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RADIANT REALITY

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

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Question

Do I have to repeat my entire Wudhu if I took off my leather socks after making Masah on it but before the time ends?

Answer

The removal of the Khuff (leather sock) terminates the Masah made upon it. Upon the removal of the Khuff, washing of the feet will be necessary in order to perform Salaah etc. There is no need to repeat the entire Wudhu. (Tahtawi Ala Maraaqil Falaah 1/133)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

Colostrum is the first form of milk produced by mammals including many humans immediately following delivery of a new-born. Is it permissible to consume colostrum produced by mammals. There are many products containing colostrum available in the market which have great benefits.

Answer

In terms of Shariah, the consumption of human colostrum is not permissible. A breastfed child suckling from the mother/wet-nurse is the obvious exception. (Shaami 3/211)

However, it is permissible to consume colostrum derived from Halaal animals, for e.g. a cow or goat as it falls under the same ruling of

consuming its milk, which is permissible.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

Is mehndi permissible to apply for men? I have heard some say it can be applied on the little finger. Please advise.

Answer

The application of Henna/Mehndi on the hands and feet is permitted for women only. Hence, men are not allowed to apply Henna on their hands/fingers unless there is a medical need to do so. (Al Bahrur-Raaqi 8/208)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

Is it okay to cross in front of a congregation performing Janaazah Salaah?

Answer

It should be noted that if a barrier (Sutrah) is placed in front of an Imaam leading a Salaah, the barrier suffices for the entire congregation. In other words, it will be permissible to cross in front of any of the congregants of the Salaah as the Imaam's barriers suffices for the entire congregation.

In terms of crossing an Imaam leading a Janaazah Salaah, the Imaam leads the Janaazah Salaah whilst the deceased is placed in front of him. The deceased being placed in front an Im-

aam leading a Janaazah Salaah serves as a barrier for the entire congregation and hence, in such a case, it will be permissible to cross a congregation performing the Janaazah Salaah. (Ahsanul Fataawa 4/239)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

Is it permissible to eat at a restaurant that serves alcohol? Halaal food is served at the restaurant too.

Answer

As Muslims, we have an in-built moral compass. Rasulullah (saws) alluding to this states, "Sin is that which troubles your conscience and that which you dislike coming to public notice." (Sahih Muslim)

This moral compass ought to have made it clear to us that it is simply not possible for a Muslim to eat in an outlet that serves alcohol regardless of the food being "Halaal" or not. If our moral compass has not made us understand this fact, then our beloved Rasool (saws), in no uncertain terms, has pointed this out when He (saws) stated, "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him never sit at a table where alcohol is served." (Musnad Ahmed)

Thus said our leader (saws) and upon his righteous guidance do we navigate our lives. May Allah make us of those who place the words of His Nabi (saws) above their desires, Ameen.

Mufti Moosa

Question

We are leaving for Hajj and we would like to know if there are any Salaah to perform before leaving home for Hajj?

Answer

It is preferable (Mustahab) to offer two Rakaats of optional (Nafl) Salaah when departing and arriving from a journey, Haj or otherwise. (Shaami 2/24)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

Is it okay to close the eyes in Salaah?

Answer

It is disliked (Makrooh Tanzeehi) to perform Salaah with one's eyes closed unless it is done for concentration purposes in Salaah. (Shaami 1/645)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

After the fard of Esha, I made an intention to perform 3 rakaats witr salaah. In the second rakaat, I realised that I should have made intention for 2 rakaats sunnat muakkida salaah. I changed my intention for 2 rakaats sunnat salaah and completed the salaah. Is my 2 rakaats sunnat salaah valid? Can you change your intention whilst performing salaah?

Answer

The intention of Salaah cannot be made or changed after the commencement of Salaah as the intention of Salaah must be determined before the commencement of Salaah.

Accordingly, if you made the intention of and commenced a Witr Salaah but you concluded it as a two Rakaats Salaah after changing the intention of Salaah during Salaah, your Salaah will be invalid.

However, if you made the intention of a two Rakaats Salaah, but you uttered the intention of a Witr Salaah by mistake before commencing Salaah, then the intention you made in your heart i.e. the two Rakaats Sunnah Salaah will be taken into consideration which will not render your Salaah invalid. (Raddul Muhtar: 1/417)

Mufti Taahir

Question

Should one pay zakaat on the money given as a deposit for purchasing a house?

Answer

On one's zakaat date, if the house is not yet

purchased but in the process of being purchased, then one should include the deposit amount in one's zakaat calculation and discharge the zakaat upon it.

Mufti Zakaria

Question

I am a fairly wealthy person and don't give much to my siblings' children because they are in my will. However I give lots of charity/sadaqah to other organizations. Is my sadaqah or charity valid if my sibling divorced his wife and left her and his kids, and they are not well off and struggle every other day?

Answer

Your zakaat and sadaqah will be valid. Assisting the poor and needy is greatly rewarding. However, Shar'iah has emphasised that you assist your family before you assist others as your family have a greater right over you. Allah says in the holy Qur'an:

They ask you what they should spend (in charity). Say: Whatever good you spend should be for the parents, family, orphans, those in want and for wayfarers. And whatever good you do, Allah is fully aware of it.

By assisting your family who are in need of your financial support, you will receive greater reward from Allah

Mufti Zakaria

Question

Can one recite quraanic aayats of Dua like Aayatal Kursi for protection in the state of haidh or janaabat?

Answer

It is permissible for one to recite Aayatul Kursi and Duas for protection in the state of haidh or janaabat. However reciting Aayatul Kursi should be done with the intention of Dua and isti'aazah (seeking protection), not with the intention of Qiraat (recitation of the Qur'an).

Mufti Zakaria

Question

Can Mufti please give me the Islamic perspective on modelling, photography and photoshoots in Islam. Is it Haraam or can one sign up for modelling (for males and females) and go forward with it, please advise?

Answer

Participating in a modelling show is totally haraam in Islam as it incorporates a host of activities which contravene the laws of Shari'ah. Below we will explain some of the wrongs and evils found in these shows:

1. These types of shows generally aim to promote the latest styles and designs in fashion. Hence, in an effort to boost their market and make their new fashions appealing, every effort is made to cater for the demands of their clientele. Nudity and lewd conduct, wine and music, intermingling of men and women etc. are but a few of the many wrongs found in such gatherings.

2. Photography and videoing are an integral part of modelling shows. Rasulullah (saws) said:

Those involved in picture-making will be subjected to the worst forms of punishment on the day of Qiyaamat. (Bukhari, Muslim)

3. The Deen of Islam is a Deen which rests on the bedrock of simplicity and hayaa (shame and modesty) in all spheres of a person's life. Whether relating to his domestic, social or economic life, Islam strongly advocates adopting the values of simplicity and hayaa (shame and modesty) to the highest levels. One is thus required to display simplicity and hayaa in his/her dressing, behavior and conduct among people. The modest clothing that Islam commands a woman to wear even when she is in the confines of her home diametrically opposes the body-hugging and revealing clothing promoted by the western culture. Apart from this, the one modelling on the stage or walking down the catwalk - at the time when the music is being played and the videoing is taking place - is required to show

off and make an expression of his/her beauty in such clothing. This conduct and behavior opposes the very core of the Islamic teachings. Islam instructs one to refrain from boastfulness and pride at all times and to adopt humility in all facets of life. Rasulullah (saws) said:

The one who has an iota of pride will never enter paradise.

4. Most of the time the clothing being promoted in the modelling show is of such a nature that it allows a woman's satar and many parts of her body to be either exposed or discernible. At times the woman modelling is required to model before the audience dressed in unisex clothing or clothing worn by men, whereas the Hadith has condemned and severely cursed a woman that dresses up like a man and vice versa. Answer The Hadith has similarly cursed women who reveal and expose parts of their bodies before non-mahram men in a seductive manner with the aim of luring them towards themselves. In a modelling show, all these wrongs are clearly visible. When this is the grave condition of people who attract the divine wrath of Allah, we can well imagine the condition of all those who have congregated at such a venue to promote such wrongs and to view such women. Below are the Ahaadith that warn us of the serious consequences of such sins.

It is reported from Hadhrat ibn Abbaas (ra) that Nabi (saws) had cursed those men who emulate women and those women who emulate men in their dressing, etc.

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah (ra) reports that Rasulullah (saws) said: "There will be two groups (in my ummat) who will be punished in Jahan-num whom I have not yet seen (i.e. they will emerge after my demise). One group will carry whips with them resembling the tails of cattle, with which they will (oppressively) lash the people. The second group will be those women who despite wearing clothes will still be naked (i.e. they will wear tight fitting or flimsy clothing), they will attract men to themselves, and they

themselves will be inclined towards them, their heads will resemble the humps of the Bukhti camels (i.e. they will wear buns which will be high like camel humps). They will neither enter Jannah nor smell its fragrance despite its fragrance being perceivable from a great distance away.

5. Islam views women as being invaluable and extremely precious. Islam has thus exalted them, making them the queens of their homes. They are instructed to remain within the confines of their homes where all their needs be fulfilled and taken care of by the men. Men have been tasked with the responsibility to fulfill the needs of their wives and families and thus they have been commanded to leave the home in order to earn a living. The western culture has dragged women out of their homes under the pretext of gender equality and made them shoulder the obligations and responsibilities of men. In this way, apart from having to play her own role in life (cook, tend to the children, see to the house chores, etc), she also has to play the role of the man and therefore carries a double burden. Hence, we see that the west, by dragging women out of their homes into the market places, have reduced the position of women from a queen to a slave who has to serve all and sundry. This is nothing but a plan to take advantage of women, thereby stripping them of their respect and dignity. How many women are robbed of their chastity and respect in the work place by men who manipulate them and take advantage of them? In this way, we find that the west has debased and degraded women and reduced them to a mere advertising tool to market their products. Hence we find that her picture is sold to companies in order to be plastered on mundane items such as toothpaste, soaps, cereals, etc. Accordingly, she is modelled before all and sundry in order to make their product sell in the market. This is nothing but gross injustice towards women.

