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RADIANT REALITY

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Time
is running out
Turn to Allah
before the end.

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

Editor, Printer & Publisher: Mawlana Hamidullah Lone	Contents
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EDITORIAL

All thanks for Almighty, the most Merciful and Exalted

Are You Busy

Satan called a worldwide convention. In his opening address to his evil servants, he said, "We can't keep the Muslims from going to Mosque. We can't keep them from reading the Quran and knowing the truth. We can't even keep them from forming an intimate, abiding relationship experience with Allah. If they gain that connection with Allah, our power over them is broken.

So let them go to the mosques, let them have their conservative lifestyles, but steal their time, so they can't gain that relationship with Allah. This is what I want you to do, servants. Distract them from gaining hold of their Creator and maintaining that vital connection throughout their day!"

"How shall we do this?" shouted his servants. "Keep them busy in the nonessentials of life and invent innumerable schemes to occupy their minds," he answered. "Tempt them to spend, spend, spend, and borrow, borrow, borrow. Persuade the wives to go to work for long hours and the husbands to work 6 - 7 days a week, 10-12 hours a day, so they can afford their empty lifestyles. Keep them from spending time with their children. As their family fragments, soon, their home will offer no escape from the pressures of work!"

"Over-stimulate their minds so that they cannot hear that still, small voice. Entice them to play the radio or cassette player whenever they drive. To keep the TV, VCR CDs and their PCs

going constantly in their homes. And see to it that every store and restaurant in the world plays non-Islamic music constantly. This will jam their minds and break that union with Allah.

"Fill the coffee table with magazines and newspapers. Pound their minds with the news 24 hours a day. Invade their driving moments with billboards. Flood their mailboxes with junk mail, mail order catalogues, sweepstakes, and every kind of newsletter and emotional offering of free products, services, and false hopes.

"Keep skinny, beautiful models on the magazines so the husbands will believe that external beauty is what's important, and they'll become dissatisfied with their wives. Ha! That will fragment those families quickly!

"Even in their recreation, let them be excessive. Have them return from their recreation exhausted, disquieted, and unprepared for the coming week.

"Don't let them go out in nature to reflect on God's wonders. Send them to amusement parks, sporting events, concerts and movies instead.

"Keep them busy, busy, busy!! And when they meet for spiritual fellowship,

"Involve them in gossip and small talk so that they leave with troubled consciences and unsettled emotions.

"Go ahead, let them be involved

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Question Answer

Question.

Can I perform Salaah on a Chair?

Answer.

In the last decade or two, many Masaajid have seen a phenomenal increase in Musallis performing Salaah while sitting on chairs. At the same time one hardly finds anyone performing Salaah while sitting in the Tashahhud position on the floor which is the default position for a person who is not able to stand and perform Salaah.

The ruling in regards to Salaah in a seated position is quite clear. If a person is able to perform Salaah while seated on the floor and is able to perform proper Sajdah from this position, it is not permitted for him to substitute the Sajdah by bending forward while sitting on a chair.

This is because Sajdah is a Fardh in Salaah and one may not leave it out unless one is physically incapable of performing it.

For those who are genuinely incapacitated, there is no harm in performing Salaah on a chair. However, for a person who is able to sit on the floor and perform a proper Sajdah, there is no permission to use a chair and the Salaah must be made with proper Sajdah while seated on the floor. *Jamiatul-Ulama (KZN)*

Question.

I would like to ask about chang-

ing Islamic name to the another one. Are there any special rituals?

Answer.

There is no prescribed ritual to be performed when it comes to changing a person's name. If a person has an unpleasant sounding name or a name that has a bad name, he should change his name by adopting a good Muslim name that has a good meaning. (al-Mau'su'ah, Vol: 11, Pg: 337)

The procedure of changing one's name is simple and straightforward. There is no special procedure like Azaan to be called out or Aqeeqah to be done. The name should just simply be changed and he should inform those who he interacts with that this is his new name.

Mufti Suhail

Question.

I woke up when the time of the Fajr prayer was almost ended (about five minutes left before the end of prayer time), this time is not enough for making vudu', but in this time I could make Tayammum. Will be possible in this case to make Tayammum instead of vudu'?

Answer.

In your situation, water was available to use. The restriction was only the time factor. A restriction in time does not justify the concession of Tayammum. You must make wudhu and make Qadha of the missed prayer if you were not able to pray it before the time expired. (al-

Muheet al-Burhani, Vol: 1, Pg: 142)

Mufti Suhail

Question.

I have a question that relates to one of the fatwas issued on your website. In the fatwa, you refer to the impermissibility of utilizing sheep with docked tails as Qurbani. My question is whether or not this ruling extends to the permissibility of meat in general, or is it limited to Qurbani? Meaning, is the meat of a sheep with a docked tail halal to consume if it is not for Qurbani purposes?

Answer.

A Qurbani animal should have at least half the tail for the Qurbani to be valid. If half or more of the tail is docked, the Qurbani will not be valid. However the meat of a docked animal, whether for Qurbani or otherwise will be Halal if it is slaughtered according to the Shariah laws of Zabah. i.e., Bismillah being recited before slaughtering the animal and at least three veins are cut.

M. Huzaiyah Deedat

Question.

Growing up I was taught that not a single strand of a women's hair must be showing in salah. However mistakes do occur and our burkas sometimes move...

So on reading up on it, I found that if only a quarter or more of the parts of body that need to be covered become exposed, then only should the salah be repeated. Does this apply to women's hair as well? Is it then that if a quarter or more of the HEAD becomes exposed the salah will have to be repeated? Or is it if a quarter or more of a SINGLE STRAND become exposed, the salah will have to be repeated?

Answer.

As far as possible, a female should ensure that every strand of her hair is concealed in Salaah as her hair is Aurah (required to be concealed).

The hair on the head itself is considered separately and the hair that hangs from the head is considered separately. The exposure of a quarter of these portions respectively, (not just a single strand) will result in the Salaah being invalid if the exposure was for the duration of three Tasbeehs. (Raddul Muhtar, Vol: 2, Pg: 82)

Thus, if a few strands of hair become exposed unintentionally, the Salaah will not become invalid. Only, if a quarter of the hair on her head or a quarter of the hair that hangs from her head becomes exposed, for the duration of three Tasbeehs, will the Salaah be invalid. (al-Binayah, Vol: 2, Pg: 129)

Mufti Suhail

Question.

A non-Muslim woman's husband died and immediately after that a Muslim wants to marry her. She is prepared to accept Islam prior to Nikah. What iddah must she observe before her Nikah? is it three menstrual cycles or four months and ten days?

Answer.

It is compulsory on her to wait out the Iddah period before performing Nikah. Her Iddah will be four lunar months and ten days (130 days) as per the verse of the Qur'an which stipulates that the Iddah of a woman whose husband has passed away is four months and ten days. (Qur'an, 2: 234, Bada'i'us Sanai'i, Vol: 3, Pg: 192)

After the completion of her Iddah, she may get married to a Muslim man if

she accepts Islam.

Mufti Suhail

Question.

Is it advisable for young girls (grade 12) to go on an overnight excursion? The place is less than 78km so the parents and certain teachers feel it is no problem. Certain male parents want to accompany them which will be a means of them seeing the other girls.

Answer.

It is no secret that the era in which we live is full of wrongs, vice and evils. With the 'hell-phone' in nearly every child's hand, the level of immoral and indecent behaviour has soared to unprecedented heights.

While attending high school, for girls, is in itself a major cause for many vices and wrongs, the situation is worsened when young girls go on such overnight excursions where the atmosphere is more relaxed and there isn't strict adult supervision.

The issue of the distance is a technical matter. It is not some leeway to be abused for females travelling for the wrong purposes. Some male parents being present whereby the aspect of purdah will be violated is an added severe violation.

Uswatul Muslimah Panel of Ulama KZN

Question.

I recently got divorced and I'm in Iddah. I finished my two periods but my third is taking longer than usual to come. It has now been over a month. Can I take the pill to regulate my period or will my Iddah be over because 3 months finished?

Answer.

You can take the pill to regulate your period together with consulting a doctor. You will have to wait for your 3rd

menstrual cycle to complete for the termination of your Iddah as this is the law of the Qur'an with regards to menstruating women. The Iddah will not end after 3 months as this rule only applies to non-menstruating women.

Mufti Suhail

Question.

A person has money to go for Hajj but also needs to get married. If he gets married, he will no longer have sufficient money to go for Hajj. Should he go for Hajj or should he get married?

Answer.

If he fears that he will fall into sin if he does not get married soon, he should use the funds that he has to get married and he should delay his Hajj till he has sufficient funds to perform Hajj.

If he feels that he will remain chaste till he gets married later on, he should perform Hajj first and thereafter get married as soon as he can. (al-Hajj wal-Umrah by Sheikh Nurud Din Itr, Pg: 23)

Mufti Suhail

Question.

If you enter the Musjid, can you make two Rakaats tahiyatul Musjid along with other intentions like Salaatul Taubah, Shukr etc?

Answer.

You can make multiple intentions in one set of Nafl (non-obligatory) Salaah. For example, you can make the intention of Tahiyatul Musjid as well as the intention of performing Salaatul Taubah, Shukr, Salaatul Hajjah, etc. (ad-Durrul Mukhtar, Vol: 1, Pg: 440)

Mufti Suhail

Question.

Can a man fantasize of strange women? Is it allowed?

Answer.

It should be well understood that just as it is Haraam to commit adultery and fornication, to fantasize about it is also Haraam and tantamount to committing adultery and fornication of the mind (Shaami). Unfortunately, this has become a common sickness amongst people nowadays that has deprived them of the true enjoyment and bliss of life. May Ta'ala protect us all from Haraam and may he grant us clean and pure minds and thoughts. Ameen.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

My uncle was in a partnership with his brother & nephew. Recently he passed away. Does my uncle's wife become a partner in the business? If not, what happens to my uncle's partnership in the business?

Answer.

In a business partnership, if a business partner passes away, the partnership of the business partner automatically terminates. The share of the deceased partner will form part of his estate will have to be distributed amongst his rightful heirs according to the Islamic Laws of Succession and Inheritance. However, if the heirs of the deceased partner mutually agree to enter into a new partnership with the other business partners, then they may do so.

Thus, in this case, the wife of the deceased and the other heirs should decide if they wish for the estate to be distributed amongst themselves now of whether they wish to enter into a new partnership in the business.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

My mother is living in the UK

and my sister is living in South Africa. My mother passed away in the UK and she was buried after three days. Unfortunately, my sister passed away one day after my mother passed away but she was buried on the same day. She was buried two days before my mother was buried. Who inherits from who as the burial times were different?

Answer.

In the enquired case, since your mother passed away first and subsequently your sister passed away thereafter, you sister will inherit from your mother and not vice versa even though your mother was buried after your sister's burial. The Islamic Laws of Succession and Inheritance revolves around the time of the death of a person and not at the time of a burial of a person.

You may contact the Fatwa Department for a detailed distribution of the respective estates.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

My late sister had gifted her flat to my nephew ten years ago. My nephew has been staying in the flat since the last ten years. Does the flat form part of my sister's estate or does it belong to my nephew. Keep in mind that the transfer of the flat to my nephews name only took place after my sister passed away?

Answer.

You stated that your sister had already gifted the flat to your nephew ten years ago. If this is the case, then the ownership had already transferred to your nephew at that time. The 'transferal of the flat' to your nephews name after your sister passed away will not affect the ownership of your nephew. (Badaai-us-Sanaai' 7/223)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

I intend entering into a partnership agreement with a friend of mine. Both of us will be investing money in the business and both of us will be sharing the profits equally. Is there any concept of such business partnerships in Islam?

Answer.

Yes, the concept of business partnerships is recognized in Islam. In fact, the agreement in reference is termed a Musharakah agreement.

Musharakah is a joint commercial enterprise enacted by mutual agreement wherein two or more partners invest some of their capital or undertake to render some services to customers in which all the partners share the profit or loss of the joint venture on an agreed ratio.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

My sister is a Muslim and she has fallen in love with a Hindu man. Can my sister marry a Hindu man?

Answer.

At the outset, it should be understood that premarital relationships are totally prohibited in Islam. Such relationships must be terminated and abundant Taubah and Istighfaar should be made as it is a sin that draws the wrath and anger of Allah.

As far the marriage of a Muslim with a Hindu is concerned, it is not permissible for a Muslim to marry a Hindu unless they accept Islam. Allah mentions:

“Do not marry unbelieving men until they believe” (Quran 2/221)

Therefore, if a Muslim marries a Hindu, the marriage will be unlawful and invalid according to the Shariah. Children born from such a marriage will

be considered illegitimate in Islam.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

I know of this friend of mine. She is in love with a boy who is 10 years her senior. They are family and both people come from respectable households. The girl hasn't admitted her love to anyone. She made du'aa that if this boy is meant for her she should see him in a dream. After a while, she saw him in a dream.

The thing is that if she has to tell her parents, they might get angry at her, because she is still young and is studying. The boy was previously married but she doesn't care about that. It doesn't affect her much but she just thought that maybe she should ask about it.

Answer

1. Nikaah is a major step in life. Such a major decision must never be taken without the guidance and help of one's parents and seniors.

2. Our advice to your friend is to ignore these feelings. Keep the heart and mind clear. She should continue to make du'aa on a general note that Allah should grant her a spouse who is pious and has excellent akhlaaq, etc.

3. The dream she saw is most probably the effect of her mind being pre-occupied in his thoughts. This is not a basis to make any decision.

Uswatul Muslimah Panel of Ulama KZN

Question.

