ideas about Islam, helping to create exactly the sort of climate in which a 14-year-old boy would be dragged off in handcuffs for building a clock.

Cable TV news has been promot-

ing overt bigotry against Muslims, stating over and over that Islam is an inherently violent religion that is to blame for ISIS.

CNN has promoted a kind of “he said, she said” conception of Islam, in which it is valid and worthwhile to debate whether Muslims make for inferior people and societies, thus mainstreaming more overt bigotry. Host Chris Cuomo, for example, called Muslims “unusually violent” and “unusually barbaric.” The network has run chyrons such as “IS ISLAM VIOLENT? OR PEACEFUL?”

Hosts have repeated bigoted falsehoods, for example that female genital mutilation is an inherently Muslim problem (in fact, it is a regional practice that crosses religious lines) or that restrictions on women driving are “commonplace” in the Muslim world (in fact, it is restricted to one country, Saudi Arabia, that represents 2 percent of the global Muslim population). In one bizarre segment, during an interview with Muslim-American human rights lawyer Arsalan Iftikhar, CNN host Don Lemon interrupted him mid-sentence to ask, for no obvious reason at all, “Do you support ISIS?”

Fox News has taken this to the next logical step, telling its millions of viewers over and over that Muslims are a threat who must be feared and dealt with forcefully, even violently.

For example, Fox News’s Andrea Tantaros, in making a point about “the history of Islam,” argued, “You can’t solve it with a dialogue. You can’t solve it with a summit. You solve it with a bullet to the head. It’s the only thing these people understand.” Bill O’Reilly has declared that “Islam is a destructive force” and that the US is in a holy war with certain groups of Muslims. Host Jeanine Pirro once issued a breathtaking seven-minute monologue

calling for the United States to arm death squads throughout the Muslim world to kill all Islamists and members of Islamist organizations, though many of those organizations are avowedly peaceful and have millions of members, including women and children.

This problem extends to the left, as well. HBO host Bill Maher frequently rants against Islam and its adherents, saying, for example, that “vast numbers of Muslims want humans to die for holding a different idea” and share “too much in common with ISIS.”

The school and police officials in Irving, Texas, as appalling as their actions may have been, were only doing what the American TV media has been telling them to do all year: to view Muslims with fear and suspicion, and to do whatever is necessary to neutralize the threat they pose.

It is no coincidence that popular attitudes toward Muslims are becoming more hostile in the US: Americans are more skeptical about Muslims and Islam, express lower favorability toward Muslims, are more likely to support racial profiling of Muslims, and increasingly say that Muslim Americans cannot be trusted in positions of government authority.

Sometimes the media is so effective at engendering Islamophobia that you can see attitudes hardening right before your eyes. Maher, in defending his comments about Muslims in an interview with Salon, bragged about as much. Here is he describing how, over time, as he has pounded away at Muslims, his once skeptical audiences have grown to accept and even embrace his ideas:

What I think is interesting is that the audience, my studio audience, has really come around on this issue. When I



used to talk about it, it was just either stony silence or outright booing and now I notice quite a shift. ...

When I talked about it at the end of last week's show, they stood up at the end — they cheered during it and they stood up at the end. And when I introduced the topic last night, I'd say about half the audience gave a cheer when I said we need to stand up for liberal principles.

That bears repeating: The audiences used to sit quietly or boo when Maher espoused his hateful and factually incorrect views on Islam. Now they stand up and cheer. That is the power of the American media, and it's a power that is increasingly directed toward prejudice, hate, and fear.

Islamophobic attitudes initially spiked after President Obama's election — a continuation of the dog-whistle politics that Obama is a secret Muslim, or at least suspiciously un-hostile toward Islam — but have been resurfacing more recently.

State legislatures are passing laws banning "Sharia" or "foreign law," a barely veiled expression of official legislative hostility toward Islam and Muslim-American communities.

In late January, a Texas state legislator protested the state capital's Muslim Capitol Day, meant to promote tolerance, by demanding that any Muslim "publicly announce allegiance to America and our laws" before entering her office. "We will see how long they stay in my office," she said.

Her stunt likely seemed silly to many Americans — another far-flung legislator saying something outlandish — but it was neither isolated nor fringe, but

rather part of a concerted and deliberate campaign to promote anti-Muslim fear and hatred that has coincided with anti-Muslim violence.

Elements of the Republican Party have been hijacked, at state and national levels, by a fringe group of anti-Muslim activists who see Islam itself as a threat. While some leading Republicans resist their agenda, others embrace it; Louisiana Gov. and presidential hopeful Bobby Jindal has falsely claimed that Muslims in the UK have set up "no-go zones" that police refuse to enter and where Sharia law prevails, and that Muslim immigrants coming to the US are an "invasion" and "colonization."

These attitudes have contributed to the unwillingness to shelter Syrian refugees, with some politicians claiming that it will bring ISIS to our shores. They can also be seen in a February poll showing that 54 percent of Republican respondents believe that Obama "deep down" is best described as Muslim.

This shows up in popular culture, as well. In January, Warner Bros. released *American Sniper*, an Iraq War film that portrays Iraqis as an undifferentiated mass of terrorists and terrorist sympathizers who can only be confronted with violence.

In one scene, the film's protagonist and namesake shoots an Iraqi woman and child to death — an act the film tacitly approves by later showing them as having carried a grenade. The morality of killing Iraqi civilians is raised only so the hero protagonist can shout down whoever has had the gall to question his decisions by explaining that those civilians were no innocents.

