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## EDITORIAL

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

# Why No Help

There is nothing new in reports that Rohingya Muslims in Burma are being persecuted, driven out of their homes, killed, and burnt to death. There is nothing new in reports that the neighboring Bangladeshi officials have refused to give asylum the fleeing Rohingya refugees.

This is what we humans have been doing to our fellow humans for centuries despite the fact that we all claim that we are a compassionate, kinder and gentler people believing in a merciful God.

What is interesting is the logic that has often been used by people denying help to the suffering people. The response of a Bangladeshi official summarizes our general historical attitude when he ordered the fleeing refugees pleading to be allowed to stay in Bangladesh; otherwise they would be killed by the Burmese authorities, by saying: "Go back, Allah will save you."

This is our typical response to any crisis. Can one boldly ask the question without being categorized as a blasphemer? Did Allah ever save a suffering person through direct intervention? Did He come to the rescue of women raped in Bosnia, Syria or Burma or in Bangladesh or any where else in the world? Did He save the children, elderly and the weak killed in natural disasters or human-made disasters?

Those who say that these sufferings are like a test for the affected people often do not explain what will Allah, the Creator, the Master, the Almighty, and the one in control of every thing will gain by letting this situation prevail and intensify for helpless

and powerless individuals?

Only Allah can answer these questions and He already has in His last guidance to human beings preserved in the Quran.

"Thus, when they are told, "Spend on others out of what God has provided for you as sustenance," those who are bent on denying the truth say unto those who believe, "Shall we feed anyone whom, if [your] God had so willed, He could have fed [Himself]? Clearly, you are but lost in error!" (36:47)

Allah told us that He would not interfere in our affairs and He commanded us to keep open and accessible for the suffering and needy people, the resources and means of nourishment and safety that the Almighty has provided to us. Obviously, those who deny these Divine directives do not fulfill their covenant with Allah and tell others that if Allah had willed that resources should be distributed in a way that no one remains needy and poor in the world. They blame Allah for not providing sustenance and security to the people. In other words they are questioning the freedom that Allah has given them in creating a system in which everyone adequately gets the necessities of life.

The practice of Allah is that He establishes His system in human society by human efforts. There is no exception to the rule. The reason is that human beings should have freedom to exercise discipline and commitment to the Divine dictates so that their self is fully developed in this world as well as in the world hereafter. It was easy for Allah to

*Cont'd on page 21*

# Question Answer

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## Question

Where exactly are the seven heavens and the seven earths? We have heard of it quite often and believe in it but would like to know in more detail.

## Answer

Neither the Qur'an nor the Ahadith have given any clear description of the seven heavens and seven earths. This itself shows that this is not an article of faith, for had it been, then surely Allah and His Rasul (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) would have clarified the matter. For us, it is sufficient to believe that there are seven heavens and earths, and that Allah knows what form they are. There are billions of secrets and mysteries of the universe which we do not know, nor are we required to delve therein. This is just one of them. We leave these affairs to the knowledge of Allah.

## Question

I want to know, is it permissible for me to go and see an illusionist perform?

## Answer

The difference between an illusionist and magician is negligible. Both terms are used interchangeably and are synonyms for one another. Some people have made a distinction and said that 'magician' is a broader term that encompasses both magicians and illusionists. Others say that a magician just

does simple tricks whereas an illusionist acknowledges his lack of 'supernatural' abilities and engages the minds of the audience by stagecraft, stage presence, use of language, and theatrical training.

As far as Shariah is concerned, both are impermissible to practice and it is impermissible for a person to attend the performances and shows of both magicians and illusionists.

## Question

Is it Jaa'iz to pay interest with interest?

The person sold their property with the intention of purchasing another property, the purchased property was part of a sequestered estate and the purchaser was unwittingly responsible for a small occupational interest at 11% p.a until the full amount was paid.

So can the interest money gained from an interest bearing account be used to settle the interest requested.

## Answer

In terms of Shariah, it is Haram (impermissible) to take interest or to give interest. In the event one was involved in dealing with interest and received interest money, the interest money must be returned to its original owner (the one from whom it was received). If it is not possible to return this money back to its original owner, then

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one must dispose of such money by giving it away in charity.

Hence, if one is an account holder with a bank which accrues interest, and he owes the same bank interest due to taking out an interest bearing loan (although taking out an interest bearing loan is totally impermissible) he may dispose of the interest received from the bank by paying it towards the interest he owes to the same bank. This is because he is giving back the interest received to its original owner (the bank). However, in the situation stated in the query, it is impermissible to use the interest received from the bank to pay interest oweable to a property seller. Such interest must be disposed of by giving it in charity.

#### Question

What is the ruling regarding entering in competitions and winning money or something in the competition?

Ex. These competitions on the

sweets that say you can win instant airtime if you dial a number where you pay 20c/20sec. etc.

#### Answer

Qimar (gambling) is prohibited in Shariah. In terms of Shariah, Qimar is known as the act in which there lies a possibility for each of the competing parties to gain or lose. In other words, there exists a possibility that one may benefit from the opposing party's wealth or may lose over one's own wealth to the opposing party.

In principle, if one is required to pay money to enter into a competition, the prize awarded therefrom is impermissible. However, if there is no fee upon entrance into a competition, then the prize awarded is regarded as a gift, thus permissible.

In order for us to issue a ruling on the example given in the query, adequate information regarding the details of the competition is required. The information given in the query is not sufficient.

## *Ticket to Jannah*

*Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) said: "Any woman who passes away in a condition that her husband is happy with her will enter Jannah (paradise)." (Sunan Tirmizi)*

*The happiness of the husband is the wife's ticket to Jannah. Her mind should always be thinking of ways to keep her husband happy. A husband cannot ask for more in a wife, if his wife is always cheerful, warm, smiling and caring. To keep one's husband happy is as easy as just remaining content and expressing one's happiness.*

*Indeed real happiness will only be enjoyed if both husband and wife work together as a couple in bringing alive complete Deen, and in both spouses fulfilling each other's rights and showering love and compassion. Thus, if the wife tactfully creates this situation both will enjoy peace and tranquility.*

# Lesson From The Qur'an

*Commentary: Tafsir Division, Darul Uloom Ilahiya.*

## Surah Al-Imran - Verse 79-81

### Not the Job of a Prophet

*When the Christians of Najran claimed that Isa (AS) had commanded them to take him as a Divinity, and some Muslims asked the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) that they should be permitted to prostrate themselves before him, the following was revealed: **It is not (possible) for a man (being a human) that Allah gives him the Book, the wisdom (i.e., the understanding of the Divine Law) and the prophethood (and despite) then he starts saying to the people, 'Become my worshippers, aside from Allah<sup>1</sup>;**...*

1. All this is said to confute and contradict the Trinitarian Christians. Isa (AS), as a prophet, could never have taught people to worship him or to make him as co-equal with Allah in any sense of the word. An apostle of Allah invites people to follow him to the obedience of Allah, and surely not to deify himself. *(Majidi)*

It is not possible that Allah bestows his slave with the Book and prophethood, and he (the Prophet) in its place decrees people to deify him (instead of Allah). No prophet will command towards worship of something other than Allah, for - the prophethood and such a command are two contradictory things, the first one - an invitation towards monotheism, while the second - towards polytheism. *(Mazhari)*

Since it is plain truth that a prophet and his obedient follower would never even signify to be worshipped besides Allah, then why does it happen that people bow at the tombs of Awliya, prostrate before their so called spiritual elders and invoke at the shrines for the fulfillment of their wishes. Do they possess any such teaching from the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) or has any of his true heirs (i.e., Awliya) given such a guidance. Isn't it the duty of Muslims to rise for the eradication of such foolish acts? Have they not been able to remember that Allah has sent them into this world as the proclaimers of Tawhid? *(Hidayatul Qur'an)*

The Messengers (AS), are the emissaries between Allah and His creation, conveying

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Allah's Message and Trust. The messengers indeed fulfilled their mission, gave sincere advice to creation and conveyed the truth to them. (*Ibn Kathir*)

## Teachings of the Prophet

*...Rather (he would say), "Be men of the Lord<sup>1</sup> (i.e., submit completely to Him with love and obedience); as you have been teaching the Book (of Allah to others), and as you have been learning it<sup>2</sup> (and it is packed with the teachings of tawhid)." (79) Nor is it (possible for him) that he (i.e., the person endowed with the prophetic office and wisdom) bids you to hold the angels and the (other) prophets as Lords<sup>3</sup>. Shall he bid you to disbelieve<sup>4</sup> (by asking you to believe in the divinity of apostles and angels), after your having become (owing of his teachings and instructions) Muslims (and have perfectly believed in His Unity)? (80)*

1. Declare your allegiance to Allah alone and adopt only the way of life He has approved for you so that you can be totally devoted to Him. You can achieve this devotion by virtue of your knowledge of the Scriptures and your constant study of what Allah has revealed. The more you understand your Scripture, the clearer this task becomes to you. (*In the Shade of the Qur'an*)
2. There is a lesson in the verse for him who devotes himself to amassing knowledge but does not put it into practice. His example is that of a man who planted a tree which grew up into a beautiful looking plant but which does not bear any fruit. (*Allaama Zamakshari- q.f. Ishraq al-Ma'ani*)
3. The Christians had taken Isa (AS) and Ruhul Quds, some Jews had taken Uzair (AS), and some polytheists (Mushriks) had taken the angels as lords beside Allah. When the angels and prophets cannot be taken as partners with Allah, it is simply unreasonable to speak about the stone-idols and the wooden cross (or even a saintly person). (*Uthmani*)
4. This verse implies that a person whom Allah invests with the Book, the Wisdom and the power of making decisions, and places him on the great station of prophethood is always faithful to his mission when he communicates the Divine message to people and calls them to become His faithful servants. That he starts moving people away from the worship of one God and starts asking them to become his own worshippers or the worshippers of some other creatures is something he can never do. If so, this would mean that the one whom Allah had sent as his messenger did not, in fact, deserve this designation. (*Ma'ariful Qur'an - M.Shafi.*)

## Pledge of the Prophets (AS)

**And, mention, when** (in the spiritual world on a metaphysical plane or by means of revelation) **Allah made the Prophets<sup>1</sup>** (i.e., from their souls) **enter into covenant:** (saying) **"If I give you a book and wisdom** (i.e., the understanding of the Divine Law), **then comes to you a messenger** (i.e., any other apostle with the proofs of prophethood and messengership) **verifying what is with you** (and answering to the description of him you have in the previous Scripture), **you shall have to believe in him<sup>2</sup>** (with heart and soul) **and you shall have to support him** (in propagating the Shariah and by words and deeds; this constitutes the response to the oath). **Allah said: 'Do you affirm and accept My covenant** (i.e., My bond) **in this respect?' They said: 'We affirm.'** **He said: 'Then, bear witness<sup>3</sup>** (to this before one another and your own souls and (those of) your followers), **and I am with you among the witnesses'<sup>4</sup>** (before you and them).

(81)

1. As we replay this majestic scene in our minds, we are overawed with the image of all messengers assembled in the presence of Allah.