Why hijab is so important for a woman?

Answer.

The importance of hijab is due to it being the law of Allah. As the slaves of Allah, that is all that we need to be concerned about – that what is the law of Allah. We should then submit to that

command without any question and without delving into the wisdom behind that law.

In any case, Allah has created a natural attraction between males and females. Hence Allah has commanded that there be no intermingling of the genders. Men are responsible for working outside the home and earning a living for the family. Thus men will be outside. While women are responsible for the duties indoors, out of necessity a woman will also sometimes have to emerge and be in the presence of men, such as when travelling, when going to some place out of need, etc. The centre of a woman's beauty is her face. Hence she has been commanded to veil herself so as to prevent any occurrence of fitnah. Where hijaab is ignored, flirting and illicit relationships abound.

Nevertheless, as stated earlier, the wisdom behind the command is not our concern. We must submit without question, as Nabi Ebrahim ('alaihi salaam) set out to fulfil the command of Allah, to slaughter his son without questioning the logic or wisdom in the command. Allah is the All Wise and His commands are filled with wisdom whether we understand it or not.

Uswatul Muslimah Panel of Ulama KZN

Question.

I am married for 5 months to a boy I've known from before. I have very severe trust issues especially when my husband goes to the gym. He has a habit of not lowering his gaze and I get scared that he'll notice other women. Is it wrong of me to have these thoughts?

I regret knowing the boy from before I got married as I wish it was done the halal way but nevertheless I regret

what I've done and I try to repent for it.

How do I deal with my trust issues as it is ruining me and making me depressed?

Answer.

There are two independent issues here. Both must not be mixed up.

The first issue pertains to yourself. It is not permissible to harbour suspicions about anyone. Shaitaan uses this to create problems between people. Often there is nothing in reality but Shaitaan, by means of whispering suspicions into the heart, makes one totally negative about this. This negativity overshadows the relationship between them. Eventually this leads to a break of ties or marriages, Allah forbid. Therefore, if you have not seen something, do not suspect any mischief and poison your heart.

The second aspect pertains to your husband. He should totally avoid going to such environments which are places of fitnah. Just as one should not harbour suspicions about others, one should also not do anything or go to such places which invite suspicion. In a very nice way, advise your husband to avoid going to the gym due to the environment being very negative. Alternatively, encourage him to himself enquire from a senior mufti.

You should also commence ta'leem in your home. Daily read the books, Fazaail-e-Aa'maal and Fazaail-e-Sadaqaat for at least ten minutes. Encourage him to participate but do not insist. If he does not join, you sit and read the kitaab by yourself. Insha-Allah, this will create the consciousness of Allah in the heart and save one from haraam.

Uswatul Muslimah Panel of Ulama KZN

Lesson From The Qur'an

“Those who disbelieve—they are friends and protectors of one another (especially against you). Unless you do it also (i.e. maintain solidarity among yourselves as believers) there will be unrest on the earth and great corruption.” (8:73)

The verse prior to the one above: *“Those who have believed and emigrated (to the home of Islam), and striven hard with their wealth and persons in God’s cause, and those who give refuge (to them) and help (them)—those (illustrious ones) are friends and protectors of one another (and can inherit from one another),” (8:72)*

decreed that those who emigrated to Madinah (Muhajirun) and those who gave refuge to and helped them (Ansar) could inherit from one another although they were not relatives. As for the verse under discussion, it was decreed in it that the Muslims and unbelievers could not inherit from one another; unbelievers can inherit from unbelievers only. In interpreting this verse, God’s Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, says:

“I am distant from every Muslim who keeps living among unbelievers. Their fire does not give light.” (Abu Dawood, Tirmidhi, Nasaie)

In other words, the fire they kindle is not felt as a light despite their beliefs; as a result, the two different worlds cannot be distinguished from each other.

This matter can be interpreted in the following ways:

1. Fire has a great importance in deserts as a means of direction and warm. The hadith above may be interpreted as an inability to distinguish between the fire of the friend and that of the enemy.

2. If the sources of light or fireplaces of believers and unbelievers exist side by side, they cannot be differentiated from each other. The sources of light of believers and unbelievers should be separate so that each may not be deceived and confused.

3. The most important point is that if unbelievers and believers are mixed with one another, neglecting the basic differences of creed, morality, and goals, they may not be able to observe and preserve their metaphysical intensity and spiritual alertness against one another. They may be tolerant towards each other and live in peace, but belief and unbelief cannot be reconciled.

4. Another point is that according to the Islamic Law of Heritage, ikhtilafu’d-din (the difference of religion) and

ikhtilafu'd-darr (the difference of worlds) prevent mutual inheritance. That is, both Muslims and the followers of other religions as well as the Muslim citizens of Islamic world and the citizens of non-Muslim countries that are at war with Muslims cannot inherit from each other. Apart from humanly relationships, if the basic principles of belief and practice and certain legal disciplines cannot be observed and preserved, we may cause cor-

ruption and disorder by the affairs and acts from which we hope improvement and reform. The greatest disturbance, abuse, and corruption are those caused by good intention and the acts done with the purpose of improvement. For the harm caused by good intentions is liable to be continuous. Once the masses are directed to this kind of conduct unconsciously, it will be very difficult for them to turn back to normality.

Bring my Son Back to Life

Sayyiduna Anas (RA) recounts the following amazing incident:

We once visited a Sabaabi (RA) who was extremely sick. His illness had advanced to such a point that he passed away before we could even leave his home. We then used a piece of cloth that belonged to him to cover his body.

One of us then turned to his aged mother, seated at his head side, and attempted to console her saying, "Be hopeful of Allah's reward in your calamity." The old mother asked, "What has happened? Has my son passed away?" When we replied in the affirmative she again asked, "Are you sure that he has passed away?" When we again confirmed that her son had indeed passed away, she raised her hands and made the following du'aa, "O Allah! You know that I accepted Islam and migrated to your Rasool (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) with the hope in my heart that you will assist me in every moment of adversity and prosperity. Do not therefore burden me with this calamity today."

She then moved the cloth to expose his face and we were able to eat with him before departing, as he was once again alive, by the will of Allah. (Sifatus Safwahand and Mujaabud Da'wah)

Lessons:

- 1. Although such cases are rare, and generally do not take place, the lesson that we derive is that a person who lives his life to please Allah can remain assured and confident that Allah will definitely come to his aid in his hour of need.*
- 2. A heart void of the obedience and remembrance of Allah is a "dead" heart. If a mother's du'aa caused Allah to literally bring a dead son to life, imagine the effect our heartfelt, sincere du'aas can have in bringing our own "dead" hearts and the "dead" hearts of our wayward, disobedient children to life.*
- 3. As children, let us never underestimate the significance and value of our mothers' du'aas. It sometimes takes just one du'aa spontaneously emerging from a happy mother's heart to secure the lifelong success of her child. However, the opposite is unfortunately a reality as well; it takes just one curse of a displeased mother to ruin the life of her child in this life and the next.*

Lesson From Sahih al-Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

The Book of Salaah

Salaah is amongst the fundamentals of Islamic worship. The Tahaarah—the ritual cleanliness through Wudu, Gusul or Tayammum is an essential prerequisite for Salaah and that is why Imam Bukhari first discussed the chapters related to Tahaarah and now will be discussing the chapters related to Salaah—the main objective in worship.

The word Salaah literally means ‘Dua’. It is defined as:

“Salaah often means Dua literally”

In Islamic Shariah, the word Salaah is used for a specified type of worship which begins with Takbeer-i-Tahreemah and ends with Salaam. Since it mostly consists of Dua, it is called Salaah.

Chapter 1 : How the prayer was made obligatory during the Night Journey (Me’raj - miraculous journey of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam))

And Ibn Abbas said, “Abu Sufiyaan, when telling the narration of Heraclius mentioned: The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) ordered us to offer our prayers and to be true and chaste”.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

By establishing this title for the

chapter under discussion, the purpose of Imam Bukhari seems to be multidimensional. The most important thing which he wants to point at is that all the commandments regarding all types of Ibaadah (worship) except Salaah were given to Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) while being physically on the face of earth; and Salaah is the only Ibaadah, the commandment of which was given as a gift to Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) in the heavens where he was taken during his visit famously known as Me’raj. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was invited as a guest by Allah to the heavens and here at this point one has to first imagine who the Host was, who the guest was and what the venue of invitation was then only one can appreciate the significance of the gift bestowed by such a Host to such a guest at such an elevated place. This gift was five times obligatory Salaah. When Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) went to Me’raj, he did not forget his people even at such an elevation and got a gift for them from Allah—the gift of Salaah also called as ‘Me’raj-ul-Mu’mineen’. Here, in this chapter, Imam Bukhari tells us that the Salaah was decreed upon the Um-

mah during the Me'raj of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). By mentioning the Hadith of Heraclius quoted by Ibn Abbas from Abu Sufiyaaan, Imam Bukhari wants to say that the Salaah was decreed upon the Ummah before Hijrah (migration to Madinah). Allaama Ibn Hajr is also of the same opinion.

What about Salaah before Me'raj?

Five time Salaah was decreed upon the Ummah during the ascent of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) to the heavens— what is called Me'raj. The learned scholars have debated the issue regarding the nature of Salaah offered by Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and Sahaaba before Me'raj. On the basis of various narrations it is believed that before Me'raj, Salaah was offered two times viz., Fajr and Isha as per the Qur'anic verse:

Remember your Lord much; and proclaim His purity in the evening and the morning (3:41)

But the learned scholars differ in their opinion whether Salaah at these two times i.e., morning and evening was Fardh (obligatory) or Nafil (optional). Imam Shaafa'ee is of the opinion that Tahajjud Salaah was obligatory right from the very early days of Islam, as per the Qur'anic verse of Surah al-Muzzammil, viz.,

O you, wrapped up in clothes, stand at night (for prayer) except a little, half of it, or make it a little less. (73:1-3)

Surah al-Muzzammil was revealed during the early days of Islam. The majority of the learned scholars believe that Tahajjud was Fardh (obligatory) on Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) alone and not on the entire Ummah.

"Ibn Abbas said that Tahajjud was obligatory on Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and the earlier prophets".

Hadith No. 341

Narrated Abu Dhar

Allah's Apostle said, "While I was at Makkah the roof of my house was opened and Gabriel descended, opened my chest, and washed it with Zamzam water. Then he brought a golden tray full of wisdom and faith and having poured its contents into my chest, he closed it. Then he took my hand and ascended with me to the nearest heaven, when I reached the nearest heaven, Gabriel said to the gatekeeper of the heaven, 'Open (the gate).' The gatekeeper asked, 'Who is it?' Gabriel answered: 'Gabriel.' He asked, 'Is there anyone with you?' Gabriel replied, 'Yes, Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is with me.' He asked, 'Has he been called?' Gabriel said, 'Yes.' so the gate was opened and we went over the nearest heaven and there we saw a man sitting with some people on his right and some on his left. When he looked towards his right, he laughed and when he looked toward his left he wept. Then he said, 'Welcome! O pious Prophet and pious son.' I asked Gabriel, 'Who is he?' He replied, 'He is Adam and the people on his right and left are the souls of his offspring. Those on his right are the people of Paradise and those on his left are the people of Hell and when he looks towards his right he laughs and when he looks towards his left he weeps.'

Then he ascended with me till he reached the second heaven and he (Gabriel) said to its gatekeeper, 'Open (the gate).' The gatekeeper said to him the same as the gatekeeper of the first heaven had said and he opened the gate. Anas said: "Abu

Dhar added that the Prophet met Adam, Idris, Moses, Jesus and Abraham, he (Abu Dhar) did not mention on which heaven they were but he mentioned that he (the Prophet) met Adam on the nearest heaven and Abraham on the sixth heaven. Anas said, "When Gabriel along with the Prophet passed by Idris, the latter said, 'Welcome! O pious Prophet and pious brother.' The Prophet asked, 'Who is he?' Gabriel replied, 'He is Idris.'" The Prophet added, "I passed by Moses and he said, 'Welcome! O pious Prophet and pious brother.' I asked Gabriel, 'Who is he?' Gabriel replied, 'He is Moses.' Then I passed by Jesus and he said, 'Welcome! O pious brother and pious Prophet.' I asked, 'Who is he?' Gabriel replied, 'He is Jesus."

Then I passed by Abraham and he said, 'Welcome! O pious Prophet and pious son.' I asked Gabriel, 'Who is he?' Gabriel replied, 'He is Abraham. The Prophet added, 'Then Gabriel ascended with me to a place where I heard the creaking of the pens.'" Ibn Hazm and Anas bin Maa'lik said: The Prophet said, "Then Allah enjoined fifty prayers on my followers when I returned with this order of Allah, I passed by Moses who asked me, 'What has Allah enjoined on your followers?' I replied, 'He has enjoined fifty prayers on them.' Moses said, 'Go back to your Lord (and appeal for reduction) for your followers will not be able to bear it.' (So I went back to Allah and requested for reduction) and He reduced it to half. When I passed by Moses again and informed him about it, he said, 'Go back to your Lord as your followers will not be able to bear it.' So I returned to Allah and requested for further reduction and half of it was reduced. I again passed by Moses and he said to me: 'Return to your Lord,

for your followers will not be able to bear it. So I returned to Allah and He said, 'These are five prayers and they are all (equal to) fifty (in reward) for My Word does not change.' I returned to Moses and he told me to go back once again. I replied, 'Now I feel shy of asking my Lord again.' Then Gabriel took me till we "reached Sidrat-il-Muntaha (Lote tree of the utmost boundary) which was shrouded in colors, indescribable. Then I was admitted into Paradise where I found small (tents or) walls (made) of pearls and its earth was of musk."