*Source: Vox Explainers*

# Islam is the Solution

*Khalid Baig*

The term "Third World" was coined in 1952, in the wake of the Second World War, to refer to the ex-colonies that were not part of the two newly emerged geopolitical blocs of associated interests. The "Third" then meant the third way.

But, the world order setup by the "First World" in the post-colonial period was even more exploitative than the one that immediately preceded it. It engineered a net transfer of wealth, at an increasing rate, from the poor countries to the rich, making the former poorer and the latter richer. While in 1820 the estimates of disparity of wealth between the richest and the poorest countries in the world were about 3:1, by 1950 the ratio had changed to 35:1, and by 1992 it had reached 72:1. Today it is even higher. Ironically the exploiters have earned the exploiters a 'respectability' and the exploited a disdain. The term "Third World" has come to signify a rank, as in third class.

Then there are armies of "experts" who have been convincing everyone that the real problem of the exploited countries is that they are too "traditional" and their salvation lies in aping the progressive ways of the West. This is the essence of the modernization theory that seeks to move societies from

the "traditional" to the "modern."

This discussion is of special value to the Muslims because all the Muslim countries fall in the "Third World." Today there are generations of educated Muslims who have been convinced that progress equals modernization equals westernization. For every problem they turn to the "First World" for answers, guidance, and assistance. They see their societies as decadent and attribute this decadence to their adherence to traditions and religion. Most of the rulers in the Muslim world today, unfortunately, come from this group. At the same time they claim to be Muslims and servants of Islam.

May be we can invite them to shed this hypocrisy and take an objective look at their societies. They may find out that contrary to their thinking, whatever good is there in any society, it comes from Islam. Whatever evils are there come from hypocrisy and defiance of Islam.

It is generally observed that in Muslim societies today people are neither punctual nor value time much. Their leisurely ways are in direct contrast to the world where the creed is that time is money. Islam does not promote this materialistic notion of the value of time which results in nobody having

time for others. But it does teach the value of every moment of our life as providing the opportunity for earning the rewards in the hereafter. It does require us to be punctual and not to waste time. And it delivers.

In the vast Muslim world there is one enterprise that is extraordinary in its punctuality and discipline. In the big cities or the remotest rural areas, the azan is called five times a day and the people gather for the congregational prayers at the proper times without fail. Neither excessive cold in the winter nights nor excruciating heat during sizzling summer days keeps them from their sacred duty. This enterprise has not been financed by governments or big businesses. When most people are in their warm beds in their unheated homes, there is a muezzin in every neighborhood who never fails to wake up and remind everyone, "Prayer is better than sleep."

Here is a glimpse of the power of Islam. Can we imagine the situation when not just the muezzin and a small congregation, but the entire population becomes responsive to its duty? Can we imagine when their sense of responsibility goes beyond the prayers and covers all aspects of their life?

Equally fascinating is the unparalleled power of Islam in shunning social evils that are consuming the world. Despite their myriad problems, the Muslim lands even today shine as islands of virtue in a deep dark ocean of vice.

Consider Alcoholism. In the USA alone, the economic costs of Alcoholism and drug abuse are reported to be at a quarter trillion dollars per year. The social and moral costs are additional. But the solution evades world's most techno-

logically advanced and organized society.

Actually it did try. In 1917, Congress passed the 18th Amendment, prohibiting alcohol. This was after a century of grass roots efforts, which included thousands of societies for prohibition and abstinence pledges in churches. They also allocated \$5 million for enforcement to turn USA into a liquor-free society. A few years later the estimate was \$300 million and growing. Organized crime started. Thirteen years later Prohibition was repealed. The "Noble Experiment" had failed miserably.

In contrast, Islam banned alcohol 14 centuries ago among people whose love for alcohol was second to none. In three simple steps, spanning only a few years, alcohol was banished from the Muslim world. Today, despite small areas of infraction, a map of the dry world coincides with the map of the Muslim world. Islam has declared alcohol to be Ummul-Khabaith (the root of all evil) and no power on earth can change that designation.

We recently saw a small example of the same miracle with respect to drugs. One command by the Taliban Ameer achieved what hundreds of experts and millions of dollars could not. In the areas under Taliban rule today the cultivation of opium has stopped. (It continues in areas under the control of the western sponsored Northern Alliance, but that is another story).

Where else but in a Muslim country (Saudi Arabia) one can find jewelry stores without armed guards, closed doors, and elaborate security systems? One of the major crimes against humanity and morality committed by the "First World" has been the exploitation of

*Cont'd on page 38*

# Preparing for Death

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*Imam Ghazali (ra)*  
*Translator: Shazia Ahmad*

You have asked – may Allah grant you success – about readiness for death, and the conditions and means [of attaining that spiritual state]. When is a servant (of God) ready for death? What should one strive to achieve so that he or she is fully prepared for this path?

Know that death is an expression used for the journey from this world to the Divine Presence, for to Allah is the ultimate return. Anyone traveling to a royal court is in need of three things for his journey: a severing of the ties that keep him from advancing; a preparation of provisions for the road; and an acceptable gift for the king, to present to him and by which to attain his pleasure. Similarly, the traveler journeying to the Divine Presence is in need of three things: preparation of his provisions, a cutting of ties, and the offering of a gift.

*The traveler's provision refers to a deep consciousness of God (taqwa). Allah says, "...And take a provision with you for the journey, but the best of provisions is taqwa." (Qur'an, 2:197)*

The cutting of ties means a severing of the heart from the pleasures of this world. This is what was meant by the Prophet's (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) words, "an indifference towards the abode of delusions".

The gift to be presented to the King is love, the origin of which is in true gnosis (ma'rifah) and faith (iman).