True respect, honour and dignity can only be

attained by following the pristine, pure teachings of Islam and the mubaarak sunnah of Nabi (saws). If we seek honour and respect elsewhere, we will bring nothing but disgrace and humiliation to ourselves. Hazrat Umar (ra) has emphasized:

“We were the most disgraced of people. Allah then gave us honour through Islam. If we ever seek honour in something besides that through which Allah has honoured us (Islam), Allah will disgrace us.”

Hence, from the abovementioned discussion, the severe Deeni harms and consequences for the one who undertakes modelling or even participates in a modelling show as a spectator are quite clear.

Mufti Zakaria

Question

If someone is praying two rakaats nafil and they get up for the third rakaat, read Surah Faa-tiha full and finish that third rakaat, then does sajda-e-sahw, is that valid?

Answer

In Nafil Salaah, each two rakaats is considered a separate Salaah and the tashahhud after every two rakaats is regarded Fardh. Hence, in the case where one performed three rakaats and one sat for tashahhud after two rakaats and thereafter stood up for the third rakaat, then due to the fact that one had sat for the qadaah after two rakaats, the Salaah will be valid through making sajda-e-sahw at the end of the Salaah. However, if one performed three rakaats and did not sit for tashahhud after performing two rakaats, the entire salaah will become invalid, since there is no three rakaat Nafil Salaah and due to him not sitting after two rakaats. Even if one made sajda-e-sahw at the end of the Salaah, the Salaah will not be valid and one will have to make qadha of two rakaats.

Note:

1. In the case where one forgot to sit after two rakaats and stood up for the third rakaat, then

upon remembering that he had forgot to sit for tashahhud, he should immediately return to the sitting position as long as he did not make sajdah for the third rakaat. If he made sajdah for the third rakaat, then he should join another rakaat and complete the Salaah with sajda-e-sahw. In this way, the entire four rakaat Salaah will be valid.

2. In Nafil Salaah, each two rakaats is considered a separate Salaah and the tashahhud after every two rakaats is regarded Fardh on condition that one does not perform four rakaats. If one missed out the tashahhud after two rakaats and performed four rakaats, the tashahhud after two rakaats will change from Fardh to Waajib and the last qadaah will be regarded as Fardh. Hence, on account of missing the Waajib tashahhud after two rakaats, one will have to make sajda-e-sahw.

Mufti Zakaria

Question

Can a lady in haidh reply to the azaan?

Answer

Replying to the azaan is a form of zikr. It is not permissible for a woman in haiz to recite the Quraan. However, it is permissible for her to engage in zikr, istighfaar and duAnswer Hence, it is permissible for her to reply to the azaan.

Mufti Zakaria

Question

In the home, can a girl wear loose fitting full sleeve short shirts that do not show the body figures?

Answer

This has resemblance with men's clothing, hence it will not be permissible for a woman to wear such clothing. The hadith has cursed women who resemble men in dressing and vice versaAnswer Women should wear loose fitting long dresses which cover their entire bodies.

Mufti Zakaria

*Lesson from
The Qur'an*



No Distinction

And do not expel those who call their Lord morning and evening seeking His pleasure. You are not responsible for anything in their account and they are not responsible for anything in your account that you expel them out and thus become one of the unjust. And in this way We have tested some of them through some others, that they say, "Are these the ones, from among us all, whom Allah has favoured?" Is it not that Allah knows the grateful best? [6:52,53]

As for people who failed to feel human despite being human, even touched the outer limit of rating human beings as one of the smartest animals of the world, who did not hesitate in harnessing other 'animals' in their service, what would they know about the purpose of creation other than taking the fulfillment of their immediate physical compulsions and needs, and acting in accordance with animal instincts as the purpose of their lives - very much like an animal would do. When this be the only purpose of life, then, it is also obvious that the criterion of recognizing good and bad, small or big, high or low, noble or mean can hardly be any other than whoever has more and better to eat and drink, wear and use up, and things and resources to live around with and hold on to, shall be successful, honourable and noble -and whoever has less of these shall be low life and doomed!

The truth of the matter is that, given this view of life, talking about good morals and good deeds as a criterion of judging the nobility of human beings remains out of the question. In that case, only that deed will be good and that morality will be virtuous through which these animal objectives could be fully realized.

Therefore, the first and the last lesson given by the blessed prophets and the religions they brought with them was that there is a life after this life, which will be eternal and uninterrupted. Its peace will be perfect and eternal, and so will be its pain, perfect and eternal. The life of the present world is not its own purpose. Instead of that, the real purpose of this transitory life is to get together everything which is going to come out handy in the other life - (delightfully summarized with a punch by a poet who said):

Remained busy getting ready to die

What else was that I had to do in this world?

This is the line of distinction between human beings and animals - that animals have no concern for the next life, contrary to human beings whose greatest concern, at least in the sight of reasonable and far-sighted people, is to correct, nurse and build the prospects of the next life. Given this belief and point of view, the standard of nobil-

ity and menialness, honour and disgrace will obviously not be eating and drinking lavishly, living plentifully or qualitatively, or making and holding wealth and property greedily - instead, the standard will be good morals and righteous deeds on which depends the real honour of the Akhirah (Hereafter).

Whenever people in this world have shifted away from the teachings of the prophets (A.S) and from belief in the Akhirah, the natural outcome was there for everyone to see. Money and things became the cold criterion of character and status. Those successful in this race were taken as high and classy, and whoever was left behind, or remained an under-achiever, was taken to be poor, honourless, mean and low.

Therefore, in all ages (including ours with the loudest claims to democracy and justice), people caught in the maze of worldly life have been practicing class distinction of rich and poor and high and low openly or secretly under a thousand guises whereby they would assign all virtues to the rich and influential and condemn the poor as low-life. This is what the people of Sayyidna Nuh (A.S) did. They criticized the believing poor following this standard, when they said that they would not sit with such lowly people. They said that if he wished them to hear his message, he should first turn those poor wretches out of his company. They even said: [26:111]. It means: 'How can it be that we are to believe in you while those following you are lowly people?' Sayyidna Nuh (A.S) answered their heart-rending remark in his own prophetic diction when he said: [26:112]. It means: I do not know about what they do (which could help him decide whether they were high or low) so (the reality of everyone's deeds and) their accounting is the responsibility of none but my Lord (who is aware of the secrets of the hearts), if you understand.'

By saying so, Sayyidna Nuh (A.S) brought these ignorant and arrogant people oblivious of the reality of human nobility and ignobility to see the truth of the matter - as they were the ones

who used these terms without knowing what they really meant and just went ahead stamping the rich as noble and the poor as wretched, while money is no criterion of virtues and vices. The criterion is deeds and morals. At this occasion, Sayyidna Nuh (A.S) could have said that those people were nobler and more respectable than them as far as the standard of deeds and morals was concerned. But, his prophetic method of preaching and correcting did not permit him to say something like that lest his addressees are provoked adversely. Therefore, he thought it to be sufficient to say that lowliness depended on deeds and since he did not know about their deeds fully, he could not decide as to who was noble and who was not.

The same thing has been happening in every age, after the age of Sayyidna Nuh, when poor people of successive times, no matter how noble and respectable in terms of their morals and deeds they may have been, were still down-graded as lowly by materialistic and arrogant people. Yet, these were the people who, guided by their farsightedness and good morals, were the first ones to say yes to the call of prophets in one after the other age. In fact, for later scholars of religions and communities this became the proof of the veracity of a prophet that his early followers are the poor ones of the community. This was the reason why, when the letter of the Holy Prophet reached the Byzantine ruler, Heraclius (Hiraql) inviting him to embrace Islam, he wished to investigate into the veracity of his prophethood. For this purpose, he asked from people who knew the Prophet of Islam some questions. One of these questions was: Whether most of his followers were from among the rich, or the poor? When he was told that they were poor people, he said: These are usually the first followers of messengers and prophets.

The same question rose again during the blessed time of the Holy Prophet . Its answer appears in the present verses with particular instructions.

Reports Ibn Kathir from Imam Ibn Jarir: Some chiefs of disbelievers from the tribe of Quraysh - 'Utbah, Shaybah, Ibn Rabi'ah, Mut'im ibn 'Adiyy, Harith ibn Nawfal and others - came to the Holy Prophet's uncle, Abu Talib and said to him: One of the problems, which stops us from listening to and accepting what Your nephew Muhammad tells us, is that people who surround him all the time are either our slaves who were set free by us, or they are people who were living at our mercy only. Now, with such lowly people around him, we cannot attend his sittings. You tell him, if he would ask these people to leave when it is time for us to come in, we could listen to him and think about it.

When his uncle, Abu Talib reported this to the Holy Prophet, Sayyidna 'Umar offered his advice by saying: What is wrong with it? Try this too for a few days. These people love us and they are not formal. When these chiefs are to come, they would move away from the sitting..

Thereupon, this verse was revealed in which the Holy Prophet has been emphatically prohibited to do something like that. It was after the revelation of the verse that Sayyidna 'Umar had to apologize by admitting that his advice was wrong.

And these poor people about whom this conversation took place were, at that time, no less a people than Sayyidna Bilal al-Habashi, Sayyidna Suhayb ar-Rumi, Sayyidna 'Ammar ibn Yasir, Sayyidna Salim Mawla Abi Hudhayfah, Sabih Mawla Usayd, Sayyidna 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, Sayyidna Miqdad ibn 'Amr, Sayyidna Mas'ud Ibn al-Qari, Sayyidna Dhush-Shimalyn, and other noble Sahabah (RAA) the testimonial of whose nobility and honour came from the heavens. And at another place in the Holy Qur'an, the same subject was stressed upon in these words:

And hold your self with those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His pleasure only. And do not cast your eyes (for others) beyond them, seeking the embellish-

ment of the present life. And do not obey the one whose heart We have made neglectful of Our remembrance, and who follows his own desires, and whose case is that of excess - 18:28.