United in their Submission to the sublime directive, they uphold the single truth, which Allah has willed should serve as the foundation of human life and remain pure of deviation, contradiction and conflict. Allah selects one of His servants to establish this truth on earth, before he passes it over to his successor, to whom he pledges his support, as the latter takes over the task of conveying Allah's message. No prophet has any personal interest in this matter, nor does he seek any personal glory. *(In the Shade of the Qur'an)*

2. According to Allaama Alusi (ra) - by mentioning this, a lesson is forwarded to people that it is their utmost obligation to have sincere belief on that for which a pledge is demanded even from the Prophets (AS). *(Ma'alimul Irfan)*

3. Imaam Ahmad recorded a narration from Sayyidna Jaabir bin Abdullaah (RA) that Sayyidna Umar bin Al-Khattaab (RA) came to the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) with a book that he took from some of the People of the Book. Umar began reading it to the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) who became angry. He (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "Are you uncertain about it O Ibn Al-Khattaab? By the One in Whose Hand is my soul! I have come to you with it white and pure. Do not ask them about anything, for they might tell you something true and you reject it, or they might tell you something false and you believe it. By the One in Whose Hand is my soul! If Musa were living, he would have no choice but to follow me." *(Musnad Ahmad)*

4. These words are simply used to denote the importance and pre-eminence of the bond, because there can be no document more reliable and more firm than that to which Allah and His holy Prophets (AS) are a witness. *(Uthmani)*

### *A Dull Day made Bright*

*Imran bin Hattaan was a very ugly man whose wife was extraordinarily beautiful. Once she stared at his face for some time and then expressed gratitude by saying: "Alhamdulillah." He asked in surprise: "What is all this about?" She replied: "I praised Allah Ta'ala because I hope that both of us will be ushered in to Jannah." He said: "On what basis do you say so?" She answered: "Because you are blessed with a wife as beautiful as myself, upon which you are grateful. Likewise I am married to a man like you, upon which I am exercising patience. Allah Ta'ala has promised Jannah for both - those who are grateful as well as those who adopt patience." (Tafseerul Kashaaf vol. 1, pg. 560)*

*Lesson: An intelligent person looks for something positive in the worst of situations, whilst a foolish person looks for the smallest negativity in the best of situations. Allah Ta'ala has blessed us with so many things for us to be happy and joyous about. Let us appreciate and enjoy them, and stop moaning about the small difficulties we sometimes experience. This applies to everything in our life, including our marriages. The secret is that one must focus on the reality - the Hereafter. As a result, the temporary difficulties of this world do not lead to depression and frustration. By focussing solely on this world, 'a tissue becomes an issue,' and by focussing on the Hereafter, 'a mountain becomes a molehill.'*

# Lesson From Sahih al-Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

## *The Book of Ablution*

### **Chapter 58 : What is said regarding washing out urine.**

And the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said about the man in grave that he didn't save himself from being soiled with his urine.

And (the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)) did not mention but the urine of human beings.

### **Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab**

Imam Bukhari (RA) wants to say that the human urine is Najas (ritually impure).

### **Hadith No. 212**

#### **Narrated Anas bin Malik (RA)**

*"Whenever the Prophet went to answer the call of nature, I used to bring water with which he used to clean his private parts".*

### **Comments**

Human urine or urine of those animals which are Haraam is Najas. There is consensus on it. There is difference of opinion about the urine of those animals which are Halaal. As per Hanafi and Shafa'ee schools of thought, urine is Najas whether it is of Halaal or Haraam animals. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said in a Hadith:

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*"Protect yourself from urine because punishment in grave is because of it".*

Once Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was returning after burying a Sahaabi and he seemed to be perturbed from his facial expression because he had noticed that the deceased Sahaabi was being punished in the grave. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) went to the house of this Sahaabi and asked his wife about his deeds. His wife told Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) that he used to graze sheep but while doing so he did not protect himself from their urine. It was on this occasion that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said these words.

### **Chapter 59 : Without Tarjamatul Baab**

### **Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab**

Allaama Kirmani (RA) says that Imam Bukhari (RA) wants to stress more on the importance of protecting oneself from getting soiled with urine. Otherwise the Hadith under this chapter has already been quoted earlier.

### **Hadith No. 213**

#### **Narrated Ibn 'Abbas (RA)**

*The Prophet once passed by two graves and*



said, "These two persons are being tortured not for a major sin (to avoid). One of them never saved himself from being soiled with his urine, while the other used to go about with calumnies (to make enmity between friends)." The Prophet then took a green leaf of a date-palm tree, split it into (pieces) and fixed one on each grave. They said, "O Allah's Apostle! Why have you done so?" He replied, "I hope that their punishment might be lessened till these (the pieces of the leaf) become dry."

#### **Chapter 60 : The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and the people left the Bedouin till he finished micturating in the Musjid.**

##### **Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab**

Uncleanliness of urine and importance of protecting oneself from it has already been stressed, but sometimes one has to choose the lesser evil.

##### **Hadith No. 214**

##### **Narrated Anas bin Malik (RA)**

"The Prophet saw a Bedouin making water in the Musjid and told the people not to disturb him. When he finished, the Prophet asked for some water and poured it over (the urine)".

##### **Comments**

One day a villager came to Masjid-i-Nabawi and started micturating in one of the corners of the Masjid. On seeing him, Sahaaba became very angry and wanted to stop him from this act. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) stopped them to do so and told them to let him finish.

There could have been two types of problems if the Sahaaba would have stopped him. One is that the man would have tried to run away and in that situation the whole Masjid would have been soiled with urine and the second is that if he would have been stopped half way during micturition, it would have been quite harmful for him. So Rasulul-

lah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) chose the lesser evil at this instance. There is a famous principle for such kind of occasions:

*"If a person is caught between two evils, he should choose the lesser evil".*

#### **Chapter 61 : To pour water over the urine in the Musjid.**

##### **Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab**

The soil or ground can be cleaned of urine by flowing water over it, similar is the case with a Musjid.

##### **Hadith No. 215**

##### **Narrated Abu Huraira (RA)**

"A Bedouin stood up and started making water in the Musjid. The people caught him but the Prophet ordered them to leave him and to pour a bucket or a tumbler of water over the place where he had passed the urine. The Prophet then said, "You have been sent to make things easy and not to make them difficult."

##### **Hadith No. 216**

##### **Narrated Anas bin Malik (RA)**

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said as above.

#### **Comments : while preaching—be soft and polite**

In these Ahaadith, Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has taught his Ummah that they should be soft and polite while preaching to others. If you see others doing wrongful deeds, they should be approached with kind heart and politeness. Allah says:

*"Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation". (16:125)*

#### **Ways to clean the ground soil**

As per Imam Maalik, Imam Shaf'ee and Imam Ahmad, all kinds of ground can be

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cleaned by pouring water over it. They don't believe that dryness of ground cleanses it and that there is no need to scratch it.

As per Imam Abu Haniefah (RA) there are three ways of cleaning the ground:

If the ground is soft, then only pouring water over it is enough. The earth will absorb the water along with the impurity and thus becomes clean.

If the ground is hard and has a slope, then the water should be poured over it and collected in a pit dug at the lower end of the slope and then the pit be filled with clay.

If the ground is hard and plain then it is necessary to scratch its superficial layer. It will not get cleaned by just pouring water over it as it will not absorb the water.

The third opinion of Imam Abu Haniefah (RA) is based on the Ahaadith quoted in Abu Dawood. One of these Ahaadith says:

*"Take some clay away on which the urine has fallen and throw that off".*

Musannif Ibn Abi Sheeba has quoted from Abu Qalaaba:

*"When the ground dries up it becomes clean".*

## Chapter 62 : The spilling of water over the urine.

### Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Imam Bukhari (RA) wants to say that the urine causes ritual impurity when it falls on the ground inside or outside a Musjid. At both places, the Taharah (ritual purity) can be attained by spilling water over it.

### Hadith No. 217

#### Narrated Anas bin Malik (RA)

*"A Bedouin came and passed urine in one corner of the Musjid. The people shouted at him but the Prophet stopped them till he finished urinating. The Prophet ordered them to spill a bucket of water over that place and they did so."*

### *I am Nothing!*

*When 'Aaisha (radhiyallahu 'anha) was on her death bed, 'Abdullah bin 'Abbaas (radhiyallahu 'anhuma) came in and began mentioning some of her virtues and achievements. 'Aaisha (radhiyallahu 'anha) heard this and responded: "How I wish I was a forgotten thing (who never existed)." (Bukhaari )*

*Lesson: Subhanallah! She had great virtues to her credit, she was the most beloved wife of Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam), Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) passed away while reclining on her, Jibreel ('alaihis salaam) conveyed salaam to her, as well as numerous other virtues. Yet she did not focus on any of these aspects. Instead she is wishing that she was forgotten. Such thoughts can only come to the one who is truly humble. We also need to learn this lesson of humility. Unfortunately our focus is towards "This is what I have done and these are my achievements. My child is always number one, my family is always in the forefront of everything," etc. 'Aaisha (radhiyallahu 'anha) is teaching us that we are nothing and we should not pretend to be anything.*

# A VOICE BEHIND A VEIL

*Khadijah Natalie Arbee*

I am a muslim women. I wear the niqaab (face veil).

I'm one of those to whom the new law in France would apply. I'm one of the ones being discussed by politicians, human rights groups and the media.

I'm one of those whom many feel the need to liberate.

I'm one of those you may think is oppressed.

I'm one of those many of you detest the sight of...

I'm one of those whom you may believe is uneducated; one of the ones you may think has no voice.

But I do. So let me speak.

I am not Arab, Asian or even African. I am Australian. No, not 'first generation', 'second generation', or an immigrant. On my mother's side, I'm of French-Canadian descent, and on my father's side; British. I grew up as a Christian, and attended church occasionally. I was in the school swim team, and district netball team. I holidayed with my family in the summer on the Gold Coast, and I'm educated. I have a university degree.

When I was 18 years of age I was introduced to Islam. I studied it, and accepted

it a year and a half later. By the time I reached 20, I was wearing the headscarf, and after I married I donned the niqaab.

Because of my husband? No.

My husband did not want me to wear it, although his mother and sister do, and out of respect for his wishes I didn't do so for two years. But I wanted to, and eventually did, and knowing it to be in line with our religion, my husband knew he had no authority to prevent me, and he now greatly admires my strength.

Then, I wore it because of my father? No. He's a catholic.

Because of my brother? Nope, haven't got one.

My uncle? He's an atheist.

Then because of my son? My eldest is only 8 years old. Then why??

Because I want to, that's why.

And seeing as though my niqaab does not hurt anyone, that should be sufficient reason for all of you liberals of a liberal society; I should be able to finish my discussion right here. But although it may be so for any other style of dress, it isn't enough when it comes to niqaab for some reason. You want more. So I will continue.

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What makes me want to then? Two things: Faith and experience.

Faith? Yeah, faith. Faith in my Creator, faith in His decisions, faith in Islam. A deep faith. Many wonder at the faith of Muslims, at their conviction and their commitment. It's a faith, that if you are not Muslim, is hard to explain or describe. The scripture of Islam, the Qur'an has scientific miracles in it, such that have captivated scientists globally, leading many to accept Islam. Moreover, the Qur'an has not been changed in over a thousand years, since it was revealed; not one letter moved from its place. I dare say there isn't a religious scripture like it, and this lends a clue as to the root of such faith.

In the Qur'an, Allah tells us to cover ourselves, 'so as to be known, but not molested'. So our covering is a protection; a liberation.

Protection? you ask. Liberation? From what?

This is where I move on to my second reason for veiling. Like I said, I grew up in a Western secular society, in true Western secular style. I dressed secular, lived secular, and enjoyed all the 'liberties' of such a society. Did I feel liberated, free? Suffice to say, we were taught we were, so I never thought to think otherwise. It wasn't until I became Muslim, and started covering, that I really felt liberated, and realised, before that I wasn't.