We will explain these three essential matters in further detail.

## 1. Provisions for the Road:

There is no provision for the journey to the hereafter except taqwa. Taqwa means obeying the commandments of Allah Most High and avoiding that which He has prohibited to such an extent that one fulfills all of Allah's commandments and remains far removed from all of His prohibitions.

If one has always done so, then this is a type of excellence and inner strength that is without equal. If, however, a person has some deficiencies in this matter, then he or she will not be ready [for the hereafter] except by rectifying them. This can be done by analyzing and reflecting on one's state from when one first reached the age of legal responsibility (bulugh). The servant must then busy himself with making up for what has passed, and seek to correct those matters in which one had erred.

In regards to the commandments of Allah, the servant should begin with the fundamental pillars of Islam, such as the ritual prayer, the poor-due and the

pilgrimage. If one finds a shortcoming in his or her performance of one of these acts, one should seek to remove the burden of responsibility from oneself by making up for them. One should continue doing so until he or she is certain that no obligation remains undone.

As for the prohibitions, [they are of two types]. The first type is entirely related to the rights of Allah [and not the rights of other people], such as fornication, drinking alcohol, listening to musical instruments, and engaging in [other] forbidden acts. [Disobeying a prohibition of this type] can be remedied by sincerely repenting, feeling intense regret for the sin, seeking Allah's forgiveness and pardon, and resolving strongly and with determination to never return to it again. [Know that] sincere repentance is a remedy for every sin, and a penitent person is like one who has not sinned at all.

The second type of prohibition is related to the rights of other servants, such as wronging someone in terms of wealth or reputation. [Violating a prohibition of this type] can be rectified by giving the oppressed person back his or her due right. The servant should seek to do this in all of one's dealings with others, and should scrutinize personal relationships carefully [to make sure that one has not been unjust to others].

One should seek to liberate himself from others' rights upon him by returning what is in one's possession of their wealth, compensating for what one may have consumed from it, and making amends for backbiting or speaking ill of others. This type of harmful speech is a great wrong, and a person cannot be freed from it except by [seeking the pardon of] the oppressed. The servant must ask forgiveness from every person he has

harmed in his life through backbiting or other hurtful words. If a person who has been wronged refuses, then one should be kind to him so that his heart will eventually lean towards forgiveness.

If the oppressed person passes away or becomes otherwise unreachable, the servant should increase in good deeds until he has performed an amount that he believes would be sufficient for the oppressed if it went to him on the Day of Judgment.

Know that sufficient provision for this journey is in obeying Allah's commands, abstaining from His prohibitions, and striving to perform numerous extra good deeds. Good works are a means of elevating one's spiritual rank. The more good deeds one performs, the more one increases in safety and faith.

In conclusion, provision for this journey consists of commission or omission of acts in accordance to Allah's commands and prohibitions.

## **2. Severing the Ties that Prevent One from Advancing**

A traveler may be tied down by his or her debtors, as if they were holding on to the very tails of his clothing and preventing him from moving towards his destination. In order to advance on his journey, the traveler must [free himself from them] and break all ties with them.

Similarly, the attachments that prevent one from journeying towards the hereafter are numerous. Yet all of them are connected to the love of this world, longing for it, and the inclination of the lower self towards it.

One who has no beloved in this world is completely ready for death. One who loves someone in this world, but finds that the love for Allah is stronger

and more intense in his heart is also ready, though his level is not like that of the former.

A sign that a servant has true love for Allah is that he or she does not have any feeling of dislike towards death, no matter when it may come. An aversion to death is a sign that this world and one's status in it is more beloved to a person [than meeting Allah in the hereafter]. One who dislikes death because he has not yet rectified the wrongs he has committed against others or overcome weaknesses within himself may be excused for his dislike, however, this servant cannot be considered ready [for the journey ahead]. One who is ready would have already exerted himself in these matters, and would not have left any task undone that would distract and busy his heart.

Disconnecting one's heart from the life of this world is not fully achieved unless one also possesses a balanced character and a sound and upright heart. This occurs by purifying the heart from ostentation, envy, hatred, arrogance, and all of the negative qualities that we have mentioned in our work *al-Muhlikaat* (in the third section of *Ihya Ulum ad-Din*). These are the ailments of the heart [that must be cured], for an ill person is not one prepared for travel.

It is not a requirement that the servant be entirely free of these negative qualities, but that they remain weak inside a person and are not intensified by actions or words that are contrary to the path of God-consciousness. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "The child of Adam will never be safe from three things: envy, fearing evil omens, and having bad opinions of others. I will inform you of a means of escaping from them. If you feel envious towards some-

one, do not seek to attain what he or she has. If you observe an omen said to be evil, continue without any change in your behavior. And if you think ill of someone, do not try to confirm your thoughts [by discussing them with others.]"

Thus removing these elements entirely from one's inner self is not a necessary condition for being saved. It suffices that one does not manifest them by acting in accordance to them. A balanced character is what is really essential, and is what is meant by the expression *khuluq al-hasan*. One does not attain such character except through struggle, hard work, and recognition of the areas in which one has been self-deluded.

All of the [negative] qualities we have mentioned here are produced by love of this world. If a servant realizes that the hereafter is better and everlasting he or she would certainly prefer it over the life of this world. Such a realization is a fruit of this knowledge, and such knowledge is what comprises the branches of faith.