In the present verse, the quality of these poor people has been identified as: They call on their Lord morning and evening. Here, morning and evening refer to all times of the day and night according to usage. As for calling, it means 'Ibadah or worship. Also placed here is a restriction along with this 'Ibadah, at whichever time of the day and night it may be, that is: : 'seeking Him only.' This tells us that 'Ibadah (worship of Allah) without Ikhlas (absolute sincerity before Him) is not trustworthy.

As for the saying: 'You are not responsible for what is in their account, and they are not responsible for anything in your account,' according to the interpretation of Ibn 'Atiyyah and Al-Zamakhshari and others, here the pronouns in: (Hisabihim : their account) and ('Alaihim : they are not responsible) refers to these chiefs of disbelievers, those who insisted on removing poor Muslims from the gathering at the sitting. So, Allah told the Holy Prophet not to bother with them whether, or not, they enter the fold of faith - because he was not responsible for anything in their account, just as they were not responsible for anything in his account. If he were responsible for that, that is, he would have been questioned as to why these people did not become Muslims, then, in that situation, he could have removed the poor Muslims from his sitting just for the sake of the chiefs of the disbelievers. And now, when this is not so, removing them from the sitting was rank injustice. And if he were to do something like that, he would have become one of the unjust.

In the second verse (53), it was said that this is how Allah had tested some of them through some others, so that these chiefs of the disbelievers should be able to see the great subduing power of Almighty Allah when poor Muslims,

Cont'd on page 43

Lessons from Sahih Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

The Book of Salah

Chapter 101 : The sin of one who passes in front of a musalli.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Bāb

In the previous chapter it was said that a musalli should stop the person who tries to pass in front of him, and here it is being stressed that people should refrain from passing in front of a musalli as it is a sinful act.

Hadith No. 483

Narrated Busr bin Sa'eed

Zaid bin Khālid sent him to Abi Juhaim to ask him what he had heard from Allah's Apostle about a person passing in front of another person who was praying. Abu Juhaim replied, "Allah's Apostle said, 'If the person who passes in front of another person in prayer knew the magnitude of his sin he would prefer to wait for 40 (days, months or years) rather than to pass in front of him.'" Abu An-Nadr said, "I do not remember exactly whether he said 40 days, months or years."

Comments

Zaid bin Khālid sent Busr bin Sa'eed to ask Abu Jubain what Rasulullah (saws) had said about the person who passes in front of a musalli. Abu Jubain told him that if a person

comes to know the gravity of this sin he would prefer to wait for forty (he did not remember exactly whether he said days, months or years) than passing in front of a musalli. Abu Nadr, who narrates this hadith from Abu Sa'eed, forgot whether Abu Sa'eed said forty days or months or years. A narration is Musnad Ibn Bazār indicates that it is forty years.

In short, it is a grave sin to pass in front of a musalli, and Imām Nawavi has stated that it is harām.

Chapter 102 : A man facing his companion or someone else in his prayer while he is performing the prayer.

Usmān disliked facing another man when he was praying if that distracted him. However, if he is not distracted by it, Zaid ibn Thabit said, "It does not matter. The man does not invalidate the other man's prayer."

Purpose of Tarjamatul Bāb

In earlier chapter it was said that passing in front of a musalli is highly sinful, and here it is being discussed what if a person does not pass in front, but only stands or sits down facing the musalli. It is narrated that Sayyidna Usmān disliked such an act, while Zaid bin Thābit did not bother about it. Imām Bukhāri elucidates the point further by saying that if a musalli's at-

tention is disturbed by someone passing in front then it is not right to do so.

Hadith No. 484
Narrated Aishah

The things which annul the prayers were mentioned before me. They said, "Prayer is annulled by a dog, a donkey and a woman (if they pass in front of the praying people)." I said, "You have made us (i.e. women) dogs. I saw the Prophet praying while I used to lie in my bed between him and the Qibla. Whenever I was in need of something, I would slip away for I disliked to face him."

Comments

The learned scholars differ in their opinion whether one should face towards a musalli or not. In this regard Allāma Ayni has this to say:

"Umar beat two persons, one of the two was facing other when the later was offering salāh"

"Ibn Umar did not face (while offering salāh) a talker except after Jum'ah salāh".

"It is reported from Mālik that there is no problem in offering salāh facing the back of a person."

"And majority of the learned scholars disliked facing a musalli face to face."

"Naafae said that whenever Ibn Umar could not find a place to offer salāh behind a pillar he used to tell me to turn my back towards him; this is the statement of Mālik."

Relation of this hadith with the tarjamatul bābtile

In the tarjamatul bāb, Imām Bukhāri discuss whether a man should face his companion during salāh, but the hadith is mentioning a male musalli facing a woman. There seems to be some discrepancy between the two. The learned scholars say that Imām Bukhāri's purpose is served by this hadith as well, because if a man can face a woman while offering salāh then

obviously there should be no problem if he faces a man. Rest of this hadith has already been discussed in the previous chapter.

Chapter 103 : (To offer) salāh behind a sleeping person.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Bāb

Here again the same subject is repeated i.e., the mention of a sleeping woman in the forthcoming hadith and that of a sleeping man in the tarjamatul bāb. The answer is same i.e., the Islamic Shariah addresses the man and woman equally unless and until any sort of difference is specified by the Shariah itself.

Allāma Ayni has quoted Ibn Batāl saying:

"(To offer) salāh behind a sleeping person is permissible but a group of scholars disliked it fearing that the sleeping person may speak something (in his sleep) which may distract the musalli or make him laugh and thereby spoil his salāh."

Abu Dawood and Ibn Mājah have quoted a hadith from Ibn Abbas, which says: "Do not offer salāh behind a sleeping person or the one who is talking"

Allāma Ayni quotes Khattabi saying that the chain of the narrators of this hadith is not reliable.

Hadith No. 485
Narrated Aishah

The Prophet used to pray while I was sleeping across in his bed in front of him. Whenever he wanted to pray witr, he would wake me up and I would pray witr.

Lessons from this hadith

1. It shows the importance of witr salāh as Rasulullah (saws) did not wake up Sayyida Aishah for tahaajud but did woke her up for witr.
2. It also shows that witr can be offered after sleep.

Chapter 104 : Supererogatory (nafl) prayers behind a woman.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Bāb

Imām Bukhāri wants to mention that if one is confident enough not to lose his attention if a woman is sitting or lying down in front of him while he is offering his salāh then there is no problem to offer salāh in such a situation.

Hadith No. 486

Narrated Aishah

The wife of the Prophet, “I used to sleep in front of Allah’s Apostle with my legs opposite his Qibla (facing him); and whenever he prostrated, he pushed my feet and I withdrew them and whenever he stood, I stretched them.” Aishah added, “In those days there were no lamps in the houses.”

Comments

The above quoted hadith mention that Sayyida Aishah used to sleep in her bed in front of Rasulullah (saws) with her legs facing him, and when the Prophet (saws) had to prostrate he pushed her feet and she withdrew them, and when he stood she used to stretch them again. This bespeaks about the paucity of space in the room. From this hadith the hanafite school derives the conclusion that touching a woman does not invalidate one’s ablution.

Chapter 105 : Someone who said, “Nothing invalidates the salāh.”

Purpose of Tarjamatul Bāb

Some hadiths have been quoted which mentioned that if a woman, donkey or a dog passes in front of a musalli, his salāh becomes invalid. Imām Bukhāri refutes such an opinion here in this chapter.

Hadith No. 487

Narrated Aishah

The things which annul prayer were mentioned before me (and those were): a dog, a donkey and a woman. I said, “You have compared us (women) to donkeys and dogs. By Allah! I saw the Prophet praying while I used to lie in (my) bed between him and the Qibla. Whenever I was in need of something, I disliked to sit and trouble the Prophet. So, I would slip away by the side of his feet.”

Hadith No. 488

Narrated Aishah

(the wife of the Prophet) Allah’s Apostle used to get up at night and pray while I used to lie across between him and the Qibla on his family’s bed.

Comments

A hadith quoted in Tirmidhi says: “When a man offers salāh and nothing is in front of him (as sutra) e.g., wooden plate of a saddle or the saddle itself etc., then a black dog or a donkey or a woman passing in front will spoil his salāh” (Tirmidhi)

Imām Ahmad, because of this hadith, is of the opinion that these things invalidate the salāh, but he has expressed his reservation regarding ‘a woman’ and ‘a donkey’ on the basis of two other hadiths which have been discussed in previous chapter. One hadith, as quoted by Ibn Abbas according to which he came to Mina riding a donkey and Rasulullah (saws) was offering salāh with his companions and he (Ibn Abbas) passed in front of some of the rows. He dismounted and let his donkey to graze and entered the row and nobody objected. Another hadith is quoted by Sayyida Aishah mentioned in pervious chapters wherein she says that she used to lie in front of Rasulullah (saws) when he was offering salāh. Imām Ahmad says that he has no knowledge of any hadith that speaks about any black dog. (Maarif-us-Sunan quoted in Dars-i-Tirmidhi)

Imām Bukhāri and the majority of jurists

do not believe in the invalidation of salāh by any of these things. They argue with the hadith of Sayyida Aishah and Ibn Abbas quoted above. Imām Bukhāri has also quoted Ibn Shuhāb Zuhri according to whom none of these things invalidate salāh. Imām Tahāwih has quoted similar words from Sayyidna Ali, Usmān and Hudhaifa bin Jābir al-Yemaan and others.