Yet, time and time again we hear it said that we Muslim women are forced to veil, are oppressed; treated by our men folk as nothing more than 'objects.' And that niqaab, burqa, hijab; whatever term you use, is a form of 'imprisonment'.

But what about the imprisonment of anxiety and depression?

What about the imprisonment of anorexia and bulimia?

What about the imprisonment of frequent rigorous exercise routines?

What about the imprisonment of always feeling the need to look like the super-model on the cover of Cosmo, or the pop-singer in the music video?

What about the slavery to fashion?

What about the entrapment of jealousy??

How many women waste their hard-earned money, destroy their physical and mental health, expose their bodies to vulnerability, abuse and extortion in order to..... in order to what??

In order to gain approval and praise. Who's approval and praise? Men's.

And yes, it seems even other women too. So it seems non-Muslim women are not only slaves to men, but slaves to society as a whole.

Before you scream your disagreement, which many of you may do as a knee-jerk reaction to being told you're also oppressed, stop and think. Look around you, contemplate society today, and its values, its aspirations, its goals, its direction, its past-times, its hobbies....

What good has it done for women to doff more and more clothing?

What good has it done for images of uncovered made-up women to be plastered on every billboard and magazine, on the TV, in the movies, and on the net?

Has it really brought any good for women?

The women in the images may aptly feel good about themselves for a while, but what does it mean for every other women?

Women who look upon these images usually become anxious, jealous, unsure and critical of themselves, or all of these things. Many men who view them will become aroused, or even unhappy, less satisfied with the partners they already have. What can, and does this lead to?

Cheating, dumping, chastisement, and even harassment of other women, and even children by, men who cannot find a le-

gitimate outlet for their constant arousal. And yes, I can hear some of you; 'then the men must control themselves!' Frankly speaking that argument is well spent, not to mention futile, as most men are, inherently, only able to react to that, the same way a hungry lion would react if thrown a juicy piece of steak, and told not to eat it....

Do the uncovered women captured in these images and industries, or parading around, realise or even care how many young girls are starving, purging and stressing themselves trying to mirror their image? No.

It seems they even take perverse pleasure in it. One barely-dressed singer even boldly and crudely sung recently, 'Don't you wish your girlfriend was hot like me?'

What?!

What is this women and her ilk saying??

What are they implying??

What are they doing to their sisters in humanity??!

So many poor girls, eroding themselves physically and mentally as they watch with jealousy and anxiety their partners ogle singers like this. Have the same thing occur to these women, these 'idols'; have their partners swoon over another similarly attired, and witness their reaction! And when their daughters are molested by men they themselves, or women like them, have aroused, will they reflect?

Will they act?

Will society act?

Yeah, we see it reacting: ban the burqa!

It just amazes me how many women especially, despise my choice of dress. Yet,

would they rather their husband's secretary to be dressed like me or otherwise?

Would they rather the waitress serving the table at their anniversary dinner, be dressed like me or otherwise?

Is it me and my sisters who are turning their husband's head, or attracting their boyfriends??

Is it me and my sisters who have led their daughters to anorexia, or their sons to pornography?

Is it me and my sisters whose bodies and faces solicit their husband's/boyfriend's attention on every corner? Is it me and my sisters who have aroused that man to rape or harass their sisters?

Whose mode of 'dress' is truly oppressive and harmful to women??

So now I've spoken, and although I am one, I speak on behalf of hundreds. I've explained to you that the majority of us have chosen this mode of dress, especially in the West. I have told you that we love it, we want it, and I've exemplified for you the inherent good in it. I've discussed here the issue of niqaab based on the suggestion that it is oppressive, or harmful to society, as this is the main reason stated by the French for the ban. When it comes to other issues of security and communication, then please see <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/07/11/veiled-threats/> for an excellent refutation of these arguments.

So to those of you who really are so concerned about 'liberating' me, then you will listen to what I have said, and let me and my sisters be.

Source: Islaminfo

# *You're witnessing* **A Miracle!**

---

*Abu Muhammad*

From time immemorial, the Almighty Creator, Allah Jalla Wa A'ala, as a manifestation of His Mercy towards Humanity, intermittently sent Prophets and Messengers to remind Man of the pledge of allegiance given to Allah Jalla Wa A'ala in the world of souls (Qur'an Surah 7: V172). Together with a call towards a Divine code of life, a Prophet and Messenger often performed a supernatural act that defied logic and the laws of nature and which could only be classified as an act of God – A MIRACLE!

With Isa (Jesus) (AS), it was his speech as an infant to protect the integrity of his mother (Qur'an Surah 19: V30-33), blowing of life in to clay birds, his curing the lepers, granting of sight to those born blind, bringing the dead back to life-all with Allah's permission (Qur'an Surah 3: V49) while with Moosa (Moses) (AS) it was his staff turning in to a serpent to devour the 'snakes' of the magicians to defeat them in to submission and his staff splitting the Red Sea, allowing for the exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt and the tyranny of the Pharoah while at the same time resulting in the watery grave and destruction of the Pharoah- all

with Allah's permission (Surah 26: V63- 68). To many other Prophets and Messengers were also miracles but the aim and objective was one – to draw the attention of their respective nations to the Greatness of Allah Jalla Wa A'ala and as a Divine 'stamp of approval' of the Prophet /Messenger

The Messenger of Allah, Muhammed (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was the last in the noble line and station of Prophethood. He (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) performed many miracles during his lifetime and it was imperative that, as his mission of Prophethood extends until the Last Day his followers, who were mantled with the responsibility of carrying on his mission, had in their possession a living miracle of his that would serve the purpose mentioned above. Allah Jalla Wa A'ala, in His Divine wisdom, provided for this in the form of the greatest of literary works that transformed the Arabian Peninsula and propelled a group of 'backward desert dwellers' not to just the leadership of two thirds of the then known world but also to becoming the beacons of faith and justice in a world drowned in the injustice of faithlessness. This is the Qur'an –

revered as THE infallible word of GOD by more than 1,6 billion Muslims the world over from every conceivable colour, creed and background, whose message still holds relevance and credence today as it did 1 400 years ago and will still do the same until the end of time. Free on any contradictions and inaccuracies!

The Qur'an is not just a miracle but a myriad of miracles packaged all in one. Apart from it being the most read book in the world, it is also THE only book that has, is and will be memorised verse for verse in its original language of revelation by hundreds of thousands of Muslims many of whom do not even speak Arabic. Nothing showcases this spectacle more succinctly than the month of Ramadaan where Masaajid, Musallahs and homes are adorned with the recitation of the Qur'an during the additional night prayers. A point to mention here is that while every Muslim is encouraged to understand the Qur'an, its recitation without understanding is also not without benefit. A group of atheist, Russian high ranked politicians began to tear after listening to the world renowned Qur'an Reciter Qari, Sheikh Abdul Basit (May Allah have mercy on him) reciting the Qur'an before them and their only explanation was that, 'There was something touching in it!' The fact that it is mandatory to read the Qur'an in Arabic in formal prayers is a unifying factor for Muslims in that wherever in the world they may find themselves, all differences of culture, language and the colour instantly melt away when the Imam (leader in prayer) begins the prayer and the familiarity of what's recited binds the followers in a bond of brotherhood that looms above all else!

Languages, by their very nature, evolve and their essence, correct meaning and understanding, often lost. Not only has the Arabic language been preserved but after its revelation the Qur'an because of its liter-

ary brilliance, had become THE basis and reference of the Arabic language, thus ensuring its use, protection and proliferation for posterity. Unlike other religions, anyone wishing to pursue Islamic Scholarship, the learning of Classical Arabic is a pre requisite as the Qur'an which is the foundation and primary source of the Shariah (body of Islamic Law) has to be studied in its original language of revelation. Translations are unreliable as a primary source as during this process much of the essence is lost. This process of memorisation, learning and teaching of the Qur'an has protected the Shariah from corruption. The same cannot be said of the other Aramaic languages which were the original languages of revelation of the Jewish and Christian scriptures.

Given the fact that the Qur'an is a religious scripture meant for the guidance of humanity it stands to reason that a considerable portion of it deals with spiritual concepts of the purpose of creation, beliefs, stories of the previous Prophets, death, life after death, heaven and hell it is not limited to these aspects. It has broad principles of social laws and interaction as well as principles that cover aspects of trade, business and laws of inheritance. Together with this there are scientific truths that were mentioned 1 400 years ago which science has only discovered in the last century. Some of these are:

- The origin of the Universe resulting from a 'bang' and continuously expanding (Qur'an Surah 51 : V47) discovered by Physicist and Astronomer Lemaitre and confirmed by Edwin Hubble in 1929
- The origin of life in water (Surah 21: V30) only recently discovered by Biologists
- All things created in pairs (Surah 37: V36) discovered by Physicist Paul Dirac in 1933
- Conception and subsequent development of the foetus (Surah 23 – V12-14/Surah 36 – V6/Surah 75 – V36-37) as verified by leading American Embryologist Dr Keith Moore

- The uniqueness of fingerprints (Surah 75 : V3-4) which was only discovered in the 19th Century
- The atmosphere created in seven layers (Surah 2 : V29) and each layer having its own characteristics (Surah 41 : V12) as well as the formation of rain (Surah 24 : V43/Surah 30 : V48) as well as the equal rate of evaporation and precipitation (Surah 43 : V11) only discovered recently by Meteorologists using modern technology
- Mountains created as pegs to stabilise the earth (Surah 21 : V31) only discovered by modern Geologists
- The property of the seas, that they come together yet do not mix at all due to difference in density (Surah 55 : V 19-20) only very recently discovered by Oceanographers

While the above has been cited it is important to understand that the Qur'an confirms science and not vice versa and the objective of revealing these scientific truths was to manifest the greatness of Allah Jalla Wa A'ala to those who ponder and reflect so that they would also be enveloped in Divine guidance which is the ultimate objective of the revelation of the Qur'an (Surah 2 : V2) and could also benefit from the 'Divinely endorsed' lifestyle of the The Final Messenger of Allah, Prophet Muhammed (May Allah be pleased with him)

Probably the greatest miracle of the Qur'an and a proof of its Divine origin is the fact that the one to whom it was revealed was unlettered, did not have any formal schooling was not renowned for his poetic skills in a society that prided itself on its Poets and poetry, yet at the age of forty, over a period of twenty three years, Muhammad

(Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) began uttering such words from revelation that would culminate in the greatest literary masterpiece as well as a manual for eternal salvation – The Last Testament /The Qur'an the world has ever seen and will ever see! This could be none other than the fact that what he spoke was not from himself but rather what the Almighty placed on his tongue (Surah 53 : V1-5) and so laconically prophesied in the Biblical verse of Deuteronomy, '...and I (God) will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I shall command him' (Bible Ch 18 : V 18)

Dr Maurice Bucaille, who embraced Islam after studying the Qur'an, had this to say

*'It is impossible that Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) authored the Quran. How could a man, from being illiterate, become the most important author, in terms of literary merits, in the whole of Arabic literature? How could he then pronounce truths of a scientific nature that no other human being could possibly have developed at that time, an all this without once making the slightest error in his pronouncement on the subject?' (The Bible, the Quran and Science - 1978, p. 125)*

To all of us who are living at this moment who are looking for a something to inspire and motivate us, to answer our questions, satisfy our curiosities, remove our confusion, solve our problems and point us in the direction of living correctly so that we may travel the road to eternal happiness and salvation... then we need to look no further than the Qur'an which is the greatest miracle that exists today – embrace it and be Guided!