### **Presenting a Gift to Allah Most High**

The gift [that a traveler to the hereafter should prepare to present to the Divine] is faith (*iman*) that engenders love for Allah Most High. We mean here by faith a gnosis (*ma'rifa*) that overwhelms the servant completely and overtakes his heart entirely, until it is as if the servant actually sees Him. Faith then becomes something vital to the heart, persistent and constant in it, to such an extent that nothing comes to the servant's mind except Allah, neither in deeply-rooted thoughts nor in fleeting ones. [A constant awareness and focus on Allah, to the extent that not even a fleeting thought enters one's mind] is the highest

state [of faith].

The first [and lowest] level of faith is like believing that someone named Zaid is inside a house because one has been told so by a person one trusts. The second level is like believing Zaid is inside because one hears the sound of his voice. The third [and highest level] is like actually seeing him. Each level produces an increased amount of happiness and delight [for the servant, as compared to the one lower than it]. These feelings cannot be precisely described [but can only be experienced with the heart]. Such are the varying degrees of faith.

As for the branches of faith, they are numerous, while its roots are three: to have belief in Allah, belief in the Last Day, and belief in the truthfulness of the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

Complete faith in Allah includes belief in His attributes as they are elucidated in the Quran without being combined with innovations, uncertainty, wavering or doubt. One should believe that He has perfect knowledge and absolute ability, that His will is always realized and effectual [with no exceptions], and one should affirm with certainty whatever one can of His noble attributes.

One should believe in regards to the Last Day that one will be recompensed in accordance to one's actions, rewarded for obedience [to Allah] and punished for disobedience. [If one understands and believes this,] then this suffices for the servant, and it is not obligatory upon him or her to know more details [of the Day of Judgment than this].

One should believe that the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was truthful in everything that he taught. If one believes in this,

even if one does not know his (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) teachings in detail other than what is obligatory, it suffices for the servant.

This is what it means to prepare for death; and Allah grants success to those who seek to ready themselves [for the journey ahead].

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*Cont'd from page 34*

women in the form of prostitution. Whether it is legal or illegal, whether there are marked red light areas or not, it flourishes everywhere the "First World" has its way. In addition, every area visited by their armies has left behind these centers of filth. Again, the notable exception is the Muslim world.

This world was a dark place, having forgotten or distorted previous prophets' teachings, before Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) brought the light. He brought back the message of Tauheed, universal brotherhood, compassion, mercy, equality, justice, God consciousness, and morality. As Muslims turned away from Islam, the darkness started to increase again, dividing it into first, second, and third worlds. There is lot of arrogance and ignorance in these ranks. But, Islam again illuminates the way. The solution is there, if only we look in the right direction. Islam is the solution.

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*Cont'd from page 22*

*Before doing anything, search your heart for the reason you are doing the task: is it for fame, to show off, etc?*

*Turn a mundane action into worship by rectifying your intention, thereby connecting the action to Allah*

*Remember, Allah will reward you for even thinking about doing a good action.*

# From Hate to Love

*Abdul Wahid*

In the ninth year of the Hijrah, an Arab king made the first positive moves to Islam after years of feeling hatred for it. He drew closer to faith (iman) after opposing and combating it. And he finally pledged allegiance to the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) after his adamant refusal to do so.

He was Adiy, son of the famous Hatim at-Ta'iy who was known far and wide for his chivalry and fabulous generosity. Adiy inherited the domain of his father and was confirmed in the position by the Ta'iy people. Part of his strength lay in the fact that a quarter of any amount they obtained as booty from raiding expeditions had to be given to him.

When the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) announced openly his call to guidance and truth and Arabs from one region after another accepted his teachings, Adiy saw in his mission a threat to his position and leadership. Although he did not know the Prophet personally, and had never seen him, he developed strong feelings of enmity towards him. He remained antagonistic to Islam for several years until at last God opened his heart to the religion of truth and guidance.

The way in which Adiy became a Muslim is a remarkable story and he is perhaps the best person to relate it. He said:

*"There was no man among the Arabs who detested God's Messenger, may God bless him and grant him peace, more than I, when I heard about him. I was then a man of status and nobility. I was a Christian. From my people I took a fourth of their booty as was the practice of other Arab kings.*

When I heard of the Messenger of God (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), I hated him. When his mission grew in strength and when his power increased and his armies and expeditionary forces dominated east and west of the land of Arabs, I said to a servant of mine who looked after my camels:

*'Get ready a fat camel for me which is easy to ride and tether it close to me. If you hear of an army or an expeditionary force of Muhammad coming towards this land, let me know.'*

One evening, my servant came to me and said:

*'Ya Mawlayal! What you intended to do on the approach of Muhammad's cavalry to your land, do it now.'*

*'Why? May your mother lose you!'*

*'I have seen scouts searching close to the habitations. I asked about them and was told that they belonged to the army of Muhammad,' he said.*

*'Bring the camel which I had ordered you to get ready.' I said to him. I got up then and there, summoned my household (including) my children and ordered them to evacuate the land we loved. We headed*



in the direction of Syria to join people of our own faith among the Christians and settle among them.

We left in too much haste for me to gather together our entire household. When I took stock of our situation, I discovered that part of my family was missing. I had left my own sister in our Najd homelands together with the rest of the Ta'iy people. I did not have any means to return to her. So I went on with those who were with me until I reached Syria and took up residence there among people of my own religion. As for my sister, what I feared for her happened.

News reached me while I was in Syria that the forces of Muhammad entered our habitations and took my sister together with a number of other captives to Yathrib. There she was placed with other captives in a compound near the door of the Masjid.

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) passed by her. She stood up before him and said:

Ya Rasulullah! My father is dead and my guardian is not here. Be gracious to me and God will be gracious to you.'