What about the hadith quoted from Tirmidhi and similar hadith quoted in Muslim which say that passing of a woman, a donkey and a black dog in front of a musalli will spoil his salāh. According to the learned scholars it is Shaitaan which disturbs a person during salāh. A hadith says:

“The black dog is a Shaitaan”

Another one says:

“When you hear the crying of a donkey, seek Allah’s refuge from Shaitaan, as it sees him (Shaitaan)” (Muslim).

Another hadith says,

“Women are a string of Shaitaan”.

Women, as a mother, sister, daughter, wife etc., are highly honoured in Islam. She has been given due respect in whatever way she is related to a man, but at the same time, Islam being a realistic religion, does not go against the human nature. It is in the nature of a man to get attracted to a woman. It is this attraction which has been called the string of Shaitaan. Since during salāh, a bondsman is supposed to contemplate towards Allah, it is possible that he might lose his attention if a woman passes in front of him, though as per the majority of scholars his salāh is valid. ‘If there is no chance of distraction then there is no problem,’ says Imām Bukhāri.

Have a Good Thought

We all understand that backbiting is forbidden. Likewise we must remember that to even have an ill-thought of someone is also forbidden. We may be sitting all alone in the protection of our homes, but if our mind has to deliberately think that such and such a friend is a very sulky person, then that thought is forbidden. It is a sin to deliberately even think evil of someone.

What we fail to realize is that ill-thoughts give rise to ill-feelings and hatred; which in turn disunites our hearts. With the disunity of hearts there will always be fears, doubts, suspicion, fights and arguments. On the other hand, if we start thinking good of others, it will generate love and unity. Our hearts will be at ease enjoying great peace and harmony. Our thoughts become our words and actions which in turn develop into habits, which ultimately becomes our character and life. Let us strive to think good of others and in-turn enjoy a happy life.

A Short Note on Islamic Law

*Straight
Talk*



Sunk and lost in the abyss of modern day's chaos, confusion, and dysfunction, today's youth needs to be addressed. Follow not the small-timers. Chase not shadows. Battle not against supposed enemies. Your crusade against the four Schools of Law will exhaust you. Waste not your time and energy on unachievable missions. Channel them into what will pay back in gold coins: study of the Qur'an and Sunnah in their language, for instance; exceling in games like boxing, karate, etc.; feeding the widows; educating the orphans,
writes SYED IQBAL ZAHEER.

According to both the uneducated as well as those taught a few ahadith (in English), the Fiqh A'immah (the four Imams) appeared some two hundred years after the Prophet. Basing on that little piece of information, they assume, (untaught as they are that assumption is disallowed in Islam)... that until their appearance, everyone – during those 200 years – consulted the Qur'an and Hadith to take out answers to their everyday questions concerning 'how to do this and how to do that.' Therefore, they conclude, every Muslim today could – and should – also refer to the Qur'an and Sunnah, to work out details of the Law, as did the Salaf, and, consequently, do away with the four Fiqh schools, to get closer to the Salaf.

In reality, they are as far away from the Salaf as Dallas is from Madinah, in many senses of the metaphor.

Ignorance leads to greater ignorance, which

leads to blunders, ultimately to denial of many truths, and, finally, to disbelief. As is known, 'a little educated' is more dangerous than the uneducated, if he (or she) assumes that he is 'educated enough,' and that he can now preach. He is dangerous to himself as he is dangerous to his society. Today they are teeming around in noticeable numbers.

Their above assumption is based on another assumption, namely, every one of those first two hundred years or so, knew whole of the Qur'an and whole of the Sunnah. Hardly so. The number of Companions who had committed the 'whole of the Qur'an' to memory during the Prophet's life were not a large percentage – when compared to the hundreds of thousands spread over 8,000,000 sq. km living in ravines, deserts and valleys, where no man other than their inhabitants had ever set foot. These people knew a little from here, a little from there of the Qur'an – but not

the whole of it. And the numbers of those – primarily living in Madinah – who had memorized the Qur’an were vastly dwindled by the wars of Apostasy. They were dying in battlefields in such large numbers that `Umar (ra) felt concerned about preservation of the Qur’an suggesting that it be compiled as one whole, in one volume – whatever the physical format. Then soon started the exodus of early Muslims in battle formations heading against Roman and Persian Empires in the north. Obviously, war times are not the best times for anything as serious as memorization of more than six thousand verses.

The Hadith fared no better. It had to wait almost 200 years before a collection could be available for the educated class (not everyone) of major towns. Not everyone in the streets, markets, or farms and fields was educated, nor were the Hadith collections available in every city, town, village and army barracks. There were no bookstores yet, no public libraries: only personal collections. Public libraries had to wait until – gone were the Umayyads – the Abbasid Caliphate had settled down in Baghdad.

So, according to the fallacious assumption, it was not the Qur’an and Sunnah that were the sources of Law for the great majority of people in Makkah, Madinah, Yemen, the African West coast, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Persia, Asia Minor etc. because they were not available to them. The question arises: were the newest of Muslims, now in millions, leading a life of whims and fancies, because they – every individual, man and woman – living over an area now spread over several hundred million square kilometres – had no access to the two sources?

Assumptions of the ‘little-educated’ can, and do, lead to disastrous inferences.

Of course, both Qur’an and Hadith were taught by the scholars in major towns. But, barring some exceptions, majority of the townspeople were not engaged in such studies, and majority of the population did not live in towns and cities. At best, peoples of pocket populations delegated their representatives to learn the religion and teach them when they came back. They did

not bring back books, (let alone 30,000 ahadith of Ahmad bin Hanbal in 100 volumes) – in many cases, nothing in writing. Who was mad enough to say that he would accept nothing less than the Qur’an and Sunnah, first hand, all by himself, because so had the Prophet instructed?

Today some of the ‘somewhat educated’ Muslims unfurl their flags displaying the Prophet’s dictum: “I am leaving behind me two things, that, if you followed, you will never be misguided: the Qur’an and my Sunnah?” Was this dictum ever ignored by the Ummah, starting with the earliest Muslims itself?

Rather not. Those who refuse to give a decade or two to Islamic Studies (so much is their love of the Qur’an and Sunnah) cannot know the difference between principles and practices; between guidelines and everyday applications.

Sharp of intellect, pious to the core, clear of self-evaluation, and aided by Divine guidance, the Prophet’s early followers knew the exact meaning and implication of the rule pertaining to the Qur’an and Sunnah as the sources, and never assumed that they – as common individuals – were required to work out the Law themselves. They knew and believed fully in the Qur’an which had warned them of playing with the rules and had instructed them to ask and follow the ‘People of Dhikr,’ which they submissively did. (Much behind rejection of the four Fuqaha’ in our times is refusal to submit).

The Prophet had known of the difficulty for individuals of all kinds and class to work out the Shari`ah, and had said: “Unto you is my Sunnah, and the Sunnah of the Rightly-guided Khulafa’ after me.” Does it strike the proud that a third source had been added? The Qur’an had identified four sources of Law: Qur’an, Sunnah, Consensus and Analogy. (4: 59)

The truest of Imams came immediately following the Prophet’s death. Recommended by no less than he himself, the four Caliphs became the A’immatu al-Fiqh, together, and in succession, issuing Fatawa. The hundreds of thousands of the commoners from among the Companions became, to use the language of our times, Muqa-

llidin – because, neither the Qur’an was available in the markets for sale, nor in the mosques, nor the Hadith. So, they blindly followed rulings of the four Khulafa’. Thus they had been ordered by the Qur’an and thus they had been ordered by the Hadith.

To be sure, they were aided by other A’imah, such as Ubayy b. Ka’b (for matters related to the Qur’an), Ibn `Abbas (for matters involving Qur’anic commentary), Mu`adh b. Jabal, (for issues relating to the Abrogations of the Qur’an), Zayd b. Thabit (for matters involving Inheritance), `A’isha (for matters involving women’s affairs), etc. They issued Fatwa for the benefit of the Companions and the Followers, many arriving from Yemen, Oman, Bahrayn, Persia, Asia Minor, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and so many other regions.

Such were the Imams after the Prophet and such were – so to say – the Muqallidin. They were the truest of Muqallidin. They never disagreed with their guides. For them, the fatawa given out by their guides were golden rulings which would become, for the later scholars of Fiqh, one of the sources of Islamic Law, when the Law began to be coded.

Some six generations passed. The Ummah remained following the rules of the Shari’ah as dictated by their contemporary scholars. There wasn’t any group to claim that they would rather follow none but the Qur’an and Sunnah. Those were not days of slogans to hide true intentions.

But then began to surface complications of changing times, cultures, regional ways of life, customs of the land, complex business transaction, and so on. First collections of Hadith had appeared, e.g. Muwatta of Imam Malik. There were others. But, to the newest questions that arose, newest problems that began to crop up, the Qur’an and Sunnah did not offer direct answers. Qatadah was asked about something. He said, “I don’t know.” He was asked, “What’s your personal opinion?” He replied, “I haven’t expressed my personal opinion since forty years.” (He was then about fifty years old). Even a person like Ibn `Umar, an expert on Sunan of the Prophet, when

asked about something, replied, “I don’t know.” Incredibly, Imam Malik, the collector of a bulk of hadith, was asked 48 questions, to 32 of which he said, “I don’t know.”

Why were they saying that they did not know? It was because such were the complications of the New Age. And if “I don’t know” was so commonly said in those times, how often not it should be said in our much more complex times and situations? The Salaf were declaring their ignorance because the Qur’an and Sunnah did not contain any direct answers for the growing problems.

In consequence, and following the Qur’anic direction itself, there arose the need and use of the fourth and no less important function of Fiqh: Qiyas (analogy).

We shall not dwell on the subject of Analogy now. It is best understood with example of how it was put to work, without confrontation with the Qur’an and Sunnah, but rather, through the Qur’an, Sunnah and Ijma`. But such examples can only be presented in Arabic, and, in addition, hard to understand for the non-specialist. The Fuqaha’ who did it were amazingly intelligent, hard-working, God-conscious, pure of intentions, meek, humble, spiritual who preferred the next world to this.