# Adopting the Culture of Islam

*Mawlana Qari Abdullah Saleem  
Transcribed by Hafiz Ahsan Syed*

Allah has created our life in a very unique manner. The things we require, in fact what every creation requires, He has provided them for us. And we humans have many more necessities than any other creation.

Amongst His creation is the system of day and night, and the sun and the moon. Based on this system, we design our own unique system comprising of hours, days, weeks, months, and years. All of our dealings from transactions to marriages are connected to this system. We require it, use it, and make elaborate calendars from it.

Animals do not need this phenomenon. The most that animals require is the fluctuation of the seasons. When winter comes, they know to start preparing for it either by migrating to a warmer climate or simply hibernating in the present one. A similar situation is with trees and flowers. Fall marks their death, and spring [marks] their return. But because [human] needs are much more expansive, Allah has created more facilities for them.

Allah Most High says, "We have

made night and day as two signs. We made the sign of the night devoid of light, and made the sign of the day radiant that you may seek the bounty of your Lord and know the computation of years and numbers. Thus We have explained everything in detail, to keep everything distinct from the other." (Qur'an 17:12)

As such, the sun and moon were made instruments of time. By using them, we make our calendars. From the sun we determine the hours of the day and night. But by merely examining it, we can easily lose track of weeks and months. To make a calendar based on the sun, a complex mathematical system is required. The lunar calendar on the other hand is much simpler than that; an average individual can set his dates according to it without any hassle. In fact, ancient civilizations based their calendars upon the moon. The Gregorian calendar we use today came into existence much later. When Islam came, the Muslims also adopted the lunar calendar. Although other nations used them, Muslims considered it as the Islamic calendar when they adopted it. All Islamic rulings which are

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connected to days and months are according to the Islamic calendar. For instance, a women's period of 'iddah (the period of time a widow spends after her husband's death) is 4 months and 10 days. All of the Fuqaha (jurists) agree that this will be based upon the Islamic calendar and not the Gregorian calendar.

How unfortunate is it today that if any Muslim is asked regarding the current Islamic month or date, he will not be able to answer. The reason is obvious: neither do we use it nor do we know anything about it; we do not concern ourselves with it. There is no doubt that if a person involves himself with it for the sake of reward, he will be rewarded; but more importantly, it is necessary to be involved with it because it is part of our Islamic heritage and civilization. In fact, anything connected to our heritage and civilization must be adopted by us whether it is the Islamic calendar, clothing, or style of living. A nation without its heritage is worthless; only when it is connected to its heritage does it deserve to be called a nation.

This brings on another point: the difference between a qawm and an Ummah. A qawm is a group of people connected to a specific region, language, tradition, and so on. This connection is something inherited from generation to generation and its people are recognized through this connection. Another type of connection is the connection to a prophet. This is called an Ummah. It too has a specific heritage and culture. For instance, when asked what is the qawm of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), we will say the Arab. When asked if he was only sent to them, the reply will be no. In fact, he was sent to the whole world as is mentioned in the Qur'an: "Say, [O Muhammad]: 'O people, I am Allah's messenger to you all.'" (Qur'an 7: 158)

"To you all" refers to everyone till the Day of Judgment, making them all his

Ummah. So just like a qawm has its culture and heritage, so too does an Ummah. We learn our culture and identity from the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

Just like how Allah has made everything easy for us, the culture and heritage of Islam is also easy and flexible to adopt. For example, regarding clothing, Allah says, "O Children of Adam! Indeed We have sent down to you a garment which covers your shame and provides protection and adornment. But the finest of all is the garment of piety." (Qur'an 7: 26)

The ruling from Allah regarding clothing has one main condition: to cover the private parts. Besides this there is flexibility. If you live in a cold environment, you can wear thick material to protect from the cold. For those living in a warm environment, they can wear a material of thinner quality so long as it covers and hides their private parts. Allah did not mention any shape or size, but rather left it to our discretion. Along with this, Allah also mentions a principle to protect the Islamic identity and heritage: out of all the garments that can be worn, the garment of piety is the best. What constitutes as the garment of piety? It is that garment from which an onlooker can recognize and identify the signs of piety. When he sees it, no matter where he is from, he gets the impression and the idea that this person possesses fear of Allah, concern for the hereafter, and the fervor to follow the footsteps of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). That is *libas al-Taqwa* (the garment of piety). Whatever that dress or appearance may be, it is the Islamic identity and culture. And if a person leaves this and adopts the culture of another, then he is from amongst them. It is not possible for a person to claim to be part of a specific culture, yet adopt the ways of others. Thus, if we claim to be Muslims, then we should adopt the Islamic culture (*thaqafah*).

If we recognize the Islamic culture

but are deficient in following it, and we consider it as a deficiency on our part, then there is hope that Allah will allow us to change ourselves. But those who disregard the Islamic culture, adopt the culture of others, and consider themselves as doing the correct thing, then they are people whose mind-set has completely changed. (There example is of a sick person. Everything sweet tastes bitter to them, and everything bitter tastes sweet. The problem is not in the food, but the problem is in the person. So long as that sickness remains, this will be his condition. Only when the sickness is removed can he distinguish between sweet and bitter.)

For instance, many women do not wear hijab and do not cover themselves in the manner prescribed by Islam. At one level is to not act upon an Islamic injunction. At another level is to not act upon the injunction and justify disobedience as correct to such an extent that those who follow the injunction are looked down upon and considered as wrongdoers. Putting aside all the detailed rulings and commandments, the question is a simple one: has Islam commanded it or not? Once established that it has been commanded, then how can something proven through the Qur'an and Sunnah be regarded as defective and flawed? This also applies to men who neither act nor appear like the way they should. To consider ourselves at fault results in the possibility of us following it in the future [through divinely granted ability]. But to consider the actual injunction as faulty, and to look at those who follow it disgracefully and with eyes of disgust, is a very dangerous state because in essence we are considered what the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) practiced and encouraged

as being defective. This is what we should be focusing on and reforming because this is our culture and our identity, our *thaqafah*.

When we see an individual with a specific type of beard and a specific type of turban, we recognize that he is a Sikh from a distance. How did we know he's a Sikh? Did we ask him his name? His faith? His religion? We asked him nothing. Yet, from a distance, just by looking at him we were able to recognize him as a Sikh. And just as you and I recognized him as such, the whole world recognizes him in the same manner. Perhaps he will be recognized like that in the hereafter and be dealt with in a similar conduct.

In this manner, each nation has its own culture and identity. We also have our own. Today this is the fight we face: the demand and pull from each nation to follow its culture. At times this is even forced down upon us. Sadly though, we tell them not to force it because we eagerly accept it and in fact progress in it. This is something we need to think about with an open heart and mind. No doubt, trials and problems face us and await us, but if our 'aqidah is that for every trial there is a solution from Allah, we will find it. The foundation is a person's belief and certainty in Allah.

"And proclaim: The truth has come, and falsehood is ever bound to vanish." (Qur'an 17: 81)

Falsehood appears and shows itself to be strong in the beginning. Whoever sees it and thinks it impossible to overcome, he has surely lost the fight. Whatever opportunity we have been given by Allah's grace in this short life we must take full advantage of it and use it to obey Allah and follow His Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

# How to Clean The Heart

The sin of malice and discord is serious. Even on auspicious occasions despite Allah's abundant mercy, we always find one particular class of people that are deprived; those who harbour ill-feelings in their hearts towards others. In addition to this, some narrations state that such people's salah is not accepted by Allah. (At-Targheeb)

## **Few Prescriptions (from the hadith and advice of elders) to remove ill-feelings from the heart:**

1. Recite the following ayah in abundance:

*"Rabbanagh fir lana wa li ikhwaninal lazheena sabaquna bil iman, wala taj'al fee quloobina ghillal lillazheena amanu Rabbana innaka Raoofur Raheem"*  
(Surah: 59 Ayah: 10)

2. Rasulullah (sallallahu'alaihi wasalam) said:

*"Offer gifts to each other, for this creates affection and removes the anger of the hearts"*  
(Muwatta Imam Malik, see Al-Tamheed, & Takhreejul ihya)

3. Greet each other with Salam and shake hands. This is also a way of bonding the hearts. (Sahih Muslim)

4. Rasulullah (sallallahu'alaihi wasalam) said:

*"By fasting during the month of Ramadhan 20 (Vol.14, No: 174)*

*and 3 days of every other (Islamic) month, the rancour of the heart is removed"*  
(At-Targheeb)

5. Make du'a for the the person from whom one is disillusioned.

6. Praise him in his absence.

By implementing the above with the sincere intent of freeing ourselves from ill-feelings, Allah will cleanse our hearts Insha Allah.

## **Inspiration from a Sahabi (RA)**

Sayyiduna Anas (RA) says:

"We were sitting with the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu'alaihi wasalam) when he said: "A man who is from the inmates of Jannah is about to arrive." Soon thereafter, a Sahabi (RA) came in, with his shoes in his left hand and the water of wudhu dripping from his beard. When the gathering ended, Sayyiduna 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn 'As (RA) followed this person (with the motive of learning the reason for him being blessed with such a glad tiding)

He said to him: "I have taken an oath that I will not go home for 3 days. Is it possible for you to accommodate me for this time?" The Sahabi agreed. Sayyiduna 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr stayed with him for 3 days, but noticed nothing extraordinary in his routine. i.e, he never engaged in additional

voluntary deeds as expected.

However, whenever this Sahabi (RA) would go to bed at night, he would recite some form of dhikr, then sleep till fajr. Furthermore, during these 3 days he did not hear him utter any word besides good.

Sayyiduna 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr (RA) says: "After three nights I almost deemed his deeds as "nothing so special". I approached him and explained that my real motive for staying with him was to discover the special act that he may be engaging in, which warranted his guarantee of Jannah." Then I asked him: "How did You achieve such a rank?" He said: "I have no special deeds beside whatever You have seen during your stay." I accepted this and was about to leave when he exclaimed: "O, Yes! there is something. I do not harbor any evil or malice in my heart against any fellow Muslim. I am not jealous over whatever good Allah bestows upon any of them." Sayyiduna 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr (RA) said: "That is precisely the reason for You reaching such a lofty status."

*(Musnad Ahmad & Nasaai. Hafiz Ibn Katheer -rahimahullah- has declared the chain of Nasaai as authentic, in accordance to the standards of Imams Bukhari & Muslim. refer: Tafseer Ibn Katheer, surah:59, Ayah: 9)*

We often look for extraordinary deeds to acquire success, when the solution lies in the basics...

Source: Jamiat.org.za

*Cont'd from page 1*

create human beings devoid of their free will just like any other things in the universe that are programmed to do whatever has been assigned to them. When we say that had God willed to create unity or a world free from suffering, we are denying ourselves the dignity and freedom and we are abandoning our responsibilities.

"Say: "[Know,] then, that the final evidence [of all truth] rests with God alone; and had He so willed, He would have guided you all aright." (6:149)

"Now they who ascribe divinity to aught beside God say, "Had God so willed, we would not have worshipped aught but Him - neither we nor our forefathers; nor would we have declared aught as forbidden without a commandment from Him." Even thus did speak those [sinners] who lived before their time; but, then, are the apostles bound to do more than clearly deliver the message [entrusted to them]?" (16:35)

"Yet they say, "Had [not] the Most Gracious so willed, we would never have worshipped them!" [But] they cannot have any knowledge of [His having willed] such a thing: they do nothing but guess." (43:20)

It is our choice to create a world view based on the divine values or the values that we have evolved over centuries based on our ethnic, cultural, religious, financial, geographical or geographical interests. It is our choice to divide humanity into us and them. It is our choice to deny people the right to live a dignified life regardless of their backgrounds. It is our choice to create a distribution system where the resources given to us by Allah are allocated on the basis of justice or injustice. It is our choice to stop the rape, sufferings and poverty.