Comments

What is Isra and Me'raj?

The majority of the learned scholars hold the opinion that the journey of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) from Masjid-i-Haraam to Masjid-i-Aqsa during that particular night is called Isra, and from Masjid-i-Aqsa to the heavens is called Me'raj. It seems that Imam Bukhari does not agree with this view and as per him the whole journey i.e., from Masjid-i-Haraam to Masjid-i-Aqsa and then to the heavens is called Isra as he says "how Salaah was made obligatory during Isra", comments Allaama Ibn Hajr.

What is Shaq-i-Sadr (the opening of the chest)?

According to Allaama Ibn Hajr Asqalaani the incident of Shaq-i-Sadr of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) took place four times, the first time it was during the childhood of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) at the age of 4 years when he was staying with his maid Haleema. It so happened that once while he was playing with some children

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Freedom in Islam (Needs Revision)

Syed Iqbal Zaheer

Back in November 2002 we were asked (S.Shafiq Ahmed – advocate, Meerut, UP) to explain the Ummah-situation vis-à-vis the inequalities prevalent in its societies. How is it justified? And what is the role of the Ulama, elites and intelligentsia? What in specific are the Ulama doing in this regard?

It was answered – in effect then – that the Ulama are helpless since their leadership role has been taken away from them. It is now in the hands of the elites and the intellectual class. (Although we believe that the intellectual class, or the intelligentsia of Islam, does not meet with even the secular requirements, far from Islamic).

These two classes, (however defined, and whatever their worth), having taken over the lead, denied Islam – and continue to deny it, to this day – any but marginal role in the social, political and economic lives of the Muslims. This has brought on several consequences, one of which is social inequality among the masses, which was the main concern of the questioner.

That short answer stated in sum and substance what in detail would require volumes. It was also pointed out then, to put it slightly differently now, that there is not much that the Ulama can do about it, except perhaps adopting

poverty for themselves too. They are there to study, advance and spread Islamic knowledge and awareness. They have no power to enforce rules, nor does the Islamic system allow for enforcement, even if the Ulama are in power.

The above statements have also been questioned by Aliuddin and Humera Hyder. They have asked for justification, vis-à-vis the enforcement. It seems they believe that the Ulama are there to enforce the Islamic rules, if they have the power. What comes below is in response to it, with a few lines on another, important issue.

We might begin by stating that from philosophical angle, one of the prime difficulties we face in bringing in any significant change at the social, economic or political level among the Muslims, in any part of the world, is, in the final analysis, freedom of choice accorded every person Muslim or non-Muslim. Freedom is an inviolable tenet of Islam. Perhaps nothing is more firmly established in Islam than freedom. One might cite an example. When the son of the Governor of Egypt whipped a Copt and the case was reported to `Umar at Madinah, the second caliph of Islam, he ordered both the Governor and his son to show up at the capital. When they came, he ordered retribution. He remarked on

that occasion, "Allah created people free. Since when have you enslaved them?"

This is the reason why Islam was not enforced upon those of the earliest non-Muslims who, following defeats in the battlefields, fell under the political rule of Islam. To cite Egypt's example again, a very few converted to Islam after its fall to Muslims early in Islamic history. Conversion rate remained so low then onward, historians tell us, that even after some 700 years, half of the Egyptian population was still Copt, remaining on their old religion, perhaps in majority of cases Christianity. The numbers have continued to decline to this day when just about ten percent have remained Christian. This slow conversion has been the result of complete religious freedom given to them. The use of the word complete is in its unequivocal sense. There was never any coercion. Indeed, there was never any reward either. That is, no one stood to gain any material reward if he converted to Islam. In the Gulf today, many new converts to Islam go about from pillar to post when they are out of jobs, but fail to find one simply on grounds that they have converted to Islam. Compare this with Christianity. Conversion means, in most cases, immediate material rewards: free or low-cost education in Missionary institutions, ex-gratia payments to the family from Christian charitable organizations, and cash gifts at the Church for attending weekly services. But in Islam, a convert gets nothing whatsoever, except promises of rewards in the Hereafter. Indeed, the Muslims do not even recognize his conversion in the fullest sense. They say, "You are a revert." There ends the matter: "You came back to what you originally were – born on the religion of Allah –

and so, sort of, no credits for the jump."

Forced regimentation is totally and completely anathema to Islam.

Not only Islam does not enforce its beliefs on any people, it does not either enforce upon Muslims the kind of life it suggests. It defines and delineates the way to a peaceful, dignified existence. But, thereafter it is quit of the situation. It is up to the people to accept or reject.

Islam is not a communistic, tyrannical, dictatorial system to enforce its way of life, nor is it the "freedom coated" capitalistic system (as of the West today) in which "you are free to do what you are told." Islam is the other name of freedom: of the absolute kind – to the extent that you can reject it also, either wholly, as the non-Muslims do, or to a great measure, as the great majority of Muslims do, or, partly, as a smaller minority of them does today. In contrast, other systems do not allow such absolute freedom. In the USA you are not allowed to follow any other kind of life, but American/Western. Its President for example, is not allowed to denounce Christianity, or the banking system. In contrast, Muslims, living in the thick of Islam, denounce Islam, say it is the sole cause of their decline, and that the less of it in education, the better. Such denunciations are normally followed by some noisy protest by a few committed Muslims, but, in time the hulla bulla dies down and the denouncers go scot-free. Benazir Bhutto's (a former Prime Minister of Pakistan) public denunciation of Islamic penal code as barbaric is a case in point. She didn't lose a single vote for saying that.

Freedom in Islam goes deeper than what appears at the surface. An

American President for instance, cannot go to office with an Arab dress. He cannot wear a Muslim cap in public. In contrast, many Muslim heads of state wear Western suits and don hats. Some Muslim scholars also wear Western suits without anyone raising an eyebrow. If a Pope wore the Islamic turban in public appearance, he will receive a few tomatoes. Early in the history of Islam, a Persian commander asked a Muslim delegate what they had come for, he answered, "To remove you from the slavery of men and bring you into the slavery of God."

If there are restrictions in Islam, they are entirely of the kind that humanity has throughout its history judged as reprehensible: wine, gambling, women's exposure, usury, pornography, etc. Islam is not the first in restricting freedom in these affairs, and, in today's world, not the only system which places restrictions on these things.

Even where Islam enforces its injunctions, it tries to find a way for the non-believer to enjoy his right of freedom. In case of wine, for example, an Islamic state bans its sale and drunkenness in public. But it does not allow any state or voluntary organization to spy on the non-Muslims to discover whether they drink in private.

But there is something amazing about freedom in Islam. Islam does not force the citizens of the nation to defend their country against invaders. So, non-Muslims are exempt from any military duty. What does it imply? It implies that they live in the land, for centuries, enjoying all the rights, but, when it comes to defending the land against the enemies of the land, they can shrug their shoulders, say, "not my business" and walk

off! What other country will tolerate that? In most countries, if they refuse to serve when the country is invaded, they will be court-martialed and shot dead. But is that the limit to freedom? No. Amazingly, even Muslims are not forced into military service. They are encouraged to Jihad. Some sort of enforcing is also tried. It is done by the Amir declaring Jihad obligatory on everyone. But supposing some Muslims refuse to fight, refuse to do anything about turning back the enemy. What's to be done with them? Should they not be tried in the military courts? Islam has a firm no for it. Jihad was wajib on them, but if they refused, there is nothing that can be done about it except to threaten them with severe chastisement in the Hereafter. This came to light at the time of the Prophet himself. He received news that the Muslim state was likely to be attacked by Romans. He declared fighting an obligation on every Muslim, collected his forces and marched forward to prevent the invaders from entering into the Islamic lands. But many did not go. Some came to him seeking excuse on false pretexts before the journey to meet the enemy at Tabuk, while some did so after he returned from that journey. What did he do? He accepted their excuses and let them go home with smiles on their faces. The Qur'an called them hypocrites, and said they should never be allowed to fight again. But that's all. They were not punished.

Does any country give this freedom to its people? Freedom in Islam is unfettered, unbound.

Absolute freedom then, is the reason why Islamic principles cannot be enforced on anyone, and is one of the reasons why the Islamic world has not developed materially, but instead, suffers

from inequalities. Islam will not allow a group of say, committed Muslims, or the Mullah's as derogatively they are referred to, to seize power, and then force the people to the ways of Islam. That is the reason why it were the elites and not the Mullah's who seized power and forcibly put several Muslim countries on a course of material development. Had they not done it with the help of military rule, continued to this day, Turkey would have gone another way. Which way, we do not know. But not the one it was forced to take.

To many people the above would sound strange, confusing, contradictory, and perhaps wrong. But on some consideration the facts will speak for themselves. Take for example economic activities. Non-Islamic system enforce work upon the citizens. Eight hours work a day, forty-eight hours a week, fifty weeks a year, everyone has to work. In America, it is right from the age of eighteen until sixty-eight – man and woman. That is full fifty years. And, during the working hours one is required to work hard, harder, and harder: endlessly. Targets set are such as can never be completed in eight hours. So, many stay on for extra hours. But that doesn't help either. So, they work during the weekends.

In contrast, the Islamic system is very loose. Eight hours are not eight hours. Work hours are interspersed with obligatory Prayers. A whole month of Ramadan dulls down everybody's productivity. How and why? It is through freedom. People are taught that they are freed of the nature's whims and fancies, of market's up and down, and economy's rise and fall. They are told to "do their best" and depend on Allah. This is a far cry from the ruthless non-Muslim eco-

conomic systems where you perform, or take the exit. Whether, you are happy or miserable by the evening is your business. Whether you go to the bar to remove your tension or take hard drugs. Those are nobody's worry except your own. The important thing is, when you report for work, your performance has to be hundred percent efficient. But in the Islamic world, if somebody took off forty days for Tabligh work, the top boss doesn't want that to be brought to his notice for him to take the embarrassment of removing the "muballigh" from service. Thus, you have a lot more freedom in Islam than in any other system. But, how can you bind the people to say, hard work and efficiency, when you teach them self-satisfaction,

And, since this comes in the way of material development, Islam is a universally hated religion.

Some of the many noted Islamic scholars dealt with this issue in detail. A study of their writings shows that although they, as principal movers of thought and ideas in Islam in the last century, correctly lay their fingers on the right causes for the failure of Islam and Muslims in the modern times, they did not have a solution to the problems that they dealt with. Why? It is because the diagnosis done, the scholars of Islam had reached their ends and limits. The best that they could do, and can do now at any time, is to point at the malady and suggest the cure. They cannot deliver the cure. First, as stated above, they were not and are not at the helm of affairs. At the helm of affairs are still those, the elite and the intelligentsia, who refuse any serious role for Islam in building up of the society, running of the state, and development of the Muslim nations. The

credit for the poverty and backwardness of the Muslim states, and now the humiliation of the Muslim Ummah, goes entirely to the leadership of the elites and the intellectual class. (This in turn had its roots in greed amongst all, the elites, the intelligentsia, the common people: one and all, (and now even in some sections of the scholars). This was stated in the answer to a previous question.

Thus, the scholars were, and are, left with no other role but to comment, explain, suggest, expound and admonish. They have no corporeal power to enforce what they believe is right. A step further, assuming that they were at the helm of affairs, and in possession of corporeal power (the army, police, the courts, etc.) they would still have no power – since Islam denies them – the right to impose what they think as the correct measures for the Ummah.

For, as we stated in the issue of above reference: From the philosophical angle we can say that the prime cause of all present day evils in the Muslim Ummah is because Islam firmly believes in man's freedom. It does not enforce its beliefs on any people, nor does it enforce upon Muslims the kind of life it suggests. They are rather put to test. It delineates the methods for a peaceful, dignified existence. It is up to them to accept or reject. It warns however, that a Day will soon arrive when they will face the consequences of their choice.

We have witnessed, and are witnessing on daily basis, the consequences of our choices in this life. Death is the barrier between our eyes and the consequences that await those who made choices other than Islam.

The point at which the Ummah

stands now, is not the point at which its scholars, reformers, preachers, thinkers, writers and Da'wah workers, held by hand and led to this point.

YMD Feb. 2005

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The man of hope faces difficulties better, handles distress graciously, and persists in doing good and making a difference to the last moments of his life. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:

If the Hour of Judgment comes and one of you has a sapling in his hand, let him plant it before he stands up, if he is so able. (Ahmad and Bukhari)

Subhan-Allah! Transcendent is the Glory of Allah! If we are commanded to continue benefiting humanity and enriching life even when besieged by the terrors of the final quaking of the earth at the Hour of Doom, what about before that!?

The reasonable, resolute reformer braces himself and prepares for whatever difficulties he may face in his journey to Allah. He works hard, sincerely, wisely, and knowingly, trusting in the certainty of Allah's aid. He is all hope that Allah will empower him to attain his noble goals.

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) advised Ibn Abbas with these words:

Truly, with patience comes victory. Truly, with distress comes relief. (Ahmad)

Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim said:

Supremely noble feats invite troubles. Happiness is accessible only through a sea of hardship, which cannot be crossed save on the ships of tenacity and seriousness. (Mifta Dar Al-Sa'aadah, 1:363)

What Happened to Manners

Jasmine Khan

I was travelling in a bus one day; it was crowded with school children on their way home. As I tried to tune out the chattering of shrill young voices, I looked around and felt that there was something wrong. Then I noticed that the seats were occupied by children, some as young as six or seven, while adults battled to keep steady standing in the aisle.