Information can be obtained even by a scoundrel. But `ilm is for the chosen. Someone said to Hasan al-Basri, “O `Alim.” He retorted in anger saying, in effect, “Stupid! Have you ever seen an `Alim in your life?”

Sunk and lost in the abyss of modern day’s chaos, confusion, and dysfunction, today’s youth needs to be addressed. Follow not the small-timers. Chase not shadows. Battle not against supposed enemies. Your crusade against the four Schools of Law will exhaust you. Waste not your time and energy on unachievable missions. Channel them into what will pay back in gold coins: study of the Qur’an and Sunnah in their language, for instance; excelling in games like boxing, karate, etc.; feeding the widows; educating the orphans.

The world is in pain; people are moaning. Rescue whom you can. Get chosen.

Facing the Tidal Wave of Unemployment

S. Nabil Saad

You just graduated with honors and are as ready as can be for your dream job. The only challenge remaining, will you be able to find a job right away?

Another scenario, you have a quite comfortable and interesting job, well-paid and secured; or so you thought! Before you know it, you find yourself laid off! What to do?

Unemployment is one of the major challenges of our time. It has financial, social, psychological and health complications. Adjusting to a very low income at times leads to homelessness, separation or divorce, chronic depression, drug and/or alcohol addiction, etc.

How can we deal with unemployment from a Prophetic emotional wisdom perspective?

What would Prophet Muhammad (saws) have advised us to do in such a challenging situation?

How Should a Believer Face the Tide?

It is not the manner of a Mu'min (believer) to lose hope and mentally break down or even resort to drug or alcohol addiction in times of hardship.

As tempting as it may be to try to evade the trouble by temporarily blocking out the mind with such behavior, it is more fruitful and promising to turn to Allah instead, asking for His mercy and aid.

For after all, Prophet Muhammad (saws) affirms that:

“Strange is the affair of the Mu'min (the believer), verily all his affairs are good for him. If something pleasing befalls him he thanks (Allah) and it becomes better for him. And if something harmful befalls him he is patient and it becomes better for him. And this is only for the Mu'min.” (Muslim, 2999)

Tawakkul (Relying on Allah) and Tawaakul (Overdependence)

There is a clear cut line between Tawakkul (Relying on Allah) and Tawaakul (overdependence). The first thing you need to do if you are unemployed or laid off is implementing the Islamic manner of Tawakul (Relying on Allah). That is, turn to Allah first and foremost and ask Him to provide someone as a medium to help you find a job. That is, you must have complete faith and trust that it is only Allah that will send you your provision:

{And in the heaven is your provision and whatever you are promised. Then by the Lord of the heaven and earth, indeed, it is truth — just as [sure as] it is that you are speaking.} (51:22–3)

On the other hand, be careful not to fall into the trap of tawaakul (overdependence) on others. Do not lazily depend on others to provide

for you.

One day Prophet Muhammad (saws) noticed a Bedouin leaving his camel without tying it and he asked the Bedouin:

“Why don’t you tie down your camel?”

The Bedouin answered:

“I put my trust in Allah.”

The Prophet (saws) then said:

“Tie your camel first, then put your trust in Allah.” (At-Tirmidhi, 2517)

You are the one going through the trial, so you need to start taking action yourself to steadfastly get through it. Present your resume to various job openings you feel match your field of expertise.

In case you got laid off, connect with your previous co-workers or other workers of acquaintance, so they can put you in touch with workers in other companies to help you get a job.

The Upper Hand is Better than the Lower Hand

Sometimes unemployment may present a bigger challenge, when you are unable to find a well-paying job or one that matches your field; like for example if you are a white collar worker and you find yourself only able to find blue collar jobs.

Assess the situation, if you have just started your search wait and try to find something that suits you. However, if you have been out there for an endless time you may need to understand that it is better to take this opportunity rather than presenting a financial burden on others or living under very harsh conditions. It is more honorable having a job even if it may rank lower than your previous job or education level, than having no job at all and living on charity.

Abu Hurairah is reported to have heard Prophet Muhammad (saws) as saying:

“It is better for one among you to bring a load of firewood on his back and give charity out of it (and satisfy his own need) and be independent of people, than that he should beg from people, whether they give him anything or re-

fuse him. Verily the upper hand is better than the lower hand, and begin (charity) with your dependants.” (Muslim, 1042)

Free Time?

Ibn Abbas reports that the Prophet (saws) said:

“There are two blessings which many of the people lose: Health and Free time.” (Al-Bukhari, 6412)

As much as unemployment is an unfavorable condition, however if utilized wisely a fruitful outcome could be achieved. As strange as it may sound, free time that you possess while searching for a job could be a time that you could still develop intellectually, spiritually and humanely.

While searching and supplicating to Allah to give you a job, try to attend free job training courses to improve and increase your skills that will benefit you in your chances of finding jobs.

You also have the privilege of spending more time at the masjid and learning your religion while uplifting yourself spiritually. Now, it is also a very good time for volunteer work, whether it be at your local masjid or even in any other facilities, like libraries or schools for example.

Never Compromise your Faith

At times, you may have the conviction that it is your Islamic faith, for example your name or the fact that you pray at work, or your dress code as a Muslim woman, etc. that is keeping you from getting a job or got you laid off.

Whether it is true or not, do not fall into the trap of compromising your faith to reach your goal. Have trust in Allah and know that The Almighty will always give you a way out.

{And whoever fears Allah — He will make for him a way out. And will provide for him from where he does not expect. And whoever relies upon Allah — then He is sufficient for him. Indeed, Allah will accomplish His purpose. Allah has already set for everything a [decreed] extent.} (65:2–3)

THE DELUSION I AM NOT RESPONSIBLE

Robert J. Burrowes

Powerful choices are vital in this world. We face a vast array of violent challenges, some of which threaten near-term human extinction. In this context, it is unwise to leave responsibility for getting us out of this mess to others, and particularly those insane elites whose political agents so demonstrably fail to meaningfully address any of our major social, political, economic and environmental problems, writes ROBERT J. BURROWES.

One of the many interesting details to be learned by understanding human psychology is how a person's unconscious fear works in a myriad of ways to make them believe that they bear no responsibility for a particular problem.

This psychological dysfunctionality cripples a substantial portion of the human population in ways that work against the possibility of achieving worthwhile outcomes for themselves, other individuals, communities and the world as a whole. In an era when human extinction is now a likely near-term outcome of this dysfunctionality, it is obviously particularly problematic. So why does this happen and how does it manifest?

In essence, if a person is frightened by the circumstances of others or a particular set of events, their fear will often unconsciously delude them into believing and behaving as if they bear no responsibility for playing a part in addressing

the problem. This fear works particularly easily when the person, or people concerned, live at considerable social and/or geographic distance, or when the events occur in another place. But it can also work with someone who is socially or geographically close, or with an event that occurs nearby. Let me illustrate this common behaviour with several examples which might stimulate your awareness of having witnessed it too.

I first became seriously interested in this phenomenon after hearing someone, who had just returned from India, describe the many street beggars in India as 'living a subsistence lifestyle.' As I listened to this individual, I could immediately perceive that they were very frightened by their experience, but in a way that made them not want to help. Given that this individual has considerable wealth, it was immediately apparent to me that the individual was attempting to conceal from themselves their unconscious guilt (about their own wealth and how this was acquired) but I could perceive an element of anger in their response as well. This anger was obviously shaping the way in which street beggars were perceived so that there was no apparent need to do anything. So what was the unconscious anger about? Most probably about not getting help themselves when they needed it as a child.

A widespread version of this particular fear, and the delusion that arises from it, is the belief that it is the direct outcome of the decisions of others that make them responsible for the circumstances in which they find themselves. Obviously, this belief is widespread among those who refuse to take structural violence, such as the exploitative way in which the global economy functions, into account. If the victim can be blamed for their circumstances, then 'I am not responsible' in any way. Men who like to blame women, who have been sexually assaulted for their 'provocative dress,' are also exhibiting this fear and its attendant delusional behaviour.

But, perhaps, the most obvious manifestation of evading responsibility occurs when, instead of doing what they can to assist someone in need, a person laments 'not being able' to do something more significant. And by doing this, their fear enables them to conceal that they might, in fact, have done something that would have helped. This often happens, for example, when someone is too scared to offer help because it might require the agreement of someone else (such as a spouse) who (unconsciously) frightens them. But there are other reasons why their fear might generate this behaviour as well.

Another common way of evading taking responsibility (while, in this case, deluding yourself that you are not) is to offer someone who needs help something that they do not need and then, when they refuse it, to interpret this as 'confirmation' that they do not need your help.

A variation of this behaviour is to dis-
pose of something that you do not want and to delude yourself that you are, in fact, 'helping.' I first became fully aware of this version of evading responsibility (and assuaging guilt) when I was working in a refugee camp in the Sudan at the height of the Ethiopian war and famine in 1985. Companies all over the world were 'giving' away unwanted stock of unsaleable goods (pre-

sumably for a tax benefit) to aid agencies who were then trying to find ways to use it. And not always successfully. I will never forget seeing the Wad Kowli Refugee Camp for the first time with its wonderfully useless lightweight and colourful overnight bushwalking tents instead of the large, heavy duty canvas tents normally used in such difficult circumstances. Better than nothing you might say. For a week, perhaps, but only barely in 55 degrees Celsius.

Another popular way of evading responsibility is to delude yourself about the precise circumstances in which someone finds themselves. For example, if your fear makes you focus your attention on an irrelevant detail, such as the pleasantness of your memory of a town as a tourist destination, rather than the fact that someone who lives there is homeless, then it is easy to delude yourself that their life must be okay and to behave in accordance with your delusion rather than the reality of the other person's life.