'And who is your guardian?' asked the Prophet.

Adiy ibn Hatim,? she said.

'The one who fled from God and His Prophet?' he asked. He then left her and walked on.

On the following day, the same thing happened. She spoke to him just as she did the day before and he replied in the same manner. The next day, the same thing happened and she despaired of getting any concession from him for he did not say anything. Then a man from behind him indicated that she should stand up and talk to him. She therefore stood up and said:

'O Messenger of God! My father is dead

and my guardian is absent. Be gracious to me and God will be gracious to you.'

'I have agreed,' he said. Turning to those about him, he instructed:

'Let her go for her father loved noble ways, and God loves them.'

'I want to join my family in Syria,' she said. 'But don't leave in a hurry,' said the Prophet, 'until you find someone you can trust from your people who could accompany you to Syria. If you find a trustworthy person, let me know.'

When the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) left, she asked about the man who had suggested that she speak to the Prophet and was told that he was 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, may God be pleased with him. She stayed in Yathrib until a group arrived among whom was someone she could trust. So she went to the Prophet and said:

'O Messenger of God! A group of my people have come to me and among them is one I can trust who could take me to my family.'

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) gave her fine clothes and an adequate sum of money. He also gave her a camel and she left with the group.

Thereafter we followed her progress gradually and waited for her return. We could hardly believe what we heard about Muhammad's generosity towards her in spite of my attitude to him. By God, I am a leader of my people. When I beheld a woman in her hawdaj coming towards us, I said:

'The daughter of Hatim! It's she! It's she!'

When she stood before us, she snapped sharply at me and said:

'The one who severs the tie of kinship is a wrongdoer.

You took your family and your children and left the rest of your relations and those whom you ought to have protected.'

'Yes, my sister, I said, 'don't say anything but good.' I tried to pacify her until she was

satisfied. She told me what had happened to her and it was as I had heard. Then I asked her, for she was an intelligent and judicious person:

‘What do you think of the mission of this man (meaning Muhammad, peace be on him)?’

‘I think, by God, that you should join him quickly she said. ‘If he is a Prophet, the one who hastens towards him would enjoy his grace. And if he is a king, you would not be disgraced in his sight while you are as you are.’

I immediately prepared myself for travel and set off to meet the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) in Madinah without any security and without any letter. I had heard that he had said: ‘I certainly wish that God will place the hand of Adiy in my hand.’

I went up to him. He was in the Masjid. I greeted him and he said:

‘Who is this man?’

Adiy ibn Hatim,’ I said. He stood up for me, took me by the hand and set off towards his home.

By God, as he was walking with me towards his house, a weak old woman met him. With her was a young child. She stopped him and began talking to him about a problem. I was standing (all the while). I said to myself:

‘By God, this is no king.’

He then took me by the hand and went with me until we reached his home. There he got a leather cushion filled with palm fiber, gave it to me and said:

‘Sit on this!’

I felt embarrassed before him and said:

‘Rather, you sit on it.’

‘No, you,’ he said.

I deferred and sat on it. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) sat on the floor because there was no other cushion. I said to myself:

‘By God, this is not the manner of a king!’

He then turned to me and said:

‘Yes, Adiy ibn Hatim! Haven’t you been a “Rukusi professing a religion between Christianity and Sabeanism?”

‘Yes,’ I replied.

‘Did you not operate among your people on the principle of exacting from them a fourth, taking from them what your religion does not allow you?’

‘Yes,’ I said, and I knew from that that he was a Prophet sent (by God). Then he said to me:

‘Perhaps, O ‘Adiy, the only thing that prevents you from entering this religion is what you see of the destitution of the Muslims and their poverty. By God, the time is near when wealth would flow among them until no one could be found to take it.

‘Perhaps, O ‘Adiy, the only thing that prevents you from entering this religion is what you see of the small number of Muslims and their numerous foe. By God, the time is near when you would hear of the woman setting out from Qadisiyah on her camel until she reaches this house, not fearing anyone except Allah.

‘Perhaps what prevents you from entering this religion is that you only see that sovereignty and power rest in the hands of those who are not Muslims. By God, you will soon hear of the white palaces of the land of Babylon opening up for them and the treasures of Chosroes, the son of Hormuz, fall to their lot.’

‘The treasures of Chosroes, the son of Hormuz?’ I asked (incredulously).

‘Yes, the treasures of Chosroes, the son of Hormuz,’ he said.

Thereupon, I professed the testimony of truth, and declared my acceptance of Islam.”

One report says that when Adiy saw the simplicity of the Prophet’s life-style, he said to him:

“I testify that you do not seek high office in this world nor corruption,” and he announced his acceptance of Islam. Some people observed the Prophet’s treatment of Adiy and said to him:

“O Prophet of God! We have seen you do something which you have not done to any other.”

“Yes,” replied the Prophet. “This is a man of stature among his people. If such a person should come to you, treat him honorably.”

Adiy ibn Hatim (RA) lived for a long time. He later said:

“Two of the things (which the Prophet spoke of) came to pass and there remained a third. By God, it would certainly come to pass.

“I have seen the woman leaving Qadisiyah on her camel fearing nothing until she arrived at this house (of the Prophet in Madinah).

“I myself was in the vanguard of the cavalry which descended on the treasures of Chosroes and took them. And I swear by God that the third event will be realized.”

Through the will of God, the third statement of the Prophet, on him be choicest blessings and peace, came to pass during the time of the devout and ascetic Khalifah, ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz. Wealth flowed among the Muslims so much so that when the town-criers called on people throughout the Muslim domain to come and collect Zakat, no one was found in need to respond.