Many of us have forgotten some of the old school manners that our parents, grandparents, and teachers taught us. This is of course the key, manners or good conduct is instilled in us by our parents. After all, a child learns by watching, seeing and hearing what those around him do. In this increasingly frenetic world, making a good impression is vital, and good manners and respect for others can go a long way to ensuring that you do. There seems to be a lack of respect for what has been taught in the Quran and Sunnah when it comes to our behaviour. It is not that we do not know how we are supposed to behave; it seems more like a general carelessness in our conduct. "Good Manners" would appear to be a pet dinosaur, which is trotted out from time to time on very special occasions. In our daily life we seem to care more for our possessions than for those around us. We are so focussed on

the material, that we ignore the spiritual. In our drive for the outer trappings we contaminate our souls, and the souls of those around us. It is a basic human need to be acknowledged; when we fail to respect others, we are denying them their uniqueness as a fellow creation of Allah.

All praise is due to Allah who created the universe and taught His greatest Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) the best of manners, purified his character and conduct and adopted him as His friend. This is our perfect example; in fact, we are commanded by Allah to follow the Sunnah, and if we do, we cannot go wrong. Allah says:

"Say, (O Muhammad, to mankind); If ye love Allah, follow me; Allah will love you and forgive your sins. Allah is forgiving and Merciful. Say: Obey Allah and the messenger. But if they turn away, lo! Allah loveth not the disbelievers (in his guidance)". (3:31-32)

Outer good manners are a reflection of inner good conduct. Our behaviour is a direct result of our thoughts, and good character and conduct is manifested in our actions. When we exert the power given to us by Allah as our Creator, we access the light of secret power within; with good manners this power is

expressed outwardly as a rhyme of beauty; the beauty of the soul and that of actions. Our Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) never behaved as if he was greater than others. Nor did He belittle people, or cause them embarrassment or humiliation. He always greeted people kindly, and showed respect to elders as well as to children. He once said: “The dearest of you to me are those who have good manners.” (Al-Bukhari)

However, when young people do not bother to greet elderly relatives living on their property, when they go to work and come back without checking up someone who lives a few steps from their back door, is it any wonder that the children do not bother to do so either. When parents shout at their children, address them without any respect for their feelings, are it any wonder that the youth of today are careless and have no respect for others? Almighty Allah says:

“Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar for those who hope in Allah and the latter day and remember Allah much.” (33:21)

The Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) practised what he preached; he showed how we should live as individuals and as members of the society. He disciplined himself by staying aloof from quarrels and quibbles. He never engaged in bad language. How refreshing when we consider how most of us cannot refrain from getting involved in the problems of others. His exemplary manners make him a model for us to follow. He stressed the importance of good manners. He said: “The best of you is the best among you in conduct” (Al-Bukhari and Muslim). Also: “The heaviest thing to be placed in the

balance of a believing slave on the Day of Judgement will be good behaviour. And Allah hates the one who uses bad language” (Al-Bayhaqi). Should we not take cognisance of this when next we feel like shouting of insulting those dear to us?

When asked what one needs to enter the Jannah, The Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) answer was: “Piety and good conduct”.

The Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) went even further to declare that we will inhabit different levels in Jannah, based on good manners: “The dearest and nearest among you to me on the Day of Resurrection will be the one who is the best in conduct.” (Ibn An-Najjaar).

Ethics in Islam is different from any other ethical system because it is derived from a Divine source; the revelation from Allah. It cannot be changed, or manipulated to fit our desires. It applies regardless of time or place. This system has not been changed for thousands of years. What was considered good morals in the past will remain as good morals throughout time. What was considered as bad morals in the past will also remain so forever, even if society accepts it as a norm. The system of ethics is not affected by cultural norms, because Allah is the One who determines what is acceptable and what is not. The Noble Quran is very detailed and clearly mentions the significance of good manners. No other ethical system can match it. It teaches humans how to deal with every aspect of their lives; it is not a man made system; it is the Deen of Allah. He made it complete and integrated. Unlike other ethical systems, Islam’s moral system is a very detailed and complete package. Islam addresses every aspect of human

life, no matter how minor. It does not lack anything that needs to be completed nor does it have any defects that need to be amended. The Deen of Islam guides our morals that deal with the individual, the community, and Muslims and non-Muslims alike. It also guides us on how to deal with rulers and how to honour and respect scholars. Islam even directs us on how to act during times of peace and war.

Allah favoured us by sending us Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam),

so that he may teach us wisdom. Let us reflect on Allah's words, study the Sunnah; and resolve to follow it, Insha'Allah. If you want a successful and happy life, then simply apply Islam to it, and you will have wonderful results. Good manners, self respect and respect for others go hand in hand. What a lovely gift to give to our children.

Imam Malik (RA) is reported to have said: The Sunnah is like the Ark, those who board will be saved, and those who don't, will perish.

Profound Du'aa of Ebrahim ('alaihis salaam)

When Ebrahim ('AS) left his wife and infant child in the barren land of Makkah Mukarramah on the command of Allah, he supplicated to Allah in the following words:

“O Allah, I have settled my progeny in a barren land (Makkah Mukarramah) by your sacred house, so that they may establish salaah. So make the hearts of the people yearn towards them and provide them with fruits, so that they may be grateful.” (Surah Ebrahim v37)

This du'aa contains the following important lessons:

- 1. After expressing weakness to Allah, the first aspect he made du'aa for was his family being punctual on salaah. This explains to us the importance of instructing and training our children to perform salaah.*
- 2. He did not make du'aa for Makkah Mukarramah to become a fertile land, rather he made du'aa that Allah himself arrange their sustenance. This was because Ebrahim ('alaihis salaam) did not want his family to be pre-occupied in acquiring the world. His desire was for them to dedicate themselves to Allah, while their worldly needs are taken care of. This teaches us that we should be more concerned about the deen of our children than their dunya.*
- 3. He concluded the du'aa by saying “so that they may be grateful”, implying that the outcome of these worldly comforts should be an increase in loyalty to Allah and commitment to His deen. (Adapted from Ma'aariful Quraan).*

Between Hope and Despire

Umar Masud

Despair, Pessimism and other forms of spiritual ailment have so overwhelmed some of us that we have become helpless, lost self-esteem, succumbed to feelings of defeatism and disappointment, and abandoned all attempt at making a difference in this life and for the next.

People of this sort have nothing for life and the living, save blame, accusations, suspicions, and insults. They forfeit all opportunities of learning, doing good, and engagement in beneficial labor.

Plagued with idleness, indolence, and failure, they lead a life fraught with worry, stress, and mental instability. Their behavior is sour, their temperament petulant, their efforts fruitless, and their worries snowball day by day. An Arab adage aptly captures their sorry situation:

Indolence wedded procrastination giving birth to regret. Wretchedness married languor siring deprivation. (*Adab Al-Dunya wa'l-Din*, 407).

How proud Satan is of this lot! And why shouldn't he be? They are part of his hosts, marching to his drumming. They are a weapon in his demonic arsenal, which he employs in spreading fatal spiritual diseases and debarring the slaves of Allah from rising up to their

worldly and otherworldly responsibilities.

The Virus Spreads

Worse still, these destructive maladies have stolen into the hearts of some da'ies, or callers unto Allah, and some students of ilm, leading them to believe that munkar (wrong) is too vast to be righted. Overwhelmed by these feelings, they have grown too enfeebled to shoulder the responsibility of reform, and so withdrawn into themselves and sunk into isolation.

It is as though these people had never heard Allah's words:

And do not despair of Allah's mercy. For, most surely, none despairs of Allah's mercy except the disbelieving people. [12:87]

or His words:

And who desponds of the mercy of his Lord but those who are astray [15:56];

or the Messenger's (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) response when asked about major sins:

[Major sins are]: Associating false gods with Allah, despairing of Allah's spirit, and desponding of Allah's mercy. (Al-Bazzar)

The Prophetic Antidote Administered

The students and professors of

‘ilm, and Muslims in general, should rise above despair. They should cast aside despondency. They should assume a proactive attitude. They should diligently seek to reform themselves and others—taking strength from patient endurance, from trust in the Lord of the Heavens and the Earth, from hopefulness, and hope in Allah’s promise. Allah said:

Call to the path of your Lord, O Prophet, with sound wisdom and fair admonition.

And as to all people, argue gently with them in the fairest manner. Indeed, it is your Lord alone who knows best all those who have strayed from His straight path;

and He knows best all those who are guided aright. Moreover, if you believers punish aggressors, then punish them with the like of that with which you have been afflicted by them. But if you remain patient, it is, most surely, better for those who are patient. So be patient, O Prophet. Yet know that your patience shall not endure through adversity except with the help of Allah. Thus do not grieve over those of them who oppose you, nor be in any distress because of what they plot against you. [16:125-128]

And He said:

And thereby We made from them exemplary leaders, guiding their people by Our command—when they had endured patiently, and when they had certainty in the truth of Our revealed verses. [32:24]

He also said:

But as to those who strive for Us alone, against every evil, We shall, most surely, guide them upon Our pathways to salvation. For, indeed, Allah is, most surely, with those who excel in doing good.

[29:69]

In the first days of the mission of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), Muslims encountered violent

and relentless opposition from the polytheists of Makkah. Compelled by the immense torture that the Makkans were heaping upon their heads—and in a moment of human weakness to which not even the indestructible Companions I were immune—some of them went to the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and implored him, saying:

Would that you petition Allah to grant us victory over our enemies! Would that you supplicate in our behalf! The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) responded with these words: By Allah! This affair (Islam) is bound to triumph such that a man will travel from Ḥana’a (the capital of Yemen, to the west) to Ḥadramawt (a Yemeni region toward the east) fearing only Allah and the wolf for his sheep. That is Allah’s promise. But you are in haste. (Bukhari and Muslim)

As the above Hadith demonstrates, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) exhorted his Companions I to persevere in faith with patience, steadfastness, and hope in Allah. It was the wont of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) to give glad tidings, to refrain from spreading bad news, and to command others to do the same. When the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) sent Muadh ibn Jabal and Abu Musa Al-Ash’ari to Yemen, he advised them:

Make things easy for people, and do not make things difficult for people. Give glad tidings. Let not your behavior drive people away from Islam. Avoid dispute and be in agreement with one another. (Bukhari and Muslim)

In order for Muslims to carry out the divine command of doing good, enjoining justice, and combating injustice, they need a significant and persistent dose of encouragement and cheering. The

torch of hope, hopefulness, and confidence needs to be kindled in their hearts such that these hearts become free from all traces of despair and despondence.

In a time when the outnumbered and overpowered followers of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) were suffering tremendous persecution and oppression at the hands of their disbelieving fellow tribesmen, he gave his Companions the good news of their God-promised victory over Chosroes' Persian Empire and Caesar's Roman Dominion.

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:

Indeed, Allah has tilted earth before me, till I saw its eastern and western expanses. And, sure enough, my Ummah's dominion will cover those parts of the earth which Allah has shown me. Moreover, I was given the two treasure troves: The red [signifying the Roman Empire] and the white [signifying the Persian Empire]. (Muslim)

History tells us how his remarkable prophesy came true. Not long after the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) pronounced this singular vision, the Persian and Roman territories fell one after another into the hands of Muslims.

Hope Yet Springs

Now, when one observes the current condition of the Muslim Ummah, one is bound to see many pleasing things, much good news. Muslims are coming back to their religion. The numbers of Muslims who honor and hold fast to the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is on the rise. The signposts of the Shari'ah are conspicuous. The lights of the Sunnah are brilliant. Boundaries of falsehood and heresy are clearly marked. All these

things make one hopeful and fill one's heart with trust in Allah's succor:

Yet most surely, the help of Allah is ever near! [2:214]

So, you da'ies who invite to the truth, and you students of knowledge who are the bearers of the prophetic heritage, let not despondence hold back your laboring for your Lord. Be steadfast. Endure in faith patiently. Keep marching down the path of learning, teaching, and guiding humankind from the darkness of ignorance, polytheism, sin, and heresy, to the white shores of peace, salvation, and bliss.

Thank Allah that goodness is ever-present in the Muslim Ummah. Processions of Muslim reformers will never cease. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:

The example of my Ummah is like that of a rainy season. None knows whether its beginning or end will be good. (Ahmad and Tirmidhi)

He said also:

Allah will continue to raise from among the Muslim Ummah those whom He uses to uphold His religion. (Ahmad and Ibn Majah)

Also, on the authority of Thawban, who quoted the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) as saying:

There will ever be a contingent from among my Ummah who will continue to rally around the banner of truth, undaunted by the betrayals they meet, until they meet Allah in that state. (Muslim)

With such glad tidings and heart-comforting words, no one should succumb to despair and despondency. Hopefulness strengthens hearts, reinforces resolve, and opens the gates of hope, work, sacrifice, and giving.

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What to do Upon a Death

Dr. Abdul Hayy 'Arifi (ra)

When signs of death start showing up

The blessed Companion Abu Sa'eed Khudri (RA) narrates that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "Prompt the dying among you to say (the kalimah): Lā ilāha illallāh (I declare that there is no god but Allah)." (Muslim)

The blessed Companion Ma'qil Ibne Yasār (RA) narrates that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "You should recite Soorah Yāseen over the dying among you." (Musnade-Ahmad, Abu Dāwood, Ibne Mājah)

In the agony of death

Turn the face of the dying person towards the Qiblah. Let him or her make the following prayer, "O Allah, forgive me and have mercy on me and have me join higher companions." (Tirmizi)

Rulings

1. Soon after the signs of death become obvious, make the dying person lie on his back with the Qiblah on his right. Turn the face slightly towards the Qiblah, raise the head a little by placing a pillow or some other head-rest, in which case also, the dying person will be considered as facing the Qiblah. But leave the dying person as he is if he feels

uncomfortable while being made to face the Qiblah. One should sit down close by and say loudly, "Ash'hadu allā ilāha illallāhu wahdahoo lā shareeka lahoo wa ash'hadu anna Muhammadan 'abduhoo wa rasooluh." (I bear witness that there is no god but Allah. He is One, there is no partner with Him; and I bear witness that Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is His Servant and His Messenger.) Given his condition, do not ask him to recite the kalimah, for that is a time of great trial – who knows what he might say under stress.