One way that some people evade responsibility is to delude themselves that a person who needs help is 'not contributing' while also deluding themselves about the importance of their own efforts. This is just one of many delusions that wealthy people often have to self-justify their wealth while many people who work extremely hard are paid a pittance (or nothing) for their time, expertise and labour.

Variations of another delusion include 'I can only give what I have got' and 'I can't afford it' (but you might know of others), which exposes the fear that makes a person believe that they have very little irrespective of their (sometimes considerable) material wealth. This fear/delusion combination arises because, in the emotional sense, the person probably does have 'very little.' If a person is denied their emotional needs as a child, they will often learn to regard material possessions as the only measure of value in the quality of their life. And because material possessions can never replace an emotional

need, no amount of material wealth can ever feel as if it is 'enough.' For a fuller explanation of this point, see 'Love Denied: The Psychology of Materialism, Violence and War.' (<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/HL1305/S00186/love-denied-the-psychology-of-materialism-violence-and-war.htm/>).

If someone is too scared to accept any responsibility for helping despite the sometimes obvious distress of a person in need, they might even ask for reassurance, for example by asking, 'Are you okay?' But the question is meaningless and asked in such a way that the person in need might even know that no help will be forthcoming. They might even offer the reassurance sought despite having to lie to do so.

A common way in which some people, particularly academics, evade responsibility is to offer an explanation and/or theory about a social problem but then take no action to change things themselves.

Another widespread way of evading responsibility, especially among what I call 'the love and light brigade,' is to focus attention on 'positives' (the 'good' news) rather than truthfully presenting information about the state of our world and then inviting powerful responses to that truth. Deluding ourselves that we can avoid dealing with reality, much of which happens to be extremely unpleasant and ugly, is a frightened and powerless way of approaching the world. But it is very common.

Many people evade responsibility, of course, simply by believing and acting as if someone else, perhaps even 'the government,' is 'properly' responsible.

Undoubtedly, however, the most widespread ways of evading responsibility are to deny any responsibility for military violence while paying the taxes to finance it, denying any responsibility for adverse environmental and climate impacts while making no effort to reduce consumption, denying any responsibility for the exploitation of other people while buying

the cheap products produced by their exploited (and sometimes slave) labour, denying any responsibility for the exploitation of animals despite eating and/or otherwise consuming a range of animal products, and denying any part in inflicting violence, especially on children, without understanding the many forms this violence can take. See 'Why Violence?' (<http://tinyurl.com/whyviolence>) and 'Fearless Psychology and Fearful Psychology: Principles and Practice' (<http://anitamckone.wordpress.com/articles-2/fearless-and-fearful-psychology/>).

Ultimately, of course, we evade responsibility by ignoring the existence of a problem.

Despite everything presented above, it should not be interpreted to mean that we should all take responsibility for everything that is wrong with the world. There is, obviously, a great deal wrong and the most committed person cannot do something about all of it. However, we can make powerful choices, based on an assessment of the range of problems that interest us, to intervene in ways, large or small, to make a difference. This is vastly better than fearfully deluding ourselves and/or making token gestures.

Moreover, powerful choices are vital in this world. We face a vast array of violent challenges, some of which threaten near-term human extinction. In this context, it is unwise to leave responsibility for getting us out of this mess to others, and particularly those insane elites whose political agents (who many still naively believe that we 'elect') so demonstrably fail to meaningfully address any of our major social, political, economic and environmental problems.

If you are interested in gaining greater insight into violent and dysfunctional human behaviour, and what you can do about it, you might like to read 'Why Violence?' and 'Fearless Psychology and Fearful Psychology: Principles and Practice' mentioned above.

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When Scientism Takes Over Tradition

Muhammad Ghilan

We have made you [believers] into a just community, so that you may bear witness [to the truth] before others and so that the Messenger may bear witness [to it] before you. We only made the direction the one you used to face [Prophet] in order to distinguish those who follow the Messenger from those who turn on their heels: that test was hard, except for those God has guided. God would never let your faith go to waste [believers], for God is most compassionate and most merciful towards people. [2:143]

Contrary to the dominant narrative peddled by historically illiterate new atheists, every major civilization has engaged in what we call the “scientific enterprise”. What was different about past peoples was the philosophical foundations upon which science was done and the cosmological perspective it fit within. Human beings were not superstitious dumb beasts roaming around the earth looking for the next source of food and water. No matter where you go on this planet, you can find evidence in remnants that indicates advancements in technology that would boggle the modern mind only because the modern mind has so much contempt for the past that it does not expect more than bar-

barism from it. This is a product of assuming that technological progress is equivalent to human progress and that it is qualitatively unique to our time. It is an attitude that is reminiscent of the people of ‘Ad, who God says about in the Quran:

The people of ‘Ad behaved arrogantly throughout the land without any right, saying, ‘Who could be stronger than us?’ Did they not realize that God, who created them, was stronger than them? They continued to reject Our message. [41:15]

It is also an attitude for which God asks a question in the Quran:

Have they not travelled through the land and seen how their predecessors met their end? They were mightier than them: they cultivated the earth more and built more upon it. Their own messengers also came to them with clear signs: God did not wrong them; they wronged themselves. [30:9]

There was a time when Europeans traveled to Muslims and had enough of an inferiority complex to cover their heads with Arab turbans. Now the tables have turned, and Muslims have the inferiority complex that drives many of us to cover our intellects with “Enlightenment”

sophistry. We just do not recognize it as sophistry because we want to be acknowledged as “rational”. Why anyone would want to be given approval by an intellectually incoherent group filled with individuals who revel in circular reasoning is an odd thing. But it is not so odd when we recognize that to have a seat at the academic and “intellectual” table, we must pay homage to those who set it up. Otherwise, we will be eating leftovers outside with the peasants. At least, that is how it is presented and may appear at first glance until you look closer and realize the food on the table is spoiled, and if it was not for our transient case of anosmia we would not be producing so much unwarranted skepticism and vomit then calling it “reform” and “progress”.

As an increasing number of influential Muslims appear to be capitulating to the social pressures in the academic and public intellectual spheres, it is important more now than ever to be acutely aware of the truism that there is no science without philosophy. Every scientific theory is an intellectual construct produced to model how the patterns we observe and measure in the world are thought to behave. It is not only the explanatory value of the theories that gives them merit, but also their predictive one. That is why a proposal like Intelligent Design is not considered science. Anyone can look at how things are now and propose an explanation. But the progress of science does not depend on post hoc accounts. One needs to put their theories to the test by using them as predictive models. This is the primary reason why evolutionary theory continues to exist. In the scientific world, evolutionary theory is not an atheist project bent on the destruction of religion. Actually, if you step outside of YouTube and stop paying attention to the Richard Dawkinses and Sam Harris of the world, most scientists do not even bring up religion when they are engaged in their work. It is really not all that glamorous when you go behind the scenes: you have an idea about how something is/functions/came to be, you meas-

ure it, you make a prediction based on your idea and initial measurements, you carry out an experiment or a search to test whether your prediction will pan out, and then put up the findings against your idea. Sometimes you find out you were right, but most of the time it does not work out in your favour, and you have to go back to the drawing board and either adjust your idea or throw it out completely and come up with an alternative. This is all, of course, within the context of a general theoretical paradigm you are operating within. Sometimes the paradigm itself needs to be completely thrown out if it continues to accumulate predictions that are irreconcilable with empirical observations, and a new paradigm can begin to take hold. This will typically take at least a full generation before it is realized.

It all sounds neat, but it really is not. What happens in real life is that no theory has a perfect predictive record. Even when it looks like it does, such as in the case of gravity, it is a product of our limited observations. Gravity is not even a thing in and of itself. It is a relationship between material objects, and the grand narrative we made about it is based on our observations thus far. You only believe that what you throw up will come down if you did not have enough force behind it to overcome gravity because that has been our collective experience. It is not necessarily true. We just have faith that it will work out that way because we never experienced it otherwise. This insight is usually attributed by the selectively amnesic Western mind to David Hume, but it has been recognized by Muslims long before and as was famously articulated by Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali in his discussion on miracles, a scholar whose thought Neil de-Grasse Tyson has made declarations about and its negative impact on the “Golden Age” of Islam despite not having read his work or Islamic history for that matter.

The convincing power of a scientific theory is not inherent to it. It is in the combination of se-

lective reporting in an image-based culture that gives the impression of it having a neat predictive record and in the general application of science as technology. Outsiders to the daily practice of science do not make distinctions between physics, chemistry, and biology, let alone make distinctions between subfields within these areas of science. It is therefore untenable to expect them to grasp the underlying philosophical assumptions and by extension implications of theories proposed in these different areas. Abstract discussions tend to frustrate most people when they have no apparent immediate practical utility. Sensory experience tends to overpower the intellect, often in ways that can be harmful. The ascent of scientists has less to do with the validity of theoretical claims they make and more to do with their ability to produce technology that facilitates modern ways of living. It is easy to fall into the error of assuming that we “know” how something is because we can manipulate it and subject it to our use. However, the simple example of the phenomenon of light refutes this notion.

The challenge Muslims have today is to sift through modern science and separate between valid conclusions, the theoretical constructs and philosophical assumptions upon which they were built, the equivocations between quantity and quality, and the grand narrative mythologies that make it on the New York Times Best Sellers list as popular science books. The Quran affirms that despite their indefatigable attempts at negating God, there will be truth in every theory, and the advancements being made will serve as proof on the Day of Rising against those who make them and continue to reject God:

They only know the outer surface of this present life and are heedless of the life to come. Have they not thought about their own selves? God did not create the heavens and earth and everything between them without a serious purpose and an appointed time, yet many people deny that they

will meet their Lord. [30-7-8]

We shall show them Our signs in every region of the earth and in themselves, until it becomes clear to them that this is the Truth. Is it not enough that your Lord witnesses everything? [41:53]

We must resist the reflexive binary reaction where we feel the need to reject either science or religion, or fall into unwarranted skepticism that bends the religion to make it congruent with whatever science happens to be in vogue at the time. Indeed, the latter reaction is a type of rejecting religion, for it removes its theology in exchange for philosophical naturalism as Islam is paradoxically made to have no conflict with scientism. We need to get beyond Christian apologetics that seeks to affirm the validity of a text we believe was corrupted and a theology we reject as an anathema against God. We must take responsibility as witnesses and produce nuanced responses that use Islamic primary sources as the guiding compass, where we recognize the contextual realities that influenced our past scholars’ perspectives as well as those that currently influence us when we approach the tradition. Otherwise, we risk having Muslims turn into essentially atheists who happen to perform Islamic rituals. But hey, at least we can call ourselves “rational” that way.