## Dogged Devotion

*There was once a Mogul leader who converted to Christianity. To celebrate his conversion, a group of prominent Christian and Mogul leaders came to visit him. During the visit, one of the group began to attack the honor and speak ill of Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam). He continued reviling Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam), until a hunting dog which was tied nearby suddenly leaped on him and began to scratch and claw at him. The dog was so furious that it took several men to restrain it and free the man. On seeing this, one of the group said to him, “The dog attacked you because you were speaking ill of Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam).” “Never!” he exclaimed, “The dog is very noble. When I was gesturing with my hand, it thought I wanted to hit it. That is why it attacked me.” Saying this, he foolishly went on speaking ill of Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam). After some time the dog again leaped up and attacked him, this time tearing out his throat and killing him instantly. The devotion of this dog to the honor of Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) had such an effect on their hearts that approximately forty thousand Moguls accepted Islam! (Ad-Durarul Kaaminah vol. 3, pg. 128)*

*Lessons:*

- 1. When Allah Ta‘ala loves a person, he instills the love of that person into the hearts of the entire creation. Similarly when Allah Ta‘ala dislikes a person, he instills the dislike and hatred of that person into the hearts of the entire creation. Speaking against Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam), or even the pious who follow in his footsteps, is an action that greatly angers Allah Ta‘ala. Thus even the dog was unable to suppress its rage and hence attacked the person reviling Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam).*
- 2. If a dog could stand up for the honor of Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam), can we not do the same? One of the most important ways in which we can honor him is to revive every one of his beloved sunnats and blessed conduct.*
- 3. True devotion to Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) is such that it draws people towards Islam even if the devotion is displayed by a dog. Imagine the change we can make if we become devoted to Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam).*

# The Companions and The Da'wah Paradigm (2)

*AbdulAziz Abdul Latif*

*IN PART 1 (previous issue) we were reminded that the Companions of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) were more deeply knowledgeable of the Qur'an and the ways of the Prophet than were any succeeding generations. We continue with the lessons for our Da'wa from the Companions.*

Because the Khawârij were given to reckless whim (ahwâ') in their judgment and actions, they had a tendency to take the proof-texts of Revelation out of context and in so doing render the Qur'an into disjointed bits. For this reason, they conceived Allah's statement—judgment belongs to none but Allah—in isolation from His statement in another verse of the Qur'an—as two just men from among you shall so judge [Sûrat Al-Mâ'idah, 5:95]. This misguided approach to understanding the Qur'an caused the Khawârij, as Ibn Abbâs (RA) rightly stated, to “believe in the verses of the Qur'an that were clearly decisive in their meaning (muhkam) and err when they came to its ambiguous (mutashâbih) ones.”

My point is twofold. In debating the Khawârij and appealing to them to hearken to the Sunnah, the Companion Ibn Abbâs (RA) employed clear authoritative evidences. Yet he was also lenient, quick-witted, and made sure his oppo-

nents got his points and arguments, for he used to repeat, after each rejoinder he made, the following question: Did I answer this objection of yours? As a result of Ibn Abbâs's (RA) systematic, disciplined, and learned approach, 20,000 of the Khawârij's ranks renounced their misguided beliefs and reverted to the Islam of the Sunnah, immediately after this specific debate.

Also noteworthy, in a speech he once delivered at Mina, the Companion Ibn Abbâs (RA) recited and interpreted Sûrat Al-Nûr from beginning to end. Sayyiduna Ibn Abbâs' (RA) expository remarks on Sûrat Al-Nûr were so insightful, so beautiful that one who had heard him said:

*Had the [Christians of Byzantium] heard him that day, they would have converted to Islam on the spot. (Al-Siyar, Imam Dhahabî, 3:351).*

## **By Way of the Prophet: Ibn Mas'ud and Jabir ibn 'Abdullah**

The Companion Abdullah ibn Mas'ud also confronted the attitude of these Khawârij outliers. He argued from the basis of the Sunnah and the practice of the Sahâbah. He said to them:

Here are the Companions of your Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) still alive. And here are the clothes and per-

sonal effects of your Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) not yet worn out! By Allah! Either you lay claim to a religion superior to the Prophet Muhammad's (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), or you are opening a gate of misguidance. (Al-Dârimî, 1:79).

Here is an additional example.

It is reported that Yazîd Al-Faqîr, a man from the generation of the Tâbî'in, inclined toward the belief of the Khawârij that perpetrators of enormities (kabâ'ir) would burn for eternity in Hellfire in the Hereafter. One day he heard the Companion Jâbir ibn Abdullâh (RA) mention the hadith on the jahannamiyyûn, that is, the sinful Muslims of sound aqîdah who would enter Hellfire for a time and later be removed from it.

Yazîd remarked: "O Companion of the Prophet! How you talk! Has Allah not said in His Book:

*Our Lord! Indeed, whoever You commit to the Fire of Hell, truly you have disgraced him? [Sûrat al-Imrân, 3:192]*

"Do you recite the Qur'an?" said Jâbir. "Yes," said Yazîd.

*"Did you come in your reading of the Qur'an upon the Maqâm of Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)?" (the Lofty Station of Praise to which Allah promised to raise Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) in the Hereafter, see Sûrat Al-Isrâ', 17:79)*

"Yes," said Yazîd.