Allah has given us guidance and He would not interfere in our world to ensure that they are followed and implemented. We are the ones who have to accept the guidance or reject it and we are the ones who have to show respect to the freedom of choice He has given us.

The sufferings of Rohingyas will pass as the sufferings of many others have passed. But the continuation of sufferings pronounces a clear judgment on our behavior and attitude. It tells us that we have failed to grasp the essence of divine guidance in our lives and despite whatever labels we put on our face we are still in defiance of His teachings.

# Women of Paradise - II

## Asma' bint Abi Bakr (RA)

In the previous issue, we learned about the black woman and her love for Allah. Once again we will take a trip back in time and visit another great woman, Asma' bint Abi Bakr (RA), one of the Sahabah (female Companions) of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). This journey requires that we free our minds from the ideas of modernists and pay special attention to the life this blessed companion led, and compare it to our own lives. As always, we will make this trip through the authentic narration from the Scholars of Hadith. Brace yourselves as we now journey back in time to the golden era at the time of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

Asma' daughter of Abu Bakr (RA) said: "az-Zubair (RA) (Ibn al-'Awwam, the cousin of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), through his aunt) married me. He had neither wealth, slave or anything else like it, except a camel (to get water) and a horse. I used to graze his horse, [provide fodder to it and look after it, and ground dates for his camel. Besides this, I grazed the camel], made arrangements for providing [it with] water and patched up [his] leather bucket and kneaded the flour. But I was not proficient in baking the bread, so my female neighbors used to bake bread for me [and

they were sincere women]. And I used to carry on my head the stones (seeds) of the dates from az-Zubair's land which Allah's Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) had endowed him, and it was at a distance of two miles (from Madinah).

"As I was one day carrying the stones of dates upon my head I happened to meet Allah's Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) along with a group of his Companions. He called me and said to the camel to sit down so that he should make me ride behind him. I felt shy to go with men and I remembered az-Zubair (RA) and his ghirah, and he was the man having the most ghirah. When the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) understood my shyness, he left. I came to az-Zubair (RA) and said: 'The Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) met me as I was carrying the stones of the dates on my head, and there was with him a group of his Companions, he said to the camel to sit down so that I mount it, I felt shy from him, and remembered your ghirah.' Whereupon he (az-Zubair) said: 'By Allah, the carrying of dates' stone upon your head is more severe a burden on me than riding with him.' [And I led this life of hardship] until Abu Bakr (RA) sent afterwards a female servant who took upon herself the responsibility of looking after the horse and I felt as if she had

emancipated me." Remember that Asma' was the sister in law of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)!

Asma' reported: "I performed the household duties of az-Zubair (RA) and he had a horse, I used to look after it. Nothing was (more) for me than looking after the horse. I used to bring grass for it and looked after it, then I got a servant as Allah's Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) had some prisoners of war in his possession. He gave me a female servant. She then began to look after the horse and thus relieved me of this burden. A person came and he said: 'Mother of Abdullah, I am a destitute person and I intend that I should start business under the shadow of your house.' I (Asma') said: 'If I grant you permission, az Zubair (RA) may not agree to that, so you come and make a demand of it when az-Zubair (RA) is also present there.'"

He came accordingly and said: 'Mother of Abdullah, I am a destitute person. I intend to start small business in the shadow of your house. I said: 'Is there not in Madinah (any place for starting the business) except my house?' Az-Zubair (RA) said: 'Why is it that you prohibit the destitute man to start business here?' So he started business and he (earned so much) that we sold our slave-girl to him. Az-Zubair (RA) came to me while the money was in my lap. He said: 'Give this to me.' I said: '(I intend) to spend it in charity.'" [Muslim]

Notice how Asma' (RA) had been in favor of allowing that person to start business under the shadow of their house, but she did not like to do anything which could be a source of annoyance or disgust to her husband. She, therefore, posed a question in order to solicit the opinion of her husband and when his reaction was found favorable, she agreed to this proposal.

Dear Sister, Allah has made you a protected jewel in Islam whom the liberals

are trying to make an object of trade, and the modernists [among Muslims] are trying to strip you of your modesty and shyness. Read these ahadith carefully, over and over, and ponder them very deeply. They contain a gold mine for both women and men

Asma' (RA) had the following credits to her personality (among others): She was one of the most noble women of Arabia at that time.

The daughter of the pure and the noble Abu Bakr (RA), the leader of his tribe, and the first Caliph of Islam.

The sister-in-law of the best of mankind - Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), who named her "Thatun-Nitaqayn" (the one with two belts), for her heroic act during the Hijrah [migration] of the Prophet and Abu Bakr, from Makkah to Madinah.

The sister of the most knowledgeable woman, 'Aishah (RA) who is among the only seven Companions of the Prophet who narrated more than a thousand ahadith.

The wife of az-Zubair Ibn al-'Awwaam (RA), one of the ten people promised Paradise by the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Az-Zubair was brave, courageous and defended the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) with his sword.

The mother of amirul-mu'minin 'Abdullah Ibn az-Zubair (RA) who was given bay'a in Hijaz and was killed by al-Hajjaaj: and

The mother of 'Urwah (RA), who when he entered in prayer he would forget about this life. It was 'Urwah who when his leg had to be cut, was told to drink wine as an anesthesia but refused to drink wine and instead, gave instructions to cut it while he was in prayer. They did, and he did not feel anything until he woke up.

Asma' was one of the most noble personalities, yet was veiled and shy in front of men. She refused to be with men, mingle with them, ride among them or go with them - and by Allah, the men being talked about

were no ordinary men! They were the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and his Companions. She served her husband as a true wife should, staying at home to take care of her household. She was very careful at guarding and preserving her honor, and the honor of her husband. Did she ever pressure az-Zubair (RA) by reminding him of her honorable lineage as the daughter of the noble Abu Bakr (RA)? She was patient for the hardship she went through, and was loving and respectful towards her husband. Can a woman be richer than Asma'?

Her father, Abu Bakr (RA), was a rich merchant. Yet, she carried stones of dates on her head, and walked miles to get water and date seeds. She also dealt with horses and camels [which she did not do in her father's house], baked bread, pleased her husband, yet would not take decisions without him, even if it were an obvious decision for the pleasure of Allah.

Dear sister, wake up! Realize that the modernists and liberalists are leading you to a path other than the path of the Believers. Allah says (the meaning (of which is): And whoever contends with, and contradicts the Messenger after guidance has been clearly conveyed to him, and chooses a path other than that of the Faithful Believers, We shall leave him in the Path he has chosen and land him in Hell, what an evil refuge!" [Noble Quran 4:115].

Which path leads you to happiness of this world and the hereafter, to the pleasure of Allah and the company of Asma' in Paradise? Is it the path of tabarruj and sufur and lkhtilat or the path of Hijab and Modesty?

Remember the golden words of Asma' when she said: "I felt shy to go with men, and I remembered az-Zubair and his ghirah." Remember also what the black woman said: "But I become uncovered, so please invoke Allah for me [make du'a to Al-

lah for me] that I may not become uncovered." This illustrates what kind of a pure and clean society it was, and what kind of amazing women they were. They were the followers of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, the Salaf that we are proud to follow. We ask you to think about this, and pray to Allah to make us all among the pure women and men whom Allah is pleased with, and whom the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) will be pleased and happy to meet in Paradise, for they followed his Sunnah though they never met him, and they followed the practice of his Companions though they never met them either.

Imagine, dear sister, that you are among the blessed ones who succeeded in passing over the Sirat, and found in front of you the Hawdh (pool) of the Prophet and you drank from it. Imagine yourself entering Jannah and finding the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) who is happy to see you. Imagine you are among those whom he called "my brethren". Imagine yourself among the blessed ones when the veil will be withdrawn, and the people of the Paradise "will not have known anything dearer to them than looking upon the Countenance of their Lord." [Muslim] Indeed, the reward of Allah is invaluable; the reward of Allah is Paradise; its price is following and practicing the Qur'an and the Sunnah the way that Asma' and az-Zubair and all the Sahabah did.

We hope and pray that after journeying through these authentic ahadith with us, we can put into practice all that we have learnt. We remind you that our happiness, the pleasure of our eyes and the comfort of our hearts start with you by your following of the Qur'an and the Sunnah and the practice of the Salaf: We hope to see you insha'Allah in our next trip to the golden age through some other ayahs of the Qur'an and the authentic ahadith.

*Courtesy: islamswomen*



# When Evils Spread On Land

*Ahmad Wahaj Siddiqui*

The earth today stands in imminent danger and nothing will save it from environmental catastrophe. Six scientists from some of the leading institutions in the United States have issued an unambiguous warning to the world: Civilization itself is threatened by global warming. They also implicitly criticized UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) for underestimating the scale of rise in sea levels seen this century as a result of melting glaciers and polar ice sheets. Instead of sea level rising about 40cm, as the IPCC predicts in one of its computerized forecasts, the true rise might be as big as several meters by 2100. That is why, they say, planet earth today is in imminent danger.

However, if we look into Qur'an, it gave the warning of 'Earth is in danger' in 7th century CE: "See they not that We gradually reduce the earth from its outlying borders. (Qur'an, 13:41)

Another verse says: "See they not that We gradually reduce the earth from its outlying borders. Is it then they who will overcome?" (Qur'an, 21:44)

The outlying borders of the earth are being narrowed by sea floor spreading. The theory of lithospheric evolution holds that

the ocean floors are spreading outward from vast underwater ridges. The theory was first propounded in the early 1960s by American geologist Harry H. Hess. (Columbia Encyclopedia)

The first reason given for the sea floor spreading is the process when the ocean floor is extended the two plates move apart, the rocks break and earth-quake occurs along the plate boundary. Under a volcanic eruption the magma piles up along the crack forming a long chain of mountains on the ocean floor.

This chain is called an oceanic ridge. On the whole sea floor spreading is basically volcanic. (Columbia Encyclopedia)

The Qur'an has described this phenomenon when nobody could dream of it in 7th Century. It said: "When the oceans boil over with a swell." (Qur'an, 81:6)

Commentary in 'The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an,' which has been revised and republished by The Presidency of the Islamic Research, Ifta and Call Guidance of Saudi Arabia in 1989, in its explanatory note 5975 says: "It is expressed to be Arabic 'Sujjarat.' The oceans which now keep their bounds will surge and boil over and overwhelm all land marks." Famous commentator 'Ibn Kathir'

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wrote about the ocean, "When it would be like blazing fire."

In those pre-scientific times no one could have understood the possibility of the boiling sea water. But now science has upheld the truth of the Qur'an and found volcanic eruptions under seawater.

They are now on a limited scale but may cause an outburst of volcanic magma that will see ocean waters boil up and drown the earth. We already have a bad experience of tsunami which brought disaster and took hundreds of thousands of lives.

The other reason involving imminent peril to our planet earth, advanced by the scientists is global warming. Scientists have found that the Creator has surrounded this earth with an atmosphere having several layers.

The lowest region, the troposphere, extends from the earth's surface up to about 10 km in altitude. Virtually all the human activities occur in the troposphere.

The next layer, the stratosphere stretches from 10 km to about 50 km. Ozone is concentrated in a layer in the stratosphere about 15 to 30 km above the earth's surface. Ozone is a molecule containing three oxygen atoms. Out of each 10 million molecules about two million are normal oxygen. It plays a key role in the atmosphere. The ozone layer absorbs a portion of the radiation i.e. ultraviolet rays from the sun, preventing it from reaching the planet's surface.