Cont’d from page 37

is really the rent we pay for our room on this earth.” (Dr Wilfred Grenfell) Prophet Muhammad said: “Allah is at the assistance of a person as long as that person is of help to another.”

Remember the promise, people will enter Paradise; by the Mercy of Allah, through the generosity of their spirits and the soundness of their hearts. (Hadith)

O Allah! I seek refuge in Thee from anxiety, grief, incapacity, laziness, stinginess, cowardice; from the burden of debt and from the domination of people. (prayer in Hadith)

Anxiety and Stress

9 Prophetic Du'as for Anxiety & Stress

Here are some dua' to make when under stress and experiencing anxiety. They are a means of dispelling fear, of seeking forgiveness of Allah, seeking His aid, protection and guidance. They are the words of Prophet Muhammad and hence anyone that sincerely makes these du'as during times of great need, Allah will always answer the du'a of the sincere seeker. May they be of benefit to us all for there is not a time in the life of a believer when he or she does not need the protection, guidance and mercy of Allah.

And those that turn to Allah sincerely imploring His aid should know that in reality it is Allah turning to His servant, for:

“When Allah wants to be good to someone, He tries him with some hardship.”

General advice from Prophet Muhammad when you are in distress or suffering from anxiety:

“If anyone continually asks pardon, Allah will appoint for him a way out of every distress, and a relief from every anxiety, and will provide for him from where he did not reckon.”

When in distress or difficulty or sorrow:

1- Ibn 'Abbas reported:

The Prophet (saws) at times of sorrow and grief used to supplicate:

“La ilaha illa Allah Al-'Azim, Al-'Alim, la ilaha illa Allah, Rabbul 'arshil 'Azim, la ilaha illa Alla-

hu, Rabbus-Samawati wa rabbul ardi wa rabbul 'arshi karim”

“There is no god but Allah, the Mighty, the Forbearing, there is no god but Allah, the Lord of the mighty throne, there is no god but Allah, the Lord of the heavens and the earth, and the Lord of the throne of honor.” (Bukhari and Muslim).

Anas said that when the Prophet (saws) was faced with a serious difficulty, he would always supplicate:

“Ya Hayyu, ya Qayyumu, bi-rahmatika astaghithu”

“O the Living, O the Eternal, I seek help in Your grace.” (Tirmidhi)

Abu Hurairah reported that whenever the Prophet (saws) was faced with a serious difficulty, he would raise his head to the sky and supplicate:

“Subhan-Allah al-'Azim (glory be to Allah, the Mighty).”

And when he implored seriously and strongly, he would say:

“Ya Hayyu, Ya Qayyum (O the Living, the Eternal One).” (Tirmidhi)

Abu Bakr reported that the Prophet (saws) said:

“The supplications of distress are, ‘Allahumma rahmataka arju, fala takilni ila nafsi tarfata

‘ain, wa aslah li sha’ni kullahu, la ilaha illa anta.”

“O Allah, I hope for Your mercy, so give me not over to my self even for as little as wink of an eye, and set right all my affairs, there is no god but You.” (Abu Daw’ud)

Asma, daughter of ‘Amais, reported that the Prophet (saws) asked her:

“Shall I tell you words that you may say in times of pain or distress? These are, ‘Allah, Allah, Rabbi la ushriku bihi sha’an”

“Allah, Allah, my Lord, I associate none with Him).”

Another narration says that these words should be said seven times. (Abu Daw’ud)

Sa’d ibn Waqas reported that the Prophet (saws) said:

“The supplication made by the Companion of the Fish (Prophet Yunus) in the belly of the fish was,

‘La ilaha illa anta, subhanaka, inni kuntu min-adh-dhalimin’

“There is no god but You, You are far exalted and above all weaknesses, and I was indeed the wrongdoer). If any Muslim supplicates in these words, his supplication will be accepted.”

In another report we read:

“I know words that will cause Allah to remove one’s distress. These are the words (of supplication) of my brother Yunus, saws.” (Tirmidhi)

Ibn Mas’ud reported that the Prophet (saws) said:

“If any servant of Allah afflicted with distress or grief makes this supplication, his supplication will be accepted:

‘O Allah, I am Your servant, son of Your servant, son of your maidservant. My forehead is in Your hand. Your command concerning me prevails, and Your decision concerning me is just. I call upon You by every one of the beautiful names by which You have described Yourself, or which You have revealed in Your book, or have taught anyone of Your creatures, or which You

have chosen to keep in the knowledge of the unseen with You, to make the Qur’an the delight of my heart, the light of my breast, and remover of my griefs, sorrows, and afflictions.”

A supplication in these words will be answered. Allah will remove one’s affliction and replace it with joy and happiness. (Ahmad and Ibn Hibban)

Anas reported that the Prophet (saws) used to supplicate:

“O Allah, there is no ease except what You make easy, and you alone can turn a difficulty into ease.” (Fiqh-us-Sunnah, Volume 4, 131)

Prophet Muhammad (saws) used to say at the time of difficulty:

“None has the right to be worshipped but Allah, the Majestic, the Most Forbearing. None has the right to be worshipped but Allah, the Lord of the Tremendous Throne. None has the right to be worshipped but Allah, the Lord of the Heavens and the Lord of the Honorable Throne.” (Al-Bukhari, volume 9, 526)

Remember that sickness expiates evil deeds and wipes out sins.

Abu Hurairah narrates that the Prophet (saws) said:

“When Allah wants to be good to someone, He tries him with some hardship.”

He said:

“For every misfortune, illness, anxiety, grief, or hurt that afflicts a Muslim, even the hurt caused by the pricking of a thorn – Allah removes some of his sins.”

Ibn Mas’ud said: “I visited the Messenger of Allah (saws) while he had a fever. I exclaimed:

‘O Messenger of Allah! You have a high fever!”

He said:

“My fever is as much as two among you [might have].”

I asked:

‘Is it because you have a double reward?’

He replied:

Cont’d on page 43

Where's Today's Ark?

Nasir Munir

The world is an incessant interplay of the ninety-nine attributes of God. These attributes are almost equally divided between those of rigor and immanence. Man benefits from both. Where immanence predominates, one is to be thankful for God's mercy [1]. When tested with rigor, a concerted effort to correct any deviation from the monotheistic path (tauhid) is required.

Introduction

The people later to be known as the nation of Nuh gradually slipped into a state heedlessness (Ghaflah). They negated the primordial covenant with God and attributed divine power to replicas of people, things and special events. Satan who was granted the power to "whisper to the soul" made this practice fair seeming. Against this backdrop, God sent a messenger to reacquaint the people with the covenant and guide them to the straight path (sirat ul mostaqeem).

Ma - Tehtaj An Naharu Ila Dalili

(When Does Daylight Require Proof?)

The time slices during which God's Messengers were sent to earth are times of divine refraction in human experience. During these times Truth becomes manifest and evidentiary miracles, often custom made, are in plain view of people. Rebuffing Truth (Kufr) with the divine light blazing is a form of Pharaonic arro-

gance not dissimilar to Iblis's first act of disobedience. God grants human beings volition in accepting or rejecting Guidance (Hdiya). The nation of Nuh (as), by and large, rejected Guidance. God decreed that the rejecters would perish. An enormous body of water overwhelmed all, save those in the ship of salvation.

Prophet Nuh (as), in common with other Messengers of God, showed, for all humanity, the path to reclaim the title: "lieutenant of God on earth". Stations (states) of the nafs along this path are followed by aspects of Prophet Nuh's life-long Message as reflected in life-events of later day Messengers of God. Finally, the teasing question: "Where's Today's Ark?" is tackled.

Discovering the Straight Path

The Prophets are chosen by God to guide erring humanity to the Straight Path (sirat al mostaqim). A canonical Hadith (Hadith Jibreel) identifies three Stations along this path:

1) Islam: concerns the stage of action, (generally acts of piety that require the body to be performed) [2]

2) Iman: the state of firm conviction in the belief in God; this is the stage where the mind surrenders to the Truth.

3) Ihsan: indescribable in human terms is the witnessing of God (shahood). Hallmarks of the previous states are unnecessary. God is



witnessed through the 'eye' of the Heart (qalb). Each of these states has associated with them a progressively more abstract and more complete view of the true nature of God. Ascension to succeeding Stations is made possible through jihad al nafs [3]. The ascension to higher states is not necessarily linear, as Imam Rumi's ascension to the state of Ihsan shows.

Ahl e Niyah Saru
 Wa Ahl-e Mohaba Taru [4]

Imam Rumi was a renowned Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) scholar. While visiting the city of Tabriz, he was questioned about the purpose of acquiring knowledge. Not content with his answer, the questioner stated that the purpose of knowledge was to "Know, the Known". In an incommunicable flash of realization, Imam Rumi realized the significance of the questioner's statement. Whereupon, guided by the questioner, (who he accepted as a Sheikh (guide)) he followed a path to Know the Known (God), which led him to the state of Ihsan. The questioner, as it turned out, was a Gnostic, him-

self: Imam Shams Tabrazi. Imam Rumi's son later writes that the great scholar was like a schoolboy learning from his Sheikh everyday.