*"It is by this Maqâm that Allah will pull out whomever He wills from Hellfire. So yes, some people will be brought out of the Fire after spending some time in it." (Muslim)*

How profound the religious understanding (fiqh) of the Companion Jâbir (RA)! He argued from the Prophet-

ic Sunnah—which explains the Qur'an and points out its Revealer's intent—to answer the Khawârij's empty objections occasioned by their superficial understanding of the Qur'an and their ignorance of the Sunnah of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). After receiving the light of prophetic guidance through Jâbir (RA), Yazîd Al-Faqîr (RA) and all of his associates, with the exception of one recalcitrant peer, snapped free from the clutches of a doubt conjured in their hearts, among other erroneous notions, by the heretical sect of the Khawârij.

This encounter between Jâbir and Yazîd Al-Faqîr brings to mind another instructive statement that Jâbir made on the occasion of Hajjat al-Wadâ (the Prophet's Farewell Pilgrimage). He said: *The Prophet is alive receiving the Qur'an among us, and he knows its proper interpretation. Therefore, whatever he does, we do. (Muslim).*

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)—as the Sahâbah well knew—is the foremost authority on the interpretation of the Qur'an, be that in the realm of aqîdah or in the sphere of Shari'ah. This is a profoundly important precept (asl) in Islam. Unfortunately, it was lost on the Khawârij, as it has been, and is, on all their like, classic or modern, such are those who would argue—and wrongly so—from the Qur'an [alone] while turning away from the Sunnah which expounds it.

The attitude of the Prophet's Companions, such as Jâbir Ibn Abbâs (RA), Ibn Masûd (RA), and so on, was also the selfsame attitude of the early generations of Muslims that succeeded and staunchly adhered to the ways of the Sahâbah. Those were the truly blessed

dâ'is who spread goodness and guidance to deluded hearts wherever they directed their steps.

Yûsuf ibn Asbât said:

My father was a qadarî (a denier of Divine Predestination, or 'qadar') and my maternal uncles were rawâfid (a sect of fanatical Shîah), but Allah has extricated me from their falsehoods through the blessed guidance of Sufyân al-Thawrî" (a prominent scholar from the Tâbi'î generation ('Successors' to the Companions) born in Kufa) (Al-La'laka'î, 1:60).

There is also Mûsâ ibn Hizâm. He initially adhered to the doctrine of irjâ' (the deviant dogma that works ('aml) are not part of faith (imân)). But Allah willed good for him by enabling him to meet and listen to Imâm Ahmad ibn Hanbal. He thus became a devout believer in, and advocate of, the Sunnah, and he remained so to the last day of his life, a sworn foe of its detractors. (Tahdhîb Al-Tahdhîb, Ibn Hajr, 10:341).

Those who would call to Allah upon the pattern of the rightly guided of the early, blessed generations should base their da'wah approaches and practices on the guidance of the Twin Divine Revelations, the Qur'an and the Sunnah:

*Say [to them]: Indeed, I only forewarn you with [Allah's] Revelation. [Sûrat Al-Anbiyâ', 21:45]*

For in these two Heavenly sources inhere the healing answers to the host of disturbing questions that are bound to arise at points along the da'wah path.

These sources possess the utmost esteem and acclaim of Muslims. They wield, moreover, the greatest influence on people and are the most beneficial to them. How needful we are of the guid-

ance of the Qur'an and the Sunnah! This is especially so in these harrowing times of ours, when, sadly, so many of our dâ'is are swayed by all manner of individual taste, subjective opinion, private impression, and a raft of other personal predilections—and all without a solid Scriptural basis.

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*Cont'd from page 17*

Prophetic report, "The closest a man is to His Lord is when he is in prostration." Another report from him says, "The closest that a man can be to his Lord is in the middle of the late night hours. Therefore, if it is possible for you to be of those who remember Allah in those hours, then be." Muslim women are luckier to have, in addition to the two above, a third way of getting closer to their Lord. A hadith says, "The closest a woman can be to her Lord is when she is in the deepest part of her house."

### **The Animate**

Another method, which should be combined with the above for best results, is to look for God where He can be found. This is what we meant when we said earlier that God can be found through His animate creations also. Compilers of Prophetic sayings have a report on the authority of Abu Hurayrah, of which we reproduce the relevant part here: "Allah will say on the Day of Standing, 'Son of Adam! I was sick but you did not visit Me!' He will remonstrate, 'My Lord! How could I visit You when You are the Lord of the worlds?' He will say, 'Did you not know that such and such slave of Mine was sick? But you did not visit him. Did you not know that had you visited him you would have found Me at him?'"

# When You Think People Judge You

*Maryam Amirebrahimi*

I stood in front of a store employee and gave her a massive smile. I asked about her day, I tried to make small talk. She looked at me disapprovingly, a scowl on her face, barely engaging in my conversation. Immediately I assumed she was judging my appearance as a Muslim. I thought she didn't like me because of my religion. I was sure stereotypes were sorting through her brain while she looked at me with disdain.

As I spent a few seconds trying to figure out how to respond to what I perceived was her judgment, her voice broke a little and she said: "I recently found out my husband had an affair. I'm going through a divorce. Please pray for me."

I was shocked. Here I was, so self-absorbed that I was positive her reaction to me was completely based on her judgments of me, but in reality, she was a woman facing manipulation and betrayal and she was at one of the most difficult crossroads in life. Her mood, her responses to me, had nothing to do with me. On the contrary, they had everything to do with how much pain she was in. And I, in my own world of insecurity because of the constant stereotypes I feel I have to fight against, thought it was all about me.

This is not the first time I've had an experience that has given me such an important life lesson about the way I –

and frequently many of you — view the way people treat us based on stereotypes we expect others to project onto us in their interactions.