2. After the dying person has recited the kalimah once, leave it at that. Do not try to make him say the kalimah non-stop in an effort to see that he breathes his last whilst reciting it. For, the purpose is simply to make sure that the last words he says should be the kalimah. It is not at all necessary that the recitation of the kalimah continues right through the last breath. However, should he return to the mundane and the ordinary concerns of life, start reciting the kalimah again. When he, taking the cue, recites it, then be silent.

3. When breath loses its momentum and starts heaving faster and legs sag down, unable to stay up and the nose-top turns aside and the temples collapse inwards, take these signs to be the cer-

tain knock of death. At this time, start reciting the kalimah in a raised voice.

4. Reciting Soorah Yāseen lightens the hardship of death. Recite it sitting on the side of his head or anywhere else near the body, or ask someone else to do it.

5. At a time such as this, say nothing which may divert his attention to the concerns of worldly life, for this is the time to leave the mortal world and be present in the majestic Court of Allah Almighty. Do say that which turns his heart away from the concerns of the mortal world and diverts it towards the thoughts of his Creator, for it is here that the well being of the dying lies. At a time like this, bringing his children and family members before him, or anyone else he loved most, or to remind him of things or people in a nostalgic manner causing him to be swamped in the thoughts of loves lost, is a terrible thing to do to him. It is not nice that he says farewell to his life in the world so bound by its fond memories.

6. If, at the time of death, some unfortunate remark bordering on kufr (the denial of Faith) escapes the lips of the dying person, feel or say nothing about it. Instead, take it to be a slip of his reason under the stress of approaching death. When man loses his reason, he stands forgiven for his sayings and deeds. Keep praying that Allah Almighty forgives him.

7. When death comes, all concerned should say, "Innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji'oon" (Surely to Allah we belong, and to Him we are to return) and make the following prayer, "O Allah, help me in my hour of trial and replace it for me with what is better." (Tirmizi)

8. When death becomes obvious

and certain, take a strip of cloth, wide enough to pass under the chin, bring it on to the head, tie a knot, then close the eyes gently and pray, "I begin with the Name of Allah while being faithful to the Religion of His Messenger sallallahu alayhi wasallam. O Allah, make his matter easy on him and that which he is to face after death, and make him the blessed beholder of Thy Sighting, and make that to which he has departed better than what he has departed from." (Durre-Mukhtār)

9. Then straighten hands and feet, bring toes of the feet close together and tie them with a strip of cloth. Then, throw a sheet over the dead body and place it on a cot or a flat wooden bunk. Do not leave it lying on the ground. It is advisable to place some weight on the stomach lest it inflates. Allow no impure persons (in need of a bath, including women in conditions that exempt them from offering Salāh etc.) near the dead body. (Durre-Mukhtār)

Now inform relatives and friends of the deceased so that they can all participate in his funeral prayers.

10. Some incense (such as oblibanum, lobān or Frankincense), if available, may be placed near the deceased.

11. Reciting the Qur'ān near the deceased before the washing of the body is not correct.

12. All funeral arrangements including the shrouding of the dead body have to be made very quickly. Start with locating a gravesite and the preparation of the grave. Collect everything needed for the stages of washing, shrouding, funeral and burial.

13. If a person dies on a Friday, it is better to make all arrangements and bury the deceased before the Jumu'ah

congregational Salāh. Holding on to the prepared body with the thought that there will be a lot of participants in the Janāzah salāh after Jumu'ah is makrooh (detested). (Shāmi)

Let there be no wailing over the deceased

It has been related in a Hadeeth that once the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) paid a visit to a Sahābi who was on his deathbed. Seeing him in that condition, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) broke in tears. When people saw him in that state, they too started weeping. He then said to them, "Listen to me O people, and listen well. Allah Almighty certainly does not apprehend the weeping eye and the hurting heart, for a Servant of Allah has no control over these." Then, pointing to the tongue, he added, "But a mistake made by this, that is, on intentional mourning and wailing, He punishes, and on reciting 'Innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji'oon' (To Allah we belong and to Him we are to return), and on raising hands of prayer and on seeking of His Forgiveness, He bestows His Mercy." (Bukhāri, Muslim)

Kissing the deceased

After the deceased has been given the required ghusl (bath), it is permissible to kiss the deceased under intense desire to express love or personal devotion as it was with the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) when he kissed 'Uthmān Ibne Maz'oon (RA) and wept. Very similar to this, the noble Companion Abu Bakr (RA) kissed the forehead of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) after his departure from this mortal world. (Zādul-Ma'ād)

All the funeral arrangements should be swift

It has been narrated that once the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) came to visit Talhah Ibne Barā (RA) when he was sick. Seeing his critical condition, he said to the people around him, "I feel that the time of his death has arrived. If it does come to pass, I should be informed and funeral arrangements be made with haste, for it is not appropriate that the dead body of a Muslim be left amidst his family members for long." (Abu Dāwood)

'Abdullah Ibne 'Umar (RA) na narrates that he heard the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) saying, "When one among you dies, do not keep him in the house for long. Make haste in taking him to the grave and burying him." (Bayhaqi, Shu'abul-Imān)

The Angry Child

A child will most likely get angry if there is something that is stopping him from achieving his objective. When he still gets nowhere, he starts fuming with rage. We should not allow the child to reach this stage. In some homes, it is indeed sad that we incite the child into a fit of rage. This is misconceived as a form of play and affection, whereas this is detrimental to the child.

Often, the child's anger and rage is as a result of the manner we conduct ourselves. Those little eyes and ears see and hear everything around them and accordingly carry them out. Thus we as parents should display patience and tolerance in the presence of our children.

What Waits in the Future?

Kemal Serce

Scientific advances have gained major momentum in the last century; many of the things seen in science-fiction movies in the past have become ordinary things today. High technology products like supersonic planes, mobile phones, satellite communication systems, and super computers are now regular parts of our lives. New inventions pave the way for scientific advancement and the emergence of new technological products. We are living in an age in which a target is hit remotely by a rocket fired from thousands of miles; where humans control surveillance satellites from incredible distances; these inventions have changed how we define distance and privacy.

Today, there are many new fields of study, such as research on high energy and particle physics which led to the discovery of subatomic particles. Many researchers work to reveal the properties and behaviors of atomic and molecular level structures. Studies on nanotechnology, biotechnology, cybernetics, and bionics have led to advanced robot technologies; research on genetics and diverse medical fields are increasingly important.

Now, let us make some predictions on developments in these fields.

Information technologies

The advancements in this field not only support the developments in other sciences, but also lead them. In the future, following the launch of biologic and organic processors, leaps will occur in the processing speed of information and their re-use capacity. It is estimated that super-fast quantum computers will be manufactured within 20-25 years. High-end networks which provide large amounts of data transfer will increase the information flow. Information technologies will be effective in all fields of life as a result of fast, facilitated access to information and communication; wireless communications will be more common. All kinds of information will be comfortably and quickly accessed with a small device. Holographic TV, and three or four dimensional video imaging systems will be produced; movies will provide a realistic spatial sharing experience to the audience. Electronic devices operated with vocal commands and the mind will be manufactured; software capable of translating speeches into languages of interest will be more widespread.

Nanotechnology

Nanotechnology is the science of attempting molecular designs at a scale

of one billionth of a meter and making functional structures from these designs. With the manipulation of atoms and molecules, the production of Nanotubes that are absent in nature, along with nano-electrical circuits and sensors, is now possible; with the synthesis of Nanofibers, the production of multifunctional new materials is also possible.

These can make waterproof and stain-proof dyes that change color. Textiles, electronics, clothing, and merchandise can be manufactured from multifunctional materials featuring thermal, mechanic, acoustic, and opto-electronic properties; they will be utilized in all avenues of life. With the integration of multifunctional detectors and solar cells on fibers, electricity-generating solar clothes can be designed that regulate their own heat and provide humans with their daily energy demands.

High efficiency illumination systems and light sources that are able to convert almost 100% of the energy they absorb into light can be developed with the development of opto-electronic devices. The use of new technologies like solar energy, nuclear energy, and hydrogen fuel cells in vehicles and other operations requiring energy will be more widespread. Recyclable Borohydride as an important hydrogen source and acceptor which can be put to use as a very light and inexpensive fuel reserve.

The manufacture of high efficiency motors and machinery will be possible through a reduction of friction, but also with the invention of motors running on magnetic forces. Through these and other developments, a considerable amount of fuel will be saved and energy conservation will become a reality. Advanced smart robots capable of communication

with humans and imitating human behaviors will fill in for the majority of daily tasks for humans; they will complete jobs in places too risky for human life.

Material transportation, tele-transportation, interdimensional shortcuts and the bended space-time continuum are already among frequent themes of science fiction. Even some theologians consider the story of the Prophet Solomon and the Queen of Sheba and the instant transportation of her throne as a sign that these miracles can one day be realized.

Various breakthroughs in genetics may lead to cures for some illnesses. Once the functions of genetic code are illuminated completely, the way genes affect the developmental stages of an organism starting from the embryological phases will be apparent, and this will enable the necessary regulatory genetic interventions and genetic alterations during the development of an organism. Cloning may just be the beginning.

The yield in agriculture will increase as a result of biotechnological developments. It will be possible to grow disease-resistant vegetables and fruits big enough to feed many people. The range of acceptable climates for growing will also be expanded. Referring to the bounty and abundance that would be obtained, the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is recorded to have spoken of pomegranates that are as big as to provide shade for one person, and that there would be giant wheat grains," which may relate to increased harvests and abundance, and may also point to the enhancement of fruits and plants by gene modification in the future.

New combinations may be formed

with modifications of the genetic code of organisms. Not only new viruses and bacteria can be made possible via genetic intervention, but genetically different plant and animal species can also be generated. It is also possible that while working on the enhancement of the human genetic makeup through genetic editing, strange creatures in the form of humans may be born. Certain people or organizations with ill intentions may try to propagate such organisms to benefit their interests. Among the essential principles in scientific studies is the belief that new developments should benefit humanity, conserve the true nature of organisms and species, and must be aimed to preserve species from extinction and genetic anomalies.

Currently, artificial organs can be used to replace vital organs, except the brain. With developments in gene transfer and stem cell therapy, it will be possible to develop and produce artificial organs and bionic limbs, thus eliminating the lengthy time patients endure waiting for organ donations. There are great expectations from stem cell therapy in terms of curing certain cancer types and damages to the neural system and heart.

Upon elucidation of brain function maps, certain basic brain tasks can be executed through devices – not to mention the probability of motivating humans with injections of certain materials, in addition to the transfer of limited knowledge by lodging microchips into the brain.

The advancements in nanotechnology and biotechnology may instigate certain people to be deluded with power. On the other hand, since humans cannot create anything out of absolute absence, they can also not destroy what has been

created already. In fact, the works of humans constitute only the replication and application of natural patterns into technology after learning the effective laws and principles found in the existence. The technologies that scientists discover and develop in large laboratories established with extensive budgets in fact are exhibited already within the existing structures in the universe.

Science can only be a means for materialistic welfare and eternal happiness if developed and implemented wisely. Otherwise, science may as well cause humankind to doom itself with the accessed technology and developed weapons.

Hand Over Ourselves

The texture and the nature of the hands and feet are different from the eyes and the inner part of the ear. For instance, the eye will not tolerate a little dust particle to enter it, whereas the feet will walk comfortably over heaps of sand. Further, consider the hand. Its use is as far as it can stretch. It cannot reach beyond that and take hold of anything. The ear though can pick up sounds from a distance much further away. As for the eyes it can see and reach as far as the moon and the stars. These limbs have different levels of perception and strength. However, stronger than all of these is the mind. Within seconds it can travel the entire world without the body moving an inch. It can rule empires and it can invent the latest in technology. But despite of all this, the mind is controlled by the heart, and the heart is either going to be serving one Allah or else it will be the slave of the material world. Intelligence demands that we hand over ourselves to one Allah and the world will continue to serve us.

Developing Islamic Character in Kids

A lecture by Shaykh Abdullah Kapodravi

All praise is due to Almighty God, Allah, and may He, the Exalted, bestow His peace and blessings upon Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) upon his good and pure family, as well as upon all of the noble companions, and upon those who follow them in righteousness until the Day of Judgment.

Friends, a very serious issue that confronts the Islamic world today is the character of our youth, which is far removed from Islamic teachings. When I read newspaper accounts about the behavior of our youth my heart cries with pain. I anguish where is the Ummah heading? Could anyone have imaged that in this Ummah a mother would have an illicit relationship with her son? Lamentably, this is happening. A Muslim youth would be drinking? A Muslim youth would be stealing? A Muslim youth and s/he has no respect towards his/her elders? Bad character is manifesting itself everywhere. And the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was sent into the world to correct human conduct and morals. As the famous poet Shauki said: "In the world communities are raised with noble conduct, communities are obliterated with bad character."