Scientists have found depletion of ozone because of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). The CFCs compounds have atmospheric lifetimes long enough to allow them to be transported by winds into the stratosphere. The CFC's are so stable that exposure to strong ultraviolet radiation breaks them down. When that happens, the CFCs molecule releases atomic chlorine. One chlorine atom can destroy over 100,000 ozone molecules.

That is causing ozone depletion.

An example of the ozone depletion is the annual ozone hole over Antarctica that has occurred since the early 1980s. In addition, researches have shown ozone depletion occurs over the latitudes that include North America, Europe, Asia and much of Africa, Australia and South America. That has given rise to global warming and dangerous climate change triggering a rapid melting of the polar ice sheets.

The glaciers and ice sheets of Greenland in the Northern Hemisphere and the western Antarctic ice sheet in the south both show signs of the rapid changes predicted by rising temperatures.

Allah Almighty says: "Evil has appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of men have earned." (Qur'an, 30:41)

The CFCs, or CO2 emissions, are "what the hands of men have earned." These are damaging ozone on the one hand and causing warming of the globe on the other.

James Hansen, director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies observes: "Recent greenhouse gas emissions place the earth perilously close to dramatic climate change that could run out of control, with great dangers for humans and other creatures, only intense efforts to curb man-made emissions of carbon dioxide emissions and other greenhouse gases can keep the climate within or near the range of the past one million years."

Would our scientists be able to control the phenomenon that is endangering mankind? We find in the Qur'an: "On the day when the earth will be changed to another earth and so will be the heavens." (Qur'an, 14:48)

There are many other Qur'anic verses that point to the destruction of the universe, but what is not known is when it will happen.

# Lowering the Gaze

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Lowering one's gaze is one of the most important things that a Muslim should do to protect himself from the punishment of Allah. Every sincere Muslim should spare no pains in this regard and should take practical steps to guard his gaze and overcome his weakness.

Sheikh Muhammad Saleh Al-Munajjid, a prominent Saudi Muslim scholar and lecturer, states: Shari'ah came to forbid the ways that lead to immorality, one of which is looking at non-mahram (a mahram is a non-marriageable relative) women. Almighty Allah says: "Tell the believing men to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts)" (An-Nur:30) In his commentary on this verse, Imam Ibn Kathir wrote: "This is a command from Allah to His believing slaves to lower their gaze and refrain from looking at that which is forbidden to them. So they should not look at anything except that which they are permitted to look at, and they should lower their gaze and refrain from looking at forbidden things. If it so happens that a person's gaze accidentally falls upon something forbidden, he should quickly avert his gaze."

It was narrated that Jarir ibn

'Abdullah (RA) said: "I asked the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) about an accidental glance, and he commanded me to avert my gaze." (Muslim) Imam An-Nawawi said: "What is meant by an "accidental glance" is when a person's glance unintentionally falls upon a non-mahram woman. There is no sin on him for the first glance, but he must avert his gaze immediately. If he averts his gaze immediately there is no sin on him, but if he continues looking, then he will be a sinner, because of this hadith, for the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) commanded him to avert his gaze, and Allah says: "Tell the believing men to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts)" (An-Nur: 30)

Men must lower their gaze and refrain from looking at forbidden things in all circumstances, unless there is a valid reason, such as giving testimony, medical treatment, proposing marriage, buying a slave woman, engaging in financial transactions such as buying and selling, etc. In all these cases it is permissible to look as much as is required, and no more.

There are means which help a person to lower his gaze, and we ask Allah to help

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you to do them:

1 – Bearing in mind the fact that Allah is watching you, that He sees you and is with you (by His knowledge) wherever you go. It may be a secretive glance of which your closest neighbor is unaware, but Allah knows of it: “Allah knows the fraud of the eyes, and all that the hearts conceal.” (Ghafir:19)

2 – Seeking the help of Allah, beseeching Him and calling upon Him. Almighty Allah says: “And your Lord said: Invoke Me [i.e. believe in My Oneness (Islamic Monotheism) and ask Me for anything] I will respond to your (invocation).” (Ghafir: 60)

3 – You should know that every blessing you enjoy comes from Allah, and requires that you should give thanks for it. Part of being grateful for the blessing of sight means that you should protect it from looking at that which Allah has forbidden. Is there any reward for a good deed, other than good? “And whatever of blessings and good things you have, it is from Allah.” (An-Nahl: 53)

4 – Striving with your self and training yourself to lower your gaze and be patient in doing so, and never giving up. Allah says: “As for those who strive hard in Us (Our Cause), We will surely guide them to Our paths.” (Al-`Ankabut: 69) The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: “Whoever seeks to be chaste, Allah will make him chaste, and whoever seeks to be independent of means, Allah will make him independent of means, and whoever strives to be patient, Allah will make him patient...” (Al-Bukhari)

5 – Avoiding places where a person feels he will be exposed to the temptation of looking, if he can manage to avoid them, such as going to marketplaces or malls, and sitting idle in the street. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: “Beware of sitting in the street.” They said, “We have no alternative; that is where we sit and talk.” He said, “If you insist on sitting there, then give the street its rights.” They said, “What are the rights of the

street?” He said, “Lowering the gaze and refraining from causing offence...” (Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

6 – You should realize that you have no choice in this matter, regardless of what the circumstances are and no matter how great is the temptation or motive to do evil, and no matter what emotions and overwhelming desires stir within your heart. You must lower your gaze and refrain from looking at forbidden things in all places and at all times. You cannot use excuses such as the environment being corrupt, or justify your mistakes by saying that you are surrounded by temptation.

7 – Doing a lot of voluntary acts of worship, because doing a lot of them whilst also regularly doing the obligatory acts of worship is a means of protecting one’s physical faculties. According to a hadith qudsi (Divine), Allah said: “... and My slave continues to draw close to Me with supererogatory works so that I shall love him. And when I love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes and his foot with which he walks. Were he to ask (something) of Me, I would surely give it to him, and were he to ask Me for refuge, I would surely grant him it.” (Al-Bukhari)

8 – Remembering that the earth on which sin is committed will bear witness for or against us. Allah says: “That Day it will declare its information (about all that happened over it of good or evil).” (Az-Zalzalah: 4)

9 – Bearing in mind some of the texts which forbid one from letting the gaze wander freely, such as the verse in which Allah says: “Tell the believing men to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things).” (An-Nur: 30)

10 – Avoiding unnecessary looks, so that you only look at what is needed to look at, and you do not allow your gaze to wander right and left so that it falls upon something the effects and temptation of which cannot be

got rid of quickly.

11 – Marriage is one of the most effective remedies. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: “Whoever can afford it, let him get married, for it is more effective in lowering the gaze and in guarding one’s chastity. And whoever cannot afford it, let him fast, for it will be a shield for him.” (Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

11 – Remembering al-hur al-`een (maidens in Paradise), which will motivate you to be patient in avoiding that which Allah has forbidden, hoping to obtain this blessing. Allah said: “Companions of equal age.” (An-Naba’: 33) And the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: “If a woman of the people of Paradise were to look out over the people of this earth, it would light up everything in between and fill it with fragrance, and the veil of her head is better than this world and everything in it.” (Al-Bukhari)

12 – Bearing in mind the shortcomings of the one who attracts you...

13 – Checking yourself from time to time and striving to make yourself lower your gaze whilst being patient, realizing that everyone makes mistakes.

14 – Thinking of the pain and regret that will result from this looking, and the negative effects of allowing one’s gaze to wander.

15 – Understanding the benefits of lowering one’s gaze, as mentioned above.

16 – Bringing up this topic during meetings and gatherings, and explaining its dangers to others.

17 – Advising your relatives, telling them not to wear clothes that attract attention and show their beauty, such as how they dress, wearing bright colors, how they walk, speaking too softly, etc.

18 – Warding off passing thoughts and the whispers of Satan before they take hold and are acted upon. Whoever lowers his gaze after the first glance will be saved from innumerable problems, but if he continues to look

he cannot be certain that seeds that will be difficult to remove, will not be planted in his heart.

19 – Being afraid of an evil end, and of a feeling of great regret at the point of death.

20 – Keeping the company of good people, because you are naturally affected by the characteristics of the people you mix with, and a person will follow the way of his close friend, and a friend will pull you to follow his way.”



*Cont’d from page 40*

There is therefore no need for- the heart to toss in doubt and uncertainty. He will not allow your enemy to vanquish you. In this way when one fully realizes that rizq (sustenance), maut (death), hayat (life) and all affairs of creation are within the direct power and control of Allah, then there is absolutely no cause for the heart to labour in uncertainty and suffer any lack of confidence.

#### **A’mal**

The ignorant labour under the misconception that Tawakkul entails abstention from effort, the means and material agencies. This idea of tawakkul is highly erroneous. Tawakkul does not advocate shunning or abstaining from the material agencies which Allah has created and made subservient to man. Shunning the legitimate use of the material means and agencies for legitimate purposes and needs is not lawful according to the Shariat.

#### **Acquiring Tawakkul**

The way in which to acquire Tawakkul is by contemplating the bounties of Allah, His Promises and one’s past success.

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# Dealing with Grief : IV

*J. Hashmi*

When calamity strikes us, we should take pride in the fact that we are similar to the righteous servants of God, of whom were the Prophets; all of them were put through trials and tests. Prophet Abraham (AS) and his son, may God praise them both, were both tested in a most severe way. God commanded Prophet Abraham (AS) to sacrifice his son, Ismail. This command no doubt would have been very difficult for Prophet Abraham (AS), and he no doubt would have been very saddened by the thought of losing his loved one. But Prophet Abraham (AS) patiently persevered and obeyed God. Not only this, but even Ismail (AS), remained steadfast and obedient and offered himself to be sacrificed.

This test that God put Prophet Abraham (AS) through was to test his determination. If Prophet Abraham (AS) or his son had been weak in faith, they would have both failed this severe test God rewarded them with a great reward on account of their strong faith and obedience to Him; right before Prophet Abraham (AS) struck his son, a ram appeared and God told him to sacrifice it instead. As a reward, God promised to estab-

lish them as leaders on earth. God says of Prophet Abraham (AS) and his son: "So when they had both submitted their wills (to God), and he (Abraham (AS)) had laid him (his son) down on his forehead (for sacrifice), We called out unto him, saying: "O Abraham! You have indeed fulfilled the vision." Thus, indeed do we reward the doers of good. Most surely, this was a clear test." (Quran 37:103-106)

The Quran says: "And remember that Abraham was tested by his Lord with certain commands, which he fulfilled. He (God) said: 'I will make you a leader to the nations.'" (Quran 2:124)

No doubt when Prophet Abraham (AS) was instructed to sacrifice his son, he might have been reluctant in that regard, but he did it out of obedience to God Almighty. This goes to say that even if one may dislike something there may be good in it. God says: "And it may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you and that you like a thing which is bad for you. God knows and you do not know." (Quran 2:216)

Another example that comes to mind is that of Prophet Yusuf (AS). The Quran

mentions many details of the trials and tribulations he faced in his life. His father loved him a great deal, which made his brothers very jealous of him. They conspired against him, and finally dumped him in a deep well. A company of travelers passed by the well, and one of them let down his bucket. He said, "Good news! Here is a boy." And they took him as merchandise. With this, Prophet Yusuf was sent to the far off land of Egypt as a slave. An Egyptian governor bought him, and Prophet Yusuf (AS) dutifully toiled away. As he was in the service of the governor, the test intensified, the governor's wife, who was very beautiful, tried to seduce Yusuf (AS). This was a great trial for Prophet Yusuf (AS), and he resisted her advances with steadfast perseverance. One day, the governor's wife ran after Prophet Yusuf (AS), so to seduce him by force, and she tore his shirt, whereupon her husband entered the room. She accused Prophet Yusuf (AS) of rape but Yusuf (AS) denied it, and when the governor saw his shirt torn from the back, he asked his wife to repent to God Almighty. She schemed and came up with a plot to have Prophet Yusuf (AS); she gave him one of two choices, to either approach her or to be thrown in prison. He chose the second and was put in prison for a period of time.