Another time, I was making wuḍū in a public restroom and a woman kept staring at me. Some people are discreet about looking, but this woman was gawking. Finally, when I was finished and she was still looking over at me, I went to her smiling and shared, "I was washing up for prayer."

And she responded in broken English with: "I know. I am an exchange student from China. I am Muslim!"

In my head, I had totally appropriated her thoughts with stereotypes of my own about Muslims; I assumed she was wondering why it looked like I was taking a shower in the sink; maybe she was wondering if I have access to running water at home because I'm supposedly 'oppressed.' But I'm the one who made assumptions. She was simply my sister and she was waiting for me to finish so she could greet me!

Sometimes, we think someone is judging us, hating us, feeling sorry for us – but we're the ones placing judgment by assuming an onlooker is having those thoughts!

Islam actually is very clear in guiding us towards believing the best and

making excuses for others. Yes, Islamophobia is real. Muslims are dealing with constant political, legal and personal discrimination. We shouldn't deny this and we should be asking for our rights, lobbying and mobilizing as a community.

However, in personal interactions, it's not always about us. Some people are just having a bad day. Some people are staring because they are Muslim and they feel connected to their fellow believer making wudû but may not be sure how to express it in fear that they may themselves be judged.

But even in something as simple as making an excuse for another human being, whether they're Muslim or not, can be an act of worship. It can be a means of perfecting character. The Quran commands:

*O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it. And be conscious of Allah; indeed, Allah is accepting of repentance and Merciful. [49:12]*

Suspicion is a vast and general term. But there's no reason for us to immediately suspect someone isn't returning our greeting with just as much enthusiasm or isn't smiling with just as wide a grin because they don't like us as individuals or as Muslims. Perhaps they're simply having a very difficult day. Putting ourselves in a position of suspecting otherwise can cause distress for ourselves internally, as well as confusion and hurt on the part of the other.

Actively giving others the benefit of the doubt is a means of developing good character. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) taught us:

*The best of you is the best among you in conduct. (Bukhari)*

And he (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) gives us specific guidelines in developing character traits that are praiseworthy. Amongst such character traits are kindness. He [S] taught:

*Kindness is a mark of faith, and whoever is not kind has no faith. (Muslim)*

Additionally, he (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:

*God did not send me to be harsh, or cause harm, but He sent me to teach and make things easy. (Muslim)*

Sometimes Muslims can be amongst the absolutely harshest of people, especially when it comes to fearing that any part of our faith is potentially being questioned. Even when it comes to correcting other Muslims, our community frequently pushes away people in our zealous and often incredibly harsh efforts to 'correct' one another, instead of teaching with kindness and ease.

In another experience I once had, when I was in college, an unknown campus member came into one of our Muslim Students' Association meetings unannounced.

She was livid, her body language expressing anger, annoyance and mistrust. I was the President of the MSA at the time, and I approached her to welcome her at the end of our session. Most students had already left, but a friend was with me as I introduced myself. The woman started speaking aggressively immediately, and as she pointed to the scarves on me and my friend's heads, she shouted: "...and with that piece of CRAP on your heads!"

My friend, a passionate and strong woman, immediately took a step up, her hands out, demanding: "What are you



calling crap?!”

I stopped her, asked her to step aside and take a breather, and I ignored the woman’s comments. I calmly acknowledged her different perspective and gently invited her to speak with me about her concerns. Because the only information she knew about Muslims was from the media, I welcomed her to continue to attend our meetings so she could get to know real Muslims for herself.

She left still visibly hostile, but she had calmed down a little. I didn’t see or hear from her until the next week, when she entered our meeting. It was as if she was a completely different person. She was calm, she smiled, she even participated.

By the end, she came up to me and she said: “I want to apologize to you for my behavior. It was rude of me to come in before, the way I did, and to call what you wear crap.” I was moved by her change of heart, and she continued: “If you had responded the way your friend did when I said something offensive, I don’t think I would be here. But you showed me that even when I was being disrespectful towards your religion, you could still be respectful towards me. And that taught me a lot about Muslims.”

Imagine if my friend and I had both reacted in the moment, our emotions flaring, our voices raised! What would her impression of Muslims have been, in addition to the stereotypes she already had?

The Quran specifies how we should interact with those who outwardly offend us. Allah states:

*(Among) the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk gently on the earth and when addressed by the ignorant ones, their only response is, “Peace be with you.” [Sûrat Al-Furqân, 25:63]*

This ease, this gentleness, are marks of people of faith. And that kindness earns us the mercy of Allah. As the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) taught:

*Whoever is kind, Allah will be kind to him; therefore be kind to man on the earth. He Who is in heaven will show mercy on you. (Abû Dâwûd).*

He (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) also encouraged:

*Be kind, for whenever kindness becomes part of something, it beautifies it. Whenever it is taken from something, it leaves it tarnished. (Bukhari)*

Also:

*Make things simple and do not complicate them. Calm people and do not drive them away. (Bukhari)*

When a person reacts in a certain way to us, let us not immediately make the assumption that it’s due to their perceived thoughts on our religion unless that obviously is the reason. Maybe they’re going through a rough patch in their life. Maybe they’re very shy and have difficulty expressing themselves. Let’s allow people excuses. Let’s be gentle in our interactions. And even when we do feel offended (unless it’s within a legal or business situation and we can pursue it with the management, etc.), let’s remember that sometimes the best response is a kind, calm, and composed response. As the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) taught us:

*Shall I not tell you whom the (Hell) Fire is forbidden to touch? It is forbidden to touch a man who is always accessible, having a polite and tender nature. (Tirmidhi)*

Let us strive to be of those whom the hellfire is forbidden to touch because of our characters.