We have become addicted to criticizing others. So and so is doing such and such. Day and night we are accus-

tomed to leveling accusations against others. Do we not consider what we are doing? Which direction our community is heading? The biggest responsibility that falls on the Muslim Ummah is to provide correct Islamic teachings and instill excellent morals and character in our children. No matter what education they pursue the paramount consideration must be for our children to develop a strong Islamic moral character. They must never lie, never deceive anyone, nor look towards strange women. Should they be a shopkeeper then they must not misappropriate even five pence. A community imbued with good morals always ascends. This is a universal principle that holds true in all times. And a morally bankrupt community always degenerates and becomes devoid of progress. We need to inculcate good habits in our children. This is imperative for our progress.

Pitifully our situation is such that we send children to Maktabs (supplementary religious schools) from the age of 6 or 7 but when they attain the age of 12 they leave the Maktabs but continue to pursue schooling. These children then have no contact whatsoever with the glorious Qur'an or Islamic books. In fact between the ages of 12 and 24 a young person is most susceptible. This point is confirmed by educationalists. During this period if a child's guidance and upbringing is overlooked or ne-

glected then s/he will not remain steadfast on Islam.

Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) used to discern even minor things. Once Hussain, Radhiallahu Anhu, placed a piece of date in his mouth which was designated as Sadaqah (voluntary charity). Rasulullah Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam placed his finger inside the mouth and made him vomit it out, saying "This item is earmarked as Sadaqah and it cannot be consumed by you." If the same scenario was before us we would allow the child to eat the date saying, "He's a kid. What's wrong with him having a date? When he grows up he will understand the difference between Halal or Haram." No, Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) immediately stopped Hussain (RA).

Similarly, once a boy was eating with Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Instead of eating food which was near him he was taking food from different places. So Rasulullah Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam explained to him gently, "My dear son, first recite Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim, eat with your right hand, and eat from in front of you." This illustrates that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) used to sit with children and observe their eating habits. Do we ever do the same? Nowadays children are eating whilst walking, standing and on their way to school. We don't even reprimand them saying this is contrary to the lifestyle of Muslims. In the lifestyle of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) we have a comprehensive mode of living. Rasulullah, Sallallahu Alyhi Wasallam, has taught us an entire way of life which is distinct and supreme. We have neglected that lifestyle and become careless and as a result

our children have fallen prey to an un-Islamic lifestyle.

My friends, I am sitting in the Masjid and testify to you that our society is in a state of decadence and our children and youth are going astray, totally pursuing a wayward life. For Muslim parents, the need to provide sound Islamic upbringing should take precedence over all other responsibilities they owe to their children. Life is constituted of good morals and character. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was sent into the world for teaching good character to humanity. Within such a short period of time, he established such splendid character among his Companions. Today, there is no parallel to these people. The character of Abu Bakr, Umar, Osman, Ali (RAA) – who nurtured their character and made them who they were? Undoubtedly, they were taught by Sayyidina Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Those who sat in the company of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) their character was raised to sublime heights. After departing from the Prophet's company (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) they would never again speak a lie, oppress anyone. And if ever they happened to utter something wrong it would agitate and stir great remorse. Once Sayyidina Abu Bakr (RA) was seen pulling his tongue and rebuking himself: "How could I have said a harsh word to my fellow Muslim brother." Nowadays we tend to lie, gossip, and backbite whilst forgetting the heart of a Muslim will be hurt.

At this moment the most important duty that falls Muslim parents is to impart correct Islamic education to their children and inculcate sound Islamic character. Our character should be of

such a high standard that humanity is drawn to Islam. What kind of bad character is this: there was a public demonstration in Lucknow, India against the publication of cartoons in Denmark depicting the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). During the demonstration evil slogans were being chanted, shopkeepers were forced to shut their shops – including shops belonging to non-Muslims, car windows smashed, cars set alight in the street. What kind of emotional and irrational response is this? To illustrate your protest at the publication of cartoons you are recklessly damaging property. Where is the sense in this?

Recently, in France a government minister made controversial comments about immigrants and Muslim youths rioted by burning around 10,000 cars in Paris. At the time of this flare-up, I was visiting Reunion Islands. Two representatives of the French government were also there as guests to celebrate 100 years of the establishment of the mosque in St Dennis. They became aware that scholars were present from the Indian sub-continent. They approached me and one of the first things they asked me was regarding the burning of cars, how Islam viewed such acts? I replied categorically that these actions had no bearing with Islam. What is wrong must be pointed out as such. Sometimes there is a tendency to cover up the wrong doings of Muslims, justifying the actions by saying it was done by Muslims so it is acceptable to turn a blind-eye. No, what is wrong must be categorized as wrong irrespective of who has done it.

We have been taught moderation. How much injustice was perpetrated against the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) in Makkah Mukaramah? You

all know that thorns were placed in his path and he was persecuted. But did he ever respond by asking his Companions to take out a demonstration? In fact, when a lady who used to lay thorns in the path of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) fell ill, the Prophet himself went to visit her. Such was his character. He enquired “Why have you not laid any thorns in my path recently?” She enquired, “Who are you?” Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) replied: “I am the same Muhammad for whom you lay thorns.” She started weeping profusely. As they say, “With character you win, with character you respond.”

My dear Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) exemplified the noblest character. Despite being hit with stones and bleeding profusely, so much that when angels were sent asking him to order that the mountains of Taif crush the perpetrators belonging to Banu Thaqif, he replied, “O Allah, grant my people guidance.” He did not retaliate in the least as he was sent as a mercy for mankind and to guide humanity to the truth and beauty of Islam.

Patience, steadfastness and good character are prerequisites for being a good Muslim. Muslims need to create awareness and understand the challenges they are facing. It pains me to see how apathetic Muslims have become. We must always be on our guard that our wrongdoings should not blemish or tarnish the image of Islam.

May Almighty Allah grant us understanding of the challenges that face us, protect us and grant us all the Tawfiq (strength and ability) to practice the wonderful teachings of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). *Aamin*

Fight Fire with Fire

There was once a youth who went out in the search of knowledge. He packed his bags, bade his dear parents farewell, and began travelling far and wide. After a long period had passed, he eventually took a liking to a small village and chose to settle down there. The people of the village soon got to meet and interact with him and he made such an impression, that before long the entire town was abuzz with the news of the newcomer who had “proverbial piety” and “impeccable manners”. The acts of service he was ever-ready to render for one-and-all and his praiseworthy character were soon the talk of the town.

Now it so happened that in that very town there was a young teenage girl of exceptional beauty. With the entire town now fixated on only one topic – the pious youth, she found herself hearing so much about him that she was slowly attracted to the idea of this youngster and before long was yearning to see what he looked like. She therefore made it a point to stealthily glimpse at him whenever she got the chance. These glances, however fleeting they may have been, soon penetrated to the depths of her heart and she was now longing to meet him and speak to him. How she wished she could profess to him that the seed of his undying love had been planted in her heart and was growing day by day! The poor girl was so overcome by her infatuation that she began plotting ways to lure her

beloved into a circumstance of her design whereby she'd finally get her wish.

The youth was one day walking along the street when he heard someone call out to him from one of the homes. When he turned and saw the beautiful girl – he immediately lowered his gaze and refused to even look at her. “Will you please help us?” she asked, “We need to move some things in the home but they are too heavy for us.” The boy was always willing to lend a helping hand and so agreed but also instructed, “Tell all in the home that I’m about to enter. Please conceal yourselves until I leave.” Thus saying he entered, carried their things, and left as quickly as he'd come. This was not at all what she'd wanted or imagined. Things had not gone according to plan. He was supposed to at least speak to her! She was now left even more frustrated and the scant words she exchanged with him served to only further fuel the fire of love now ignited within her. She had no choice but to go back to the drawing board and think of another plot...

One stormy night the youngster was seated in his home studying by candle light. It was raining in torrents and the rain had brought with it a biting cold. While paging through his book, he suddenly heard desperate knocking on his door! “Whoever could it be?” he wondered, “Who would come out to visit me in this weather?” He got up and went to

the door and as soon as he opened it, the teenage girl dramatically collapsed at his feet shivering from the rain and cold! "What are you doing here?!" he asked in utter shock and disbelief. "I'm freezing, I came to your home for some warmth." She pleaded. The youngster's heart was pounding in his chest and he was short for breath. There was a stunning, young damsel in distress literally lying at his feet! But the tug of Imaan within him was too great, he dared not stretch his hand to her. But what could he then do?! The temptation was burning away at him! He suddenly turned to the lit-candle and plunged his fingers into the flame, apparently numb to the pain and unable to perceive the smell of his own roasting flesh. The girl stared in horror, utterly transfixed by the scene. The youth then seemed to suddenly snap back to his senses and as he did, he screamed and yanked his hand out of the flame and fled from his home. When most of the night had passed he came back home and entered tentatively, unsure of what he'd find. To his relief the girl was gone. He praised Allah for saving him from falling into sin and repeated to himself, "If you are unable to bear a small candle flame, how will you bear the raging inferno of Jahannum which will be fuelled by people and stones?"

The girl, in the meantime, was deep in thought at her own home. The spectacle of Taqwa (Allah consciousness) she'd witnessed first-hand, instead of deterring her, further entrenched his love in her heart. She now wanted him

more than ever. "But how?" she pondered. She went on thinking until she realized that this class of youngster would never stoop to Haraam. If she wanted him, she'd have to marry him. With this realization she rushed to her father and asked him if he'd marry her to the youngster. Her father happily agreed and when he approached the youngster, he too was happy to marry her. At that moment the youth realized how very true it was that if a person leaves out haraam to make Allah happy, Allah will give him the very same thing but in a halaal manner, with happiness and honour. (Suwarun Mushriqatun minath Thabaati 'alal Imaan, pg. 144)

Lessons:

1. When we are tempted to sin, we should think of the Hereafter and more specifically, Jahannum. The youth fought the fire of his temptation by reminding himself of the fire of Jahannum. Let us too fight fire with fire.
2. If we abandon Haraam for the pleasure of Allah, he will grant us the same thing we desired – if not better – in a permissible manner with happiness, honour and no guilt of sin.
3. When a person adorns himself with taqwa the entire creation becomes attracted to him as Taqwa is the "jewellery of the soul" which is seen by the eyes of the soul.
4. We should never allow ourselves to be in seclusion with a member of the opposite gender who is a non-Mahram.

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"He is successful, who embraces Islam, whose sustenance is sufficient, and who is content with what Allah has given him." (Muslim)

Only Those Who Follow It Reflect On It - II

S. Abd Al-Latif al-Tuwayjiri (ra)

We continue from Part 1 (previous issue), where we introduced the Quranic concept of tadabbur: Heeding the admonitions of the Quran and acting upon them. This practice was central to the practice of our righteous ancestors (salaf), in emulation of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

Awakening to the Miracle of Tadabbur

Sadly, this tragic state of affairs resulting from lax, imperceptive dealing with the Quran which ‘Umar and Ibn ‘Abbas warned against (Part 1) has come to pass. For no sooner had the age of the Rightly Guided Caliphs drawn to a close, than heretical sects, such as the Khawarij, made their appearance.

Though these Kharijites (whom the Prophet foretold in a number of mutawatir ahadith)—and like-minded groups—are good at the art of Quran recitation, they fail, as the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) described them in one hadith, to understand its message or to act upon its injunctions.

Commenting on this sorry situation, the distinguished Taa’bi, al-Hasan al-Basri said:

This Quran is nowadays recited by people who know not its meanings and have a disorderly approach to it.

Allah said: A most blessed Book have We sent down to you, O Prophet, in this Quran, so that they who hear its tidings may reflect on its verses. And so that those who are endowed with discretion and understanding may heed its admonition and be ever mindful of its commandments. [38:29]

But none truly reflect on the verses of the Quran other than those who heed its admonitions. What kind of a reflection on the Quran is this that makes one memorize its wordings and disregard its directives? You hear one of these misguided pretenders sing his own praises, saying: “I have memorized the Quran to the last letter!”

By Allah! He has missed all of its letters! For you see no trace of the huda (divine guidance) of the Quran in his manners or works!

By Allah! People of this ilk are bereft of knowledge, devoid of wisdom, and deprived of piety.

Since when have the sincere people of the Quran voiced such shameless bragging? May Allah curb the numbers of such ignorant braggarts!” (Ibn Al-Mubarak, Al-Zuhd, p. 274)

Islam Was Their Way of Life

The keenness of the salaf to understand and act upon the Quran is a

function of their submission (Islam) to the commands of Allah and His Messenger—for the truth is that the Book is inspired for the sole purpose of being understood and acted upon.

These our predecessors, the pious men of old, felt the hallowed blessedness of the bearing that this Book had on their very beings, both this-worldly and other-worldly.

- They gleaned it in Allah's statement: A most blessed Book have We sent down to you, O Prophet, in this Quran, so that they who hear its tidings may reflect on its verses. [38:39].
- They beheld it in His words: Truly there has now come to you from Allah a guiding light and a clear Book in this Quran. By it Allah guides whomever follows His good pleasure along the pathways of peace. And, thereby, He brings them out from the veils of darkness into light—by His permission. Thus does He guide them to a straight way of salvation. [5:15-16]
- They grasped it from His speech put in the mouth of His Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam): This Quran has many manifest proofs that my message is from your Lord, and that it is divine guidance and the way to Allah's mercy for a people who believe in Heavenly Revelation. So when the Quran is recited, listen to it, O humanity, and give heed, so that you may be shown mercy. [7:203-204]

Satisfying One's Heart

The salaf knew that there was in their hearts a longing which only tadabur of the Quran could gratify, an aching loneliness that could be banished only by living within the ambience of the speech of Allah.