When we are struck with calamities, we should think of all the trials Prophet Yusuf (AS) went through: years of slavery and imprisonment. Yet, through it all, Prophet Yusuf (AS) remained steadfast to God. He never resented the calamities that had befallen him, but instead used the time to invoke his Lord. It was then—finally, after many years—that God rewarded Prophet Yusuf (AS) for his steadfastness. It was in that same jail cell that he met a man who had a dream; God gave Prophet Yusuf (AS) the gift of being able to interpret dreams. And so Prophet Yusuf (AS) interpreted his cellmate's dream, telling him that he (the cellmate) would go free and

work for the king. Indeed, the prophecy came true and the man did go free to work for the king.

One day, the king had a dream. The story is narrated in the Quran:

"And the king of Egypt said: 'Verily, I saw in a dream seven fat cows, whom seven lean cows were devouring, and seven green ears of corn and seven others dry. O notables! Explain to me my dream if it be that you can interpret dreams.'" (Quran 12:43)

Prophet Yusuf's (AS) ex-cellmate, who was now in the service of the Egyptian king, immediately remembered Yusuf (AS). He informed the king about Prophet Yusuf (AS), and so Yusuf (AS) was asked to interpret the dream, which he did. Prophet Yusuf (AS) told the king that there would be seven years of good harvest, after which would follow seven years of drought and famine. He advised the king to store up food during the seven years of prosperity, which could be used during the times of drought and famine.

The king was so pleased by Prophet Yusuf (AS) that he not only set him free but appointed him to a very high position in the government. And so God established a great deal of good through adversity; had Prophet Yusuf (AS) never been abandoned in the well by his brothers, nor sold into slavery, nor imprisoned wrongfully, he would never have been found by the king and appointed to a position of such great authority. Indeed, Prophet Yusuf (AS) had to go through all that tribulation in order to attain that rank. Therefore, when we go through difficult times in life, we should be positive. It may be that God is propelling us to a greater good which may be unknown to us at that moment.

Prophet Suleiman (AS) was also

tested, although in a different way. He was given immense wealth and power; history attests to the fact that wealth and power corrupts. Yet, Prophet Suleiman (AS) was one of the few kings who remained pious and God-fearing. The Quran says: "And certainly we tested Suleiman...and he (Suleiman) turned (to God)." (Quran 38:34)

Indeed, all of God's prophets were tested; this shows that God bestows trials upon His righteous servants, and we should feel proud to be in their company. We should also emulate their behavior, which was to remain steadfast in times of tribulation.

### *Allah is Watching!*

*There was once a maid who worked for a family of Sayyids (descendants of Nabi sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam). She was totally ignorant regarding the laws of Deen and would not even offer her salaah. When she aged, this family would take care of her because they felt indebted to her for all the service that she had rendered to them. As her last moments came close, she began to say something which no one could understand. Finally a learned person was called and he realised that she was saying: "laa takhaafee walaa tahzane" (don't fear and don't grief). He told them to inquire from her why is she saying this. After much difficulty she replied: "There is a group of angels present who are repeating these words." Then he inquired: "Do you understand what is being told to you?" She replied: "I cannot understand it, but I can sense that they are consoling me." He then asked: "On what action are you being blessed in this way?" After some time she replied: "These angels are saying: 'You haven't done much good deeds in your life. However, there is one deed of yours which Allah Ta'ala really liked. Once you bought some ghee (clarified butter) from a shop. When you came home and boiled it, a gold coin came out from inside. Initially you thought of keeping it for yourself since no one was aware of it. Then the thought came to your mind that "Allah is watching", because of which you returned it to the shopkeeper. It is on account of this deed that you are being comforted in this way.'" (Jawaahir Paare)*

*Lesson: The Quraan Majeed declares that those who adopt taqwa (Allah consciousness) will be given glad tidings at the time of their death. This month of Ramadhaan is a training process for this consciousness of "Allah is watching". Just as we abstain from food and drink even in private merely because "Allah is watching", we need to leave out all sins for the rest of our life because "Allah is watching".*



# How Bright is Your Light?

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You're sitting comfortably in your room when all of a sudden, the electricity goes off. It becomes completely dark. You can't see a thing. Although it is your own house, life comes to an inconvenient, complete halt.

That's because you can't see a thing! You dare not move, in the fear that you may knock something over or worse still, you may stumble and hurt yourself. Uncomfortable and unnerving, isn't it?

Now fast forward to an unknown time in the future.....when it will be dark like this and even worse.....

when you.... and I..... and all of mankind.....will be gathered in the dark, in front of a bridge.....

a bridge that is sharper than a sword and thinner than a hair.....

a bridge called as-Siraat.....the bridge over Hellfire.

When the companions asked about the bridge, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa-Sallam) said: 'It is a slippery (bridge) on which there are clamps and (hooks like) thorns which are wide at one side and narrow at the other and have bent ends... Some of the believers will cross the bridge as quickly as the wink of an eye, some others as quick as light-

ning, a strong wind, or fast horses or she-camels. So some will be safe without any harm; some will be safe after receiving some scratches, and some will fall down into Hell-fire. The last person will cross by being dragged (over the bridge).'' Bukhaari

And then, it will be ordered that we all pass over this bridge. And we will have no choice but to comply to the order of the Lord of the Worlds. But it will be dark, darker than any darkness one can ever imagine.....

and on this horrific Day, mankind will be desperate... desperate to do anything, anything, to have some kind of light that will help them see the way and guide them to cross over the Siraat. And then..... there will be light.

But, you know what? This light will only be according to the light of Imaan that you had in your heart during this Dunya.If your Imaan was strong, so will be this light....strong and bright and illuminating. And if your Imaan was weak, this light will be weak too, dim and faltering and feeble.

Ibn Kathir reported in his Tafseer: "They will pass over the Siraat according to their deeds. Some of them will have a light as large as a mountain, some as a date tree, some as big as a man in the standing position. The least among them has a light as big as his

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index finger, it is lit at times and extinguished at other times.” (Ibn Abi Hatim and Ibn Jarir).

Ibn al-Qayyim says: “For one person, it (the light) will be like the sun, for another like the moon, the stars or a lamp. For yet another, this light will be only at the tips of his toes; it will shine, then go out [then shine, then go out]. For just as his light had been in this world, so he shall be given when crossing the Bridge. In fact, it is the same light that had appeared to him before. However, just as the hypocrite has no real light in this world, or has only an outward light but none within, so shall he be given [on that Day] an outward light which will vanish in the darkness and be lost.”

If you lived a life of righteousness and Taqwa, a life according to Islaam, submitting to Allaah and repenting to Him, obeying His commandments, hoping for His Mercy yet fearing His Wrath, taking care not to disobey Him to the best of your ability, then good news for you, O Muslim. Allaah will illuminate your path over the Siraat just like He illuminated your heart in this Dunya with guidance and righteousness.

“The Day (will surely come) when you shall see believing men and women with their light running before them and on their right hands, (it will be said to them): ‘Glad tidings for you this Day. You shall live for ever in Gardens underneath which rivers flow! That is indeed the mighty triumph.’ (Surah Hadeed: 12)

BUT,

If you dared to disobey the Lord of the Worlds, following your whims and desires, earning haraam, lying, cheating and backbiting, involved in all sorts of sins and forgetting the Akhirah, then dim and feeble

will be your light in accordance with the deeds that YOU chose to commit.

Imagine the desperation, despair and hopelessness of a person in such a situation!

Complete darkness.... and a bridge, that he has to cross....a bridge so sharp and so slippery and so thin, with hooks....stretching over Hellfire....and he can't see a thing! May Allaah save us.

Wouldn't he give anything, anything to have a light that is strong and bright.....

A light that can illuminate his way across the Siraat....

A light that can take him to Jannah?!!

Alas...for him, it will be too late.....

BUT, it's not too late for YOU. You still have time. You still have a chance to make your light big and strong. All you have to do is to submit to Allaah and repent sincerely. Obey whatever He commands you to and stay away from whatever He forbids you from. Have Taqwa of Allaah in all that you say and do and Wallaahi, He will brighten your heart with Imaan, lighten your life in this Dunya and illuminate your way over the Siraat on to Jannah.

“O you who believe! Turn to Allaah with sincere repentance! It may be that your Lord will remit from you your sins, and admit you into Gardens under which rivers flow. The Day that Allaah will not disgrace the Prophet (Muhammad ) and those who believe with him, their Light will run forward before them and with (their Records Books of deeds) in their right hands they will say: “Our Lord! Keep perfect our Light for us [and do not put it off till we cross over the Siraat safely] and grant us forgiveness. Verily, You are Able to do all things.” (Surah Tahreem: 8)

*Courtesy: islamgreatreligion*

# Are We Missing the Point

*Yasmin Mogahed*

To some, a Monet is only a collection of dots. To others, it is a perfect masterpiece. To some, Islam is nothing but a code of rules and regulations. But, to those who understand, it is a perfect vision of life.

As Muslims, we often focus so much on Islam's dos and don'ts that we miss the bigger picture. Islam came to perfect our manners, and yet we are willing to scream and shout to win an argument about moon sighting or zabihah meat. Islam came to increase us in humility and yet while we wear our beards and hijabs, we look down on others.

Islam came to establish a community of believers, but while we decorate our mosques with gold and silver, our prayer rows remain empty. Islam came to teach us about God, and despite wearing His words on our necklaces and decorating our houses with them, when those verses are recited to us, our hearts remain unmoved and our lives unchanged.

And Islam came to make us one brotherhood, yet we divide ourselves and

alienate one another over issues like moon sighting and voting.

This is not to say, of course, that the dos and don'ts in Islam are not important. They are crucial. The problem is that we have forgotten what they stand for. For example, the wearing of Islamic dress should never be minimized. But we have forgotten that that hijab and that beard are only symbols of our greater devotion to God. For us to wear that hijab and that beard while it has no bearing on our character means we have missed the point.

If we spend thousands of dollars decorating our mosques but then use that masjid only to display status and win arguments, we have lost its intended purpose. And if we have memorized every haram and halal ingredient of facial soap, but we own businesses that are based on interest and sell alcohol, have we not made a mockery of Allah's deen?

That deen is what transforms humanity from the lowest of the low to the representatives of God on earth. The Qur'an tells

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us: "Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: 'I will create a vicegerent on earth...'" (Qur'an, 2:30)

As a representative of God on earth, we are given a very great responsibility. It is a trust so heavy that even the mountains rejected it. Allah tells us in the Qur'an: "We did indeed offer the trust to the Heavens and the Earth and the mountains; but they refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof: but man undertook it; he was indeed unjust and foolish." (Qur'an, 33:72)

As believers, we should never lose sight of this responsibility. It is the fulfillment of that mission that transforms us from 'asfala safileen' - the lowest of the low (Qur'an, 95:5), into 'khaira ummatin ukhrijat linnaas' - the best of people arisen for mankind. (Qur'an, 3:110)

But how can we be that "best of peo-

ple"? Allah describes how in His book: "Ye are the best of peoples, risen up for mankind, commanding what is right, forbidding what is evil, and believing in Allah..." (Qur'an, 3:110).