It is the tadabbur of the Quran that opened the eyes of the salaf to the praises which Allah lavished on those of

His slaves who are given to tadabbur of His Book, as in His statement:

For only those are true believers who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts tremble; and when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith; and upon their Lord alone do they rely. [8:2]

and also in His statement:

Say to the disbelievers, O Prophet: Believe in it [the Quran], or disbelieve in it. Indeed, those who are sincere, who have already been given knowledge of the Scriptures before it, fall to the chin, bowing their faces down to the ground before Allah, whenever it is recited to them. And they say: Highly exalted is our Lord! Indeed, the promise of our Lord, most surely, is ever fulfilled. Thus do they fall to the chin, weeping, for it is a Heavenly Admonition that increases them in all humility. [17:107-109]

Do Not Lock Your Heart to the Quran

On the other hand, our pious ancestors knew also the verdict Allah heaps upon the heads of those who abandon tadabbur and who slight the Quran, as in His statement:

Will they not, then, reflect upon the admonitions of the Quran? Or is it rather, that on some hearts there are locks of their own [making]? [47:24]

and also in His statement:

Now, Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, has said: O my Lord! Indeed, the disbelievers among my people have taken this Quran as a thing to be shunned! [25:30]

The Salaf Embraced Guidance

This superbly tuned-in approach to receiving the Gracious Quran exerted an utterly profound impact on the lives

of that pioneer generation. It colored and shaped their interactions, behavior, transactions, speech, attitude, their conduct of war, and their way to peace. In a word, the spirit of the Quran governed every move they made.

Describing that magnificent generation, Asma' bint Abi Bakr (RA) said:

When the Quran was recited to the Companions, tears would well up in their eyes and their skins would shiver out of veneration for their Lord. (Qurtubi, Al-Jamia li Ahkam Al-Qur'an, 15:249).

Embracing the Stories of the Salaf

In fact, the blessings of the salaf's tadabbur of the Quran was not limited to themselves. It teemed over, flowing to countless others. The annals of history are replete with eloquent testimonies of how they established justice in every land they came to rule; of how they extracted millions of human beings from the miring ignobleness of taking one another as lords, lifting them to the dignity of worshipping the One Lord of all humanity; of how they transported people from the narrowness of the here and now to the spaciousness of the Hereafter, and from the iniquity of corrupt religions to the justice of Islam.

It is imperative that those of us entrusted with the task of nurturing and educating the Muslim youth today see to it that we highlight the role of these Muslims, the generation of the forerunners, and most particularly we must underscore their exemplary attitude toward the Quran, for they are, indeed, the very best of Muslim generations and our reference point, after the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

Nor can there be any doubt that studying the lives and works of role mod-

els is among the most important and effective methods of education. It is, in fact, a unique Quranic method, as attested to by the plethora of Quranic narratives of the lives and struggles of Allah's messengers, those righteous slaves whose example the Prophet himself was exhorted by Allah to emulate:

These prophets of old are the ones whom Allah has guided. So follow after their guidance, walking in their way. [6:90]

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outside the house of mother Haleema, two angels Jibra'eel and Mikaa'eel came and took Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) a little away and made him to lie down on the earth and opened his chest after incising it. They took out some clot like thing from his blessed heart and told him that it was the share of devil which they have removed and by doing so he was made fully safe from the effects of the Shaitaan.

Second Shaq-i-Sadr of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) took place when he reached the age of adolescence in order to keep him safe from the evil instincts which usually crop up at this age.

The third Shaq-i-Sadr took place at the age of forty years when Jibra'eel (AS) came to him in cave Hira with the Divine inspiration and prophethood was formally bestowed upon him. This Shaq-i-Sadr was obviously to prepare him for the heavy burden of Divine inspiration.

The fourth and the last Sahq-i-Sadr took place at the time of Me'raj described in the Hadith under discussion.

Comments to continue

Witness the Miracle

Khalid Baig

Night after night in Ramadan, the believers witness a unique spectacle at mosques around the world. They stand in special Taraveeh prayers in which the prayer leader will recite the entire Quran from memory. Those who have accomplished this extraordinary feat of memorizing all of the 6246 verses are not a handful of devotees but there are hundreds of thousands of them. Most, just like most Muslims in the world today, do not speak Arabic. Yet they have painstakingly learnt to pronounce each and every word of the Quran correctly. The phenomenon is not a result of some religious resurgence that would pass. From the very first day that the Quran was revealed, it was memorized. And the number of those who have memorized it has been increasing ever since. Memorization of Quran has been going on all through the centuries, all over the globe wherever Muslims are.

There are other religions that claim to possess the Word of God. There are none that can show a book that has commanded anything remotely comparable to this level of devotion. Quran is the most read and the only completely memorized book in the whole world. It is also the most studied book in the world. It has stimulated development of entire disciplines of knowledge dealing with its reading, writing, and interpretation.

Miraculous as it is, this is not the only unique aspect of the Quran.

Quran was the first book in the Arabic language. Yet fourteen centuries later, its language is as alive as it was when it was revealed. And there is no other example when the very first book in a language became any masterpiece let alone the eternal masterpiece that Quran is.

This Book is meant to command and guide humanity until the end of time. That the passage of fourteen centuries has not made the slightest dent in its language or literary beauty is only one evidence of that unique role; its contents have also been unassailable by the passage of time. It makes statements of scientific facts that science would discover centuries later but none that science could ever refute. It tells about ancient history, like the civilization of the 'Aad people in the Empty Quarter of the Arabian desert that no other historical sources, then or since, contain any information about. Yet, its veracity has only recently been verified by scientific discoveries. Above all, it provides a system of beliefs and a code of conduct for life which is as relevant, illuminating, and true today as it was fourteen centuries earlier and during all the centuries in between.

The believers know that this Book had to be above space and time because

this is the Word of the Creator of space and time. And He has promised that it will always be above space and time. But those who are looking from the outside and are just curious may consider these additional facts:

Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) did not go to any school, study from any teacher, or even learn how to read and write. He even had no interest in poetry, which was one of the most prized disciplines of his time. Yet suddenly at age forty, he began to recite this marvelous revelation.

The style of Quran is very distinct from the words of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) himself, which also have been preserved in Hadith collections. His own sayings are embodiments of eloquence, but they have a different style. Moreover, they clearly are the words of a human being. Although never deviating from the truth, they do show human emotions and the effects of the circumstances in which they were said. Quran, on the other hand, never shows the slightest trace of these effects. It always speaks from above.

It was revealed over a twenty-three year period and covers a very wide range of subjects yet it shows neither a gradual development of style nor any self-contradictions in the voluminous text.

The twenty-three years of Prophetic life was not a period spent in isolation. He did not retire to a cave to produce this miraculous work. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) did spend long periods of time in quiet meditation in Cave Hira before becoming a Prophet. But after Prophethood was conferred upon him, his life was one of constant struggle with the pagans, and later the

Jews, of Arabia who spared no effort to stop and persecute him. It was during this period of persecution, wars, campaigns, and solving problems associated with the bringing about of greatest civilizational revolution of all times --- an extremely busy and challenging period --- that Quranic Revelation was also received and compiled.

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) himself was most deeply moved by the Book. He used to stand for hours in solitary midnight prayers reciting from the Book until his feet used to get swollen. How preposterous that one should attempt to attribute the Book to him. Has there ever been another example of somebody getting so moved by his own words?

This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of all the evidence that proves Quran to be the Word of God. Scholars have written books expounding the miracle of miracles that Quran is. But even this small sampler may propel an inquiring mind to go and read the Book himself.

To read this Book with an open mind is to believe in it. Those who sincerely seek guidance will find their questions answered, their confusions removed, their problems solved in its pages. From the beginning until the end, every word in the Quran tells the reader that it is the Word of Allah. And those who ignore it do so at their own peril.

"And if you are in doubt as to what We have revealed to Our servant, then produce a Sura like thereunto; and call your witnesses or helpers (if there are any) besides Allah, if your (doubts) are true. But if you cannot - and of a surety you cannot - then fear the Fire whose fuel is men and stones which is prepared for those who reject Faith." [2:23-24]

Be like a Bee

I always had a love-hate relationship with Bees. I call it love-hate because simply the sight of them used to bring back memories of the day I got stung by one. I still remember the day and the pain of the sting. It really wasn't pleasant. Since then, Bees had always been in my bad books. That was until I discovered that there was a Surah in the Qur'an titled "The Bee" and that ayahs had been revealed regarding them. From then on, I used to love researching and watching documentaries about the Bee and how it lived. Why it made the buzzing sound and how it benefitted human beings. It was fascinating! I realised that the Bee actually taught us so many life lessons.

So today as I sat on my granny's farm, taking in the sight of the beautiful scenery (and sheep), my gaze fell upon a bee that was hovering from plant to plant just inches away from me. If this was a couple of years ago, I would have entered a mode of panic due to my phobia and ran off out of fear. This time I began to closely watch this tiny creature and its weird yet wonderful antics. It would dance from one flower to another in obvious search of pollen. In those few seconds, it must have stopped at around ten different flowers. It kept going from one to another and continued to do so. Never give up, I thought to myself. Always keep going. If you fail at something, try again. Keep going, but don't ever give up.

In those few moments of close observation, I learnt a few things from the Bee, which I hope to share with you today:

- The Bee doesn't settle for less. It will keep going and hopping from one flower to another until it who seeks out the best flower. It doesn't settle for less. Rather, it continues to travel through the spectrum of flowers, till it reaches the one which is pure, untouched, and one whose perfume is still fresh. This teaches us Ihsaan. We should always aim high and for the best in everything we do in life. We should also give our very best to others and in the cause of Allah. The Bee has high expectations and we too should have high expectations in our Lord and good thoughts of Him.

- The Bee gives more than it takes. The bee always gives more than it takes. It will not eat from the flower until it has given it more than it has taken, and even when it does take, it acts delicately and softly, as to not ruin the petals or cause them to break. If the Bee was harsh, it would ruin the flower, because the petals of a flower are so soft and easily torn. Yet, if you observe the Bee, you will be amazed to find that it is so gentle, it will take the pollen but as it takes, it will make sure not to hurt the plant in anyway.

- The Bee works hard for its Rizq. The Bee doesn't take the food of another bee because it recognises that Allah's provision is vast. If another Bee is taking

from a flower it will not jump into steal the provision but will move onto a better place out of respect for its fellow bee and out of knowledge that Allah is the Most Bountiful; the one who provides. You and I must work hard for our provision, whatever is we are seeking, we must taken the means and not steal or be envious of another person's provision in the process. We must do our best and leave the rest to Allah will full trust that He will provide.

- The Bee helps itself by helping others. The flowers a bee travels to are very far from the hive. So sometimes a bee may travel miles to reach the flowers

to get its Rizq. When it returns to the hive which is shared with a whole community of bees, Allah teaches the bee to do a little movement called 'The Bee Dance.' It is taught to hover in the air in order to teach and navigate all the other bees to the direction of the flowers so they can also get Rizq. The bee teaches us that when we benefit others, we're all benefiting ourselves. If we're doing well we must also help others to do well also, as this will strengthen our community and relationships. How many of us hate to see others do well? Let's change this. Let's be like the wise bee.

almussafirah

What a Sacrifice?

When 'Umar (RA) was about to breathe his last, he sent his son 'Abdullah bin 'Umar (RA) to 'Aaishah (RA) to ask her permission if he could be buried alongside Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) and Abu Bakr (RA). It was her husband and her father who were laid to rest in her room, therefore it was her privilege and right to grant the permission. Ibnu 'Umar (RA) comes to ask permission whilst 'Umar (RA) is on his death bed. 'Aaishah (RA) says: "I had reserved this place for myself, but today I will give 'Umar (RA) preference over myself." (Saheeh Bukhaari)

Lesson: *We can never imagine what a level of sacrifice this is! To give preference to that piece of land which is the most beloved and most precious in the sight of Allah; the land which is next to the resting place of Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam)! Giving away all the wealth of the world is a very minor thing compared to this. What a heart 'Aaishah (radhiyallahu 'anha) must have had?*

On the other hand, our condition is such that we are not prepared to give the next person any kind of preference even over trivial things. We continuously complain as to why we were not treated in a certain way. "My mother-in-law gives preference to the other grandchildren over my children" and "I was not given anything while my sister-in-law got so much" are common complains which become major issues.

Lessons from Adam and Iblis

Habib Qadri & Saád Qadri

Before the creation of man, there was a community of *jinn* (a being made from smokeless fire that, along with mankind, is also responsible for its actions) that Allah had created. A group from this community became excessively disobedient to the extent that Allah ordered the angels to destroy them. The angels subsequently destroyed all of the *jinnat* (plural of *jinn*) but spared the life of an infant *jinn* named Azazil (who later becomes Iblis), thinking that this young child could not do any harm. When they returned to Allah they explained to Him what had transpired. Allah told them that He knew what they do not know.

Azazil was raised by the angels and, as a result, grew to be a very righteous and knowledgeable servant. In fact, Azazil quickly became the most knowledgeable of *jinn* as he saw the angels and the Bounties of Allah. Thus, through his experience and presence in the heavens, Azazil was able to raise himself above the angels in piety and knowledge. But when Allah told him to bow down to Adam Azazil allowed that knowledge to deceive him and he became arrogant. Consequently, he disobeyed Allah:

And (remember) when We said to the angels: "Prostrate yourselves before Adam." And they prostrated except Iblis (Satan),

(who) refused and was proud and was one of the disbelievers. (Qur'an 2:34)

He thought himself better than Adam (AS) and in his own mind convinced himself that he did not need to prostrate to Adam because he was created from fire while Adam (AS) was created from clay.