The essence of that struggle is to believe, to fight for Truth and to strive against evil. And as soon as we give up that noble struggle, we will become among those people who Allah describes in surat Al-Asr as being in an utter state of loss. Allah also describes the ones who will be saved from that state: "Except such as have faith, and do righteous deeds, and (join together) in the mutual teaching of truth, and of patience and constancy." (Qur'an, 103:3)

And, so, if we continue to abandon this greater mission and purpose, we will have transformed the perfect vision of existence into nothing more than a collection of dots.

### *Seeking Forgiveness*

*Anas (RA) said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) saying, "Allah, the Exalted, has said: 'O son of Adam! I shall go on forgiving you so long as you pray to Me and aspire for My forgiveness whatever may be your sins.*

*O son of Adam! I do not care even if your sins should pile up to the sky and should you beg pardon of Me, I would forgive you. O son of Adam! If you come to Me with an earthful of sins and meet Me, not associating anything with Me in worship, I will certainly grant you as much pardon as will fill the earth.'"*

*[At-Tirmidhi].*

*Commentary: In this narration, there is good news for the sinners who do not stick to sins but rather repent and ask forgiveness from Allah. However numerous their sins may be, Allah will forgive all their sins. But there is a condition which they should fulfill, namely that they do not persist in what wrong they have done (3:135), as with persistence and repeatedly committing the sin, the act of seeking forgiveness becomes a futile act.*

# Our Obligations to the Qur'an

*Dr. Israr Ahmed*

The pathetic and disastrous condition of the Muslim Ummah throughout the world is due to its abandoning of the Holy Qur'an. The constant attitude of indifference, along with our hypocritical lip-service, is tantamount to ridiculing the last of Allah's (SWT) revelations. Instead, we must clearly understand our responsibilities towards the Holy Qur'an and try our very best to fulfill them. We can neither expect any improvement in our worldly state of affairs, nor hope for salvation in the Hereafter, unless we carry out all the obligations that we owe to the Qur'an.

The five demands that the Qur'an makes on every Muslim are as follows:

1. A Muslim is required to believe in the Qur'an.
2. He is required to read it.
3. He is required to understand it.
4. He is required to act upon its teachings.
5. He is required to convey its teachings to others.

## **Our First Obligation**

The first obligation is to have faith (Iman) in the Divine origin of the Qur'an. Iman has two phases: verbal profession (Iqar bil-lisan), and heart-felt conviction (tasdeeq

bil-qalb). To have faith in the Qur'an means that we should verbally profess that the Qur'an is the Word of Almighty Allah (SWT) that was revealed by Him through His angel Jibrael (AS) to the last of His messengers, Prophet Muhammad, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam. This is a legal requirement for the acceptance of a person as a member of the Muslim society.

Having done that, however, we also need to develop a deeply felt certitude in the Qur'an. It is only when we have real conviction in this verbal declaration, that our hearts and minds would come under its spell, leading us towards genuine devotion and veneration of the Holy Book. Its absence is the reason why we neither find any reverence for the Qur'an in our hearts, nor feel inclined to study it, nor evince any interest in pondering over its meanings, nor ever think of seeking its guidance in conducting our lives.

It might be asked as to how we can acquire true faith. The answer is that the source of Iman is the Holy Qur'an itself. If the Book is studied and its meanings are pondered upon in an authentic quest for truth, all the veils of darkness shall be lifted from our heart, and the inner self – the soul – will

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get illuminated by the light of true faith. Note that faith is not something that can be planted in us from the outside. It is an embodiment of fundamental truths that already exist inside us; the practice of pondering over the ayahs of the Qur'an serves to bring them to the surface of our consciousness.

### **Our Second Obligation**

The second obligation is slow and thoughtful reading of the Holy Qur'an with correct pronunciation, generally described as tilawat, tarteel, and tajweed. Note that tilawat is not only an important form of worship, but it is also an effective method of continually refreshing our faith. The Qur'an is not a book to be read once; it is a book that needs to be read again and again. We must read it carefully, reflecting on its messages, constantly seeking guidance for our lives. Just as our material body is in constant need of food for its sustenance, our spiritual soul (or rooh) is also in perpetual need for its nourishment. And while the food for our bodies is derived from the earth, the nutrition for our souls is obtained from the Word of Allah, the Holy Qur'an itself.

Moreover, a regular and constant program of reciting the Holy Qur'an is also needed because it is a means of refreshing and reviving our faith, and a weapon for surmounting the obstacles in the path of Almighty Allah (SWT). The ideal way in which the Holy Book should be recited is that one should stand in the post-midnight prayer before his Lord (SWT) and recite its Ayahs in a slow and patient manner, pausing at proper places so as to enable one's heart to imbibe its influence.

### **Our Third Obligation**

The third obligation is to understand and comprehend the Holy Qur'an. The Qur'an has been revealed so that it may be understood and pondered upon. Of course, there

are numerous levels and grades of comprehension, accessible to different persons according to their respective planes of intellect and consciousness.

The first stage in the comprehension of the Holy Qur'an is called tazakkur, a term which alludes to the fact that the teachings of the Qur'an are not at all foreign or alien to the human fitrah. Instead, they represent the eternal truths dormant in the human soul itself, and the reading or listening of the Holy Qur'an only facilitates the recalling of these forgotten verities. The Holy Qur'an has been rendered very easy by Almighty Allah (SWT) for the purpose of gaining this level of guidance. It does not matter if a person's intelligence is limited, or his knowledge of logic and philosophy is poor, or if he has no fine sense of language and literature. In spite of these drawbacks, he can still understand the basic message and practical guidance of the Holy Qur'an, provided he has an untainted nature not perverted by any crookedness.

The knowledge of Arabic language is, however, indispensable for this purpose.

Muslims, who are not only educated but who have obtained advanced degrees in arts and sciences, would have no excuse before Almighty Allah (SWT) on the Day of Judgment, if they failed to learn so much Arabic as would have enabled them to understand His Book. Learning basic Arabic is a duty that every educated Muslim owes to the Holy Qur'an.

The second stage in the comprehension of the Holy Qur'an is far from easy. Tadabbur is described as a penetrating study, an intense reflection, as thorough deliberation of the Holy Qur'an as possible. It involves diving deep into the bottomless ocean of its wisdom. This kind of understanding is impossible, unless one is to devote his entire life, all his talents, and all his energies for the sole purpose of comprehending the Qur'an. Obviously, not everyone is capable of such a high

level of devotion and effort to acquire such insight and comprehension. But there must be a number of persons, at all times, who are engaged in this enterprise.

Such scholars cannot be produced unless we have a network of universities throughout the Muslim world, which concentrate on Qur'anic research by making it the focus of all their intellectual activity.

Such scholars would need to have a thorough knowledge of the Arabic language and its grammar and a refined literary taste to appreciate the beauty and force of its expression. They must acquire a good grounding in the language in which the Qur'an was revealed by a critical study of the works of the pre-Islamic poets and orators. They must be able to appreciate the terms and modes of expression evolved by the Qur'an itself, along with an understanding of the coherence in the Qur'an. A good knowledge of tradition and old scriptures is also necessary for the comprehension of the Qur'an. Along with this classical knowledge, the scholars must also have an understanding of the fundamentals of modern physical and social sciences. This would widen their intellectual horizon and enable them to present the eternal Qur'anic truths in the contemporary idiom.

#### **Our Fourth Obligation**

The fourth obligation is to act upon the teachings of the Holy Qur'an. The Qur'an is the 'guidance for mankind'. The purpose for which this Book has been revealed will be fully realized only when people act upon its teachings and make it the guide for them in every sphere of their lives. If we disregard the injunctions of the Qur'an, then the reading and understanding of the Holy Book, instead of doing us any good, will only make us guiltier before Almighty Allah (SWT).

At an individual level, it is imperative for every Muslim to mould his or her life ac-

ording to the teachings of the Qur'an. The best way to benefit from the study of the Holy Qur'an is to go on changing our lifestyles and mending our ways in accordance with its teachings.

At the collective level of the community, it is equally imperative for us to try and establish the system of social justice as given by the Holy Qur'an. The Muslims are, as a whole, responsible for establishing the Sovereignty of Almighty Allah (SWT) in the public as well as the private sphere, and each of us is obligated to try his utmost in this path. The struggle for the establishment of such a just and equitable order in accordance with the teachings of the Qur'an is the duty of its followers.

#### **Our Fifth Obligation**

The fifth obligation is to propagate the message of the Holy Qur'an to every nook and corner of the world. This was originally the responsibility of Prophet Muhammad Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam, who fulfilled his own obligation by conveying the Divine message to the Ummah; since Prophethood has been concluded with the advent of Prophet Muhammad Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam, who is the last of the Divine Messengers, it is now the duty of the Muslims to deliver that message to all humanity. Unfortunately, the proclamation of the Divine message to the whole world appears like a far-fetched and fantastic idea, because, at the moment, the Muslims themselves are ignorant of the teachings of the Holy Qur'an.

Therefore, a powerful intellectual and academic movement is needed in order to propagate and disseminate the knowledge and wisdom of the Holy Qur'an, both on a general scale for the benefit of our masses and on the highest level of scholarship in order to convert the educated and intelligent elite of the Muslim society.

## *Praiseworthy Morals*

# Tawakkul

*Maulana Maseeh-Ullah Khan (RA)*

Allah says:

*“Upon Allah should the Believers have tawakkul (trust).”*

Rasulullah (saws) said: “When you ask, ask of Allah and when you seek aid, seek from Allah.”

### **The nature of Tawakkul**

Reposing implicit trust of the heart in only the Creator is called tawakkul. The meaning of tawakkul is expressed by the term taukeel (to make or appoint a wakeel or a counsellor, agent, representative). When one lacks the understanding and ability for something then another is appointed to execute the task. Such appointment of an agent to act on one’s behalf is the meaning of taukeel. Tawakkul then is to act in accordance with Allah’s Scheme, i.e. to adopt the principles and laws of the Shariat, and to resign oneself unto Him. In every act or task, the means required for the task will be employed within the confines of the Shariat and one’s trust will be placed in Allah.

### **The fundamentals of Tawakkul**

Tawakkul has three fundamental principles: Ma’rifat, Haalat and A’mal.

#### **Ma’arifat**

This consists of Tauheed of Allah

which means: Besides Allah there is no object of worship; He is Incomparable; He has no partner; All sovereignty belongs to Him; All praise and glory belongs to Him; He has power over all things. This conception of Tauheed acknowledges that Allah possesses such perfect power and wisdom which make Him worthy of all praise and glory. Sincere and honest belief in this conception of Tauheed grounds true Imaan in the heart.

The effect of Imaan grounding itself in the heart is Tawakkul. The condition essential for achieving this tawakkul is sincere acknowledgement of tauheed. The meaning of sincere acknowledgement is that this Tauheed pervades the heart so much that there remains no room in one’s heart to entertain any other concept.

#### **Haalat**

The Haal of Tawakkul is to resign oneself to Allah. Assign all affairs to Him and maintain the heart in the state of peace and tranquillity. It envisages diversion from all and everything other than Allah. Upon Allah being made the Wakeel one resigns in full confidence. Allah, the Wakeel is full of Wisdom and is the Benefactor and Protector of the one who has reposed tawakkul in him.

*Cont’d on page 29*