He (Allah) said: "What prevented you (O Iblis) that you did not prostrate yourself, when I commanded you?" Iblis said: "I am better than him (Adam), You created me from fire, and him You created from clay. (Qur'an 7:12)

It is important to reflect on this because many of us unknowingly use this mode of thinking when we make a mistake. Rather than accepting we have made a mistake, we begin to rationalize our actions and accept them as being correct.

In contrast, if we look at our father, Prophet Adam (AS) and his story in heaven, we learn a lesson that may forever benefit us in our lives. When Prophet Adam and his wife Hawa were in heaven, they were told to enjoy everything that their hearts desired and were commanded only to stay away from one thing.

O Adam! Dwell, you and your wife, in Heaven and eat (enjoy) from it from whatever you wish, but do not come near

to this tree, lest you be amongst the wrongdoers. (Qur'an 7:19)

When imagining this amazing scene two things need to be considered - who was involved and where this took place. Here was the first prophet and his wife, and they had the opportunity to be in heaven. Let's say that again, *heaven*. They saw and could enjoy everything in paradise. The only thing they were to refrain from was going near a tree. But Iblis was very cunning and he eventually led them to the tree. They ate its fruit, so causing them to lose out on the heavenly bounties given to them.

Think about the item they were tempted by, a fruit; they were tempted by a fruit and they lost heaven because of it. Today we are tempted by much more than a fruit. It shows us that Shaytan will always try his best to confuse and misguide all of us, no matter what his tool is. He wants us to feel alone when presented with temptations, so falling victim to our desires. We should never forget what goes on in our minds and hearts is not just something we are going through individually; rather, the majority of the time many, if not all, of us are having the same thoughts. Remember, Shaytan wants to lead us all astray, and not just some of us.

Returning back to the story, when looking at Shaytan, his immediate reaction was to be upset with Allah for his mistake. In fact, not only was Shaytan upset with Allah, but he also blamed Allah for his own mistake.

He (Shaytan) said: "Now, because You have sent me astray, verily I shall ambush them from the straight path.

(Qur'an 7:16)

Imagine the nerve of Shaytan, blaming Allah for *his own* sin! This act of

blaming and despairing of the mercy of Allah was what sealed Shaytan's fate as cursed.

When Adam and Hawa ate from the tree, they took the exact opposite route. Rather than blaming Allah they realized the mistake they made by eating fruit from the tree and immediately cried out to Allah.

They said: "Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves! If You do not forgive us and have mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers. "(7:23)

Without delay Adam and Hawa recognized their mistake, took responsibility for it, and repented to Allah for their mistake. We must relate to their example by understanding there are areas in which all of us make mistakes; many of them are quite common. However, rather than making excuses or even legitimizing our sins, it is better to recognize our mistakes and try to move on from there.

There are numerous Ahadith that describe the Day of Judgment. From these Ahadith, some clearly show that certain individuals will be forgiven for their sins, despite the fact that the magnitude of their sins - both in quantity and quality - made them appear as people of the hellfire. When examining these particular Ahadith more closely, we see that a common factor in many of them is that those who accepted their mistakes and repented were forgiven by Allah. This, as a principle, isn't foreign to us.

Throughout the world, criminals often admit to their crimes in return for a lighter punishment. Simply by admission, they are spared a harsher fate. We are without doubt guilty of many crimes against Allah. It is very important for us

not to justify these transgressions; rather we need to admit them in front of Allah in this world and beg for His forgiveness. We are by our very nature weak; He does not expect perfection from us.

Allah wants to make your burden light for you, for man was created weak. (4:28)

Thus, when we do sin against Him, it is important to return back to Him sincerely.

"Every child of Adam is a sinner, but the best from amongst the sinners are those who repent." (Hadith)

This is exactly what our parents Adam and Hawa did in heaven, and this repentance is what distinguishes the result of their mistake from the sin of Iblis.

Finally, many of us assume that when we commit sins that we will repent later on and redeem ourselves, for Allah is the Most-Merciful. This is the logic *shayatin* (devils) use. They sin and misguide others, assuming they will invoke Allah's mercy before this world ends - foolishly trying to outsmart Allah. Such people only hurt themselves. Remember, every sin comes with a price, and if Allah is merciful to us, we will see our errors in this life and repent for them, with ultimate disgust and remorse for our actions.

Allah accepts the repentance of those who do evil in ignorance and repent soon afterwards. (Qur'an 4:17)

However, if we are arrogant or delay our repentance, we never know when we will die. This is the mistake of the Pharaoh, who was shown the signs of Allah through the Prophet Musa (AS) but he was in love with his worldly status and power and faced a horrible death. It is said that as the Pharaoh was drowning, he wanted to repent to Allah.

The angels, being afraid that even after all of his transgressions Allah would still forgive the Pharaoh, began to put dirt into his mouth to make him drown faster.

Until he was about to drown, he said, "I believe that there is no god but the One in whom the children of Isra 'U believe, and Jam among those who submit." [Allah replied] "Is it now (that you come to believe) while you were rebellious before and you were amongst those who caused mischief" (Qur'an 10:90-91)

Allah did not accept his repentance and preserved his body as a reminder to all of humanity.

So today We shall save your body so that you may become a sign for those who come after you. (Qur'an 10:93)

Those who do not repent before they die will undergo a horrific judgment in the hereafter, and they will be the only ones to blame at that point. If Allah chooses not to shower His mercy upon us then we will suffer an indescribable torment in the *akhirah*.

Cont'd from page 2
in soul winning. But crowd their lives with so many good causes they have no time to seek power from Allah. Soon they will be working in their own strength, sacrificing their health and family for the good of the cause. It will work! It will work!"

It was quite a convention. And the evil servants went eagerly to their assignments causing Muslims everywhere to get busy, busy, busy and to rush here and there.

Guess what the question is: has the devil been successful at his scheme? You be the judge!

The Companions and The Da'wah Paradigm (1)

AbdulAziz Abdul Latif

Calling to Allah (da'wah) was the way of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), premier among the messengers. It is also, by divine definition, the way of his followers:

Say [to them, O Prophet]: This is my way. I call to Allah based on clear [revealed] proof—I and whoever follows me. So most highly exalted be Allah, for I am not of those who associate gods with Allah.

[12:108]

Da'wah is the means to dispel the darkness of *dalal* (deprivation of divine guidance) —and how the world is shrouded in darkness, save for a glimmer here and there that holds the brilliant light of the call of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), wherein it has restored sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and guidance to the perplexed!

Da'wah to Allah is a collective wajib, or obligation (wajib kifa'i), as Imam Ibn Taymiyyah put it:

Da'wah to Allah is incumbent on the followers of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), that is, upon his community. They are obliged to call to Allah as he did. They should enjoin what he enjoined, forbid what he forbade, and pass on the knowledge he conveyed to them. Da'wah, then, is an obligation upon Muslims, and although the obligation to give da'wah is a collective one, it can become an individual responsibility (wajib 'ayni) on one when no other in his area undertakes it. (Majmu' Al-Fatawa, 15:165-66)

Our Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) encouraged and commended giving da'wah and extending good counsel (*nush*) to Allah's creation. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said in one Hadith:

By Allah! If Allah guides aright through you a single person, it is more valuable to you than possessing the best breed of camels. (Bukhari)

In the Company of the Companions

Being the best of Muslim generations ever—and on account of their superiority over us in knowledge ('ilm), understanding the application of Revelation (fiqh), and righteousness (Salah)—the Sahabah (the Companions of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)) responded positively to this critical, prophetic counsel. The Companion Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari (RA) said:

Even after the death of the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), we fought, and prayed, and fasted, and did abundant good deeds—and many are the people who have accepted Islam at our hands. Thus our hope, indeed, is to be rewarded for all of this. (Bukhari)

The Prophet's Companions not only honored the obligation of da'wah, they were keen to discharge it in the way the Quran and the Sunnah have delineated it. Thus it happened that during the tumultuous reign of the Caliph 'Ali ibn

Abi Talib (RA), vicious tribulations (fitan) and reckless whim (ahwa') reared their demonic heads. Of these, the most malicious and lethal was the tribulation of the Khawarij.

The heretical, rebellious sect of the Khawarij was one of the bitter products of the tragic and violent contention between 'Ali (RA) and Mu'awiyah (RA) for the Muslim Caliphate. The Khawarij were initially supportive of 'Ali's (RA) claim to the caliphate. But when 'Ali (RA) agreed to what came to be known in Islamic history as the Incident of Tahkim (lit. arbitration, or the judgment of agreed upon representatives, as a means to solving the conflict over the caliphal office), a group of fighters from 'Ali's (RA) camp protested the procedure. They claimed arbitration was an act of unbelief (kufr) because it substituted men's judgment for Allah's.

Initially, the Khawarij's position was no more than a passionate, spontaneous reaction to an arrangement which they rushed to judge as incongruous with the teachings of the Quran. However, later they sought to develop their initial opinion into a complete doctrinal and moral system that consisted of a number of aberrant doctrines. They held, for instance, that all other Muslims who did not share belief in their doctrines were kuffar, unbelievers, and that it was the Khawarij's utmost duty to fight them in order to bring them back to the "correct" Islamic beliefs, namely, the Khawarij's doctrines. They believed also that a Muslim who committed one or more of the kaba'ir (enormities or grave sins) was a kafir (an unbeliever) and fated to burn in Hellfire for eternity, should he die unrepentant.

Now, in order to defend their positions against the arguments of the Muslims of the Sunnah, who dismissed the Khawarij's pronouncements as heretical, the Khawarij searched for Scriptural support for their views, particularly in the Quran. But most of their arguments were nothing more than expressions of their grossly inadequate and flawed understanding of the Quran, augmented by a total disregard of the Sunnah.

By Way of the Quran: 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbas (RA)

One of the main people to stand up to the heretical innovation (bid'ah) of the Khawarij was the learned Companion Ibn 'Abbas (RA), who did his best to convince the followers of this heretical sect to adhere to the Sunnah. He engaged their leaders for this purpose in well-known and memorable debates, in the aftermath of one of which thousands of the deluded adherents to Kharijism reportedly renounced their wayward beliefs and returned to the fold of Islam (Hiliat Al-Awliya', 1:318).

'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas (RA) was lenient with the Khawarij. He overlooked their rudeness, for example, when they labeled him "deviously argumentative." They supported this wicked calumny against him by invoking Allah's harsh statement in the Quran—They are an utterly contentious people—which Allah had directed at the inveterate idolaters of the Quraysh. For in derision of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), the Quraysh had defended their polytheism against the divine statement that their idols would be in Hellfire in the Hereafter by claiming their idols would have the same standing as Jesus, according to the Quran, for the Christians also took him

as an associate-god (Surat Al-Zukhruf, 43:58).

Ibn ‘Abbas (RA) ignored this. Then he commenced the debate with the Khawarij with a statement in which he laid down a forceful methodological premise.

He said: “I came to you from the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), to whose circle none of you belong, and upon whom the Quran came down, and who are more knowledgeable of its proper interpretation than you are” (Jami’ Bayan Al-‘Ilm, 2:104).

Indeed, the Khawarij did not base their doctrinal positions on the guidance of the Prophetic Sunnah. Nor were they rooted in the understanding and practice of the noble Sahabah. The Companions were the most pious, as well as the most knowledgeable, generation in the Muslim Ummah. They were present when the Quran came down. They knew which passages of it were of general implication and which were of particular reference. And owing to that privileged position, they were far better equipped and much more qualified to pronounce authoritatively on the Quran’s interpretation and its intent than any others.

In fact, the debate between the Companion Ibn ‘Abbas (RA) and the leaders of the Khawarij laid bare the latter’s gross ignorance and misunderstanding of the Book of Allah. One of Ibn ‘Abbas’ (RA) rejoinders in that debate is particularly instructive: As for your claim that arbitration (tahkim) is an act of unbelief because it subordinates the religion of Allah to the judgment of men, it could be answered thus: Allah has said:

O you who believe! Do not kill any game while you are in [the state of] pilgrim sanctity. And whoever among you kills

any [game therein] deliberately, then the recompense [for him] shall be the like of what he has killed in [a charitable sacrifice of] cattle—as two just men from among you shall so judge. [5:95]

In another ayah alluding to conjugal conflicts between husbands and wives, Allah said:

Moreover, if you [believers] fear a split between the two of them, then send for an arbitrator from his people and another arbitrator from her people.... [4:35]

Now, I adjure you by Allah to answer me honestly: Which of the following two things is more justified: To use arbitration (tahkim) to solve critical matters related to life and death and peaceful living, or to use it to judge in a dispute over a rabbit that’s worth a quarter dirham [analogous here to a dollar]?

The Khawarij said: “Indeed, using arbitration to settle conflicts over matters of life and death and peaceful living is more justified.”

Ibn ‘Abbas said: “Now, did I answer this specific objection of yours?”

The Khawarij said: “Yes”

So the Khawarij had claimed that the arbitration device which the two contenders of the office of Caliph (‘Ali (RA) and Mu’awiyah (RA)) accepted as a solution to the bloody conflict was an act of disbelief because, they argued, it went against the statement of Allah:

Judgment belongs to none but Allah. [6:57]

Ibn ‘Abbas (RA) countered that in two other places in the Quran (5:95) and (4:35) quoted above) where Allah allowed Muslims to employ arbitration (seeking men’s judgment, or tahkim) to solve marital conflicts or to determine legal compensations and fines.

To be concluded