The Prophets

Iblis, the ancient enemy of Adam, has purposed himself to make mankind forget our affirmation to: "Alas-tu -bi -rabikum" (Am I not Your Lord?). Failure to honor our covenant leads to out-

comes similar to that of Satan. God, in His mercy, selects people (Prophets) to remind, guide and admonish erring humanity. Nuh , was selected to remind people of their covenant with God and give them an opportunity to accept or reject it. This is the mission of all Prophets of God. The truths, sense of Abodieh, Rida and the road to salvation shown by Prophet Nuh's (as) are recounted in the context of later day Prophets.

The Nations of Ad, Thamud

The people of Ad and Thamud were descendants of the people of Nuh - who were in the ship of Salvation. Similar to the people of Nuh , they too attributed divine power to man-made objects, thereby rejecting God and the Prophets sent to them (Hud and Salih . Their fate was similar to that of the nation of Nuh .

Heedlessness leads to attributes similar to those of Iblis - with consequent consequences.

Prophet Ibrahim

Prophet Ibrahim (as) was cast into the fire (after he destroyed the idols). God decreed he should be saved: "O fire be coolness and peaceful to Ibrahim". (Quran 21:69)

God who made the natural order can just as easily break it.

Prophet Ibrahim (as) when challenged to sacrifice what he loved most - offered his son.

The sacrifice required is not of flesh and blood, but rather the surrender of man's purpose and will to God. (in a word: Islam)

Prophets Yusuf and Yunus (as)

Prophet Yusuf (as) was a favorite son of a Prophet, abandoned in a dry well, sold to slavery and imprisoned in Egypt.

Prophet Yunus (as) was cast in the pit of a large fish and endured ill health.

Neither Prophets railed against God. Both of them showed a serene acceptance of God's will (Rida, a key Islamic virtue).

Prophet Musa (as)

Prophet Musa wished to behold God: " 'Reveal Yourself unto me so that I can see you.' (God replied:) 'You Shall Not See Me, but look at that mountain, if you see it standing, then shall you see Me'. God revealed his Glory to the mountain. The mountain was flattened and Musa fell in a swoon. ..." (Quran 7:143)

God does not reveal himself in this crude manner. Contained in man is something that is not of the earth (that points to heaven, our primordial home), by cultivating that can man hope to see God (with the eye of the Heart)

Prophet Isa (as)

For all his exalted position (his ascension and second coming him) his first words on his (miraculous) birth were: "I am the slave of God ..." (Quran 19:30)

The state of Abodieh (slave-hood, obedience) as contrasted to Satan's disobedience is

the most perfected of the states, and most pleasing to God. (Note: Slavery and slave-hood in this context should not be confused with chattel slavery (e.g.: Roman Empire, New World)

Prophet Mohammad (saws)

He is the seal of Prophets, after him there will be no Prophets. "...This day have I perfected your religion for you completed my favor upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion..." (Quran 5:3)"

The Message first conveyed by Prophet Adam (as) and affirmed by all succeeding Prophets after him was reaffirmed and re-conveyed for the last time. The era of the Prophets has come to a close.

God has completed His favor on mankind. The Book (Quran) is a witness and source of salvation for all of humanity till the end of time.

Present Day Ark

Today, humanity is in need of an Ark to save us from the ravages of Modernity. The era of Modernity ushered in by the writings of, for example, Gibbon and Edmund Burke has led to a loss of meaning. With only the lower agitated possibilities of the human condition recognized, Modernity has striven to find meaning. Karl Marx attributed alienation of the soul to class differences in society; Sigmund Freud attributed it to the early repression of the passion-al dimensions of the human condition. When these remedies proved inadequate, meaning was sought in a sea of machines, skepticism and then skepticism about skepticism and later by New Age spirituality (among others). With higher states of the human condition explicitly excluded, Modernity's quest to find meaning and purpose are bound to be frustrated.

Modernity is characterized by a lifestyle that is centered on the self, and on the lower possibilities of the human condition. The message we inhale almost from birth is to glorify the nafs (clay-bound body) in one form or the other. To

“discover oneself”, to “free oneself”, and last but not least to “be yourself” emphasize a self-centric modality of behavior. Our patterns of consumption (for instance: automobiles, clothing, being seen at the “right” places etc.), it appears, define our identity. The result, not surprisingly, is a society which enthusiastically pursues material happiness but which puzzles over ever increasing rates of suicide, drug abuse, failed relationships, and aberrant forms of self-mutilation. Unremarkably, it’s a society in denial, pain.

“... Had you spent all that is upon the earth, you would not have reconciled their hearts, but God has reconciled their hearts ...” [Quran 8:63]

The Prophetic Message and The final Prophet’s (saws) luminosity reshaped the pagan Arabs from a crude materialistic populace to a unified nation - all this in a span of twenty years. This

shows that the Adamic restoration is possible even under the worst of conditions, even in times such as ours. The proverbial ark is with us. With the Quran, the example of the Prophet and thousands of transformed souls to guide us, let us set foot in the Ark - before the rains.

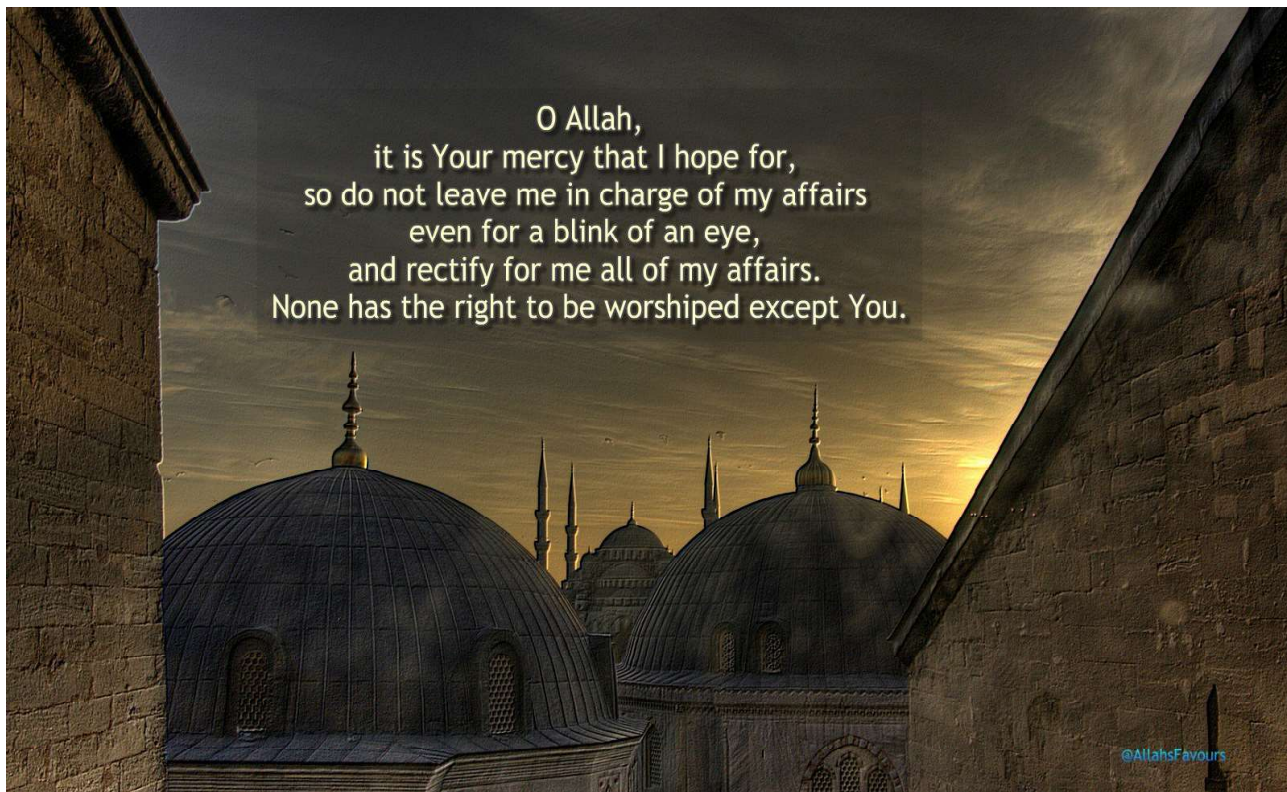
Footnotes:

[1] Whereas God is under no compulsion to be merciful; mercifulness (i.e. to be merciful) is a state that God has prescribed for Himself [“...kataba alihi rahama ...” Quran 6:12]

[2] Piety that generally require acts of the body to perform: Shadah (The Twin Testimonial: No Diety save God and Mohammad is the Messenger of God), Fasting, Zakat, Haj and Prayers

[3] jihad al nafs: The struggle to purify oneself from diseases of the heart (lust for power, honor, and greatness, greed ...)

[4]. Those that rely on intentions, Walk on the Path. Those that rely on love, Fly on the Path.



How Should We Give?

C. Azizah



Allah tells us in His Holy Quran that His last and final Prophet Muhammad (saws) is our role model and the best example, which we should try to emulate as best as we can.

We can find guidance and teachings for basically every matter of our lives in the words and actions of our beloved Prophet Muhammad.

He was the best human being that Allah has created and nobody has excelled and will excel his manners and beautiful behavior. He gave to people even though he himself had less, and his family was left with nothing after he returned to Allah. What can we learn from him?

Give in Good Times

Our beloved Prophet Muhammad (saws) gave to people in charity when he was healthy and alive. He said that one dirham (silver coin) of charity given when one is healthy counts more and is better in the sight of Allah than one hundred dirham given in charity for a dead person.

Many people start giving abundant charity once they are ill or about to die. However, the Prophet (saws) taught us that it is better to give when we are healthy and alive.

The Prophet gave when he had something to give and he even gave in charity when he did not have anything to give.

Once a man came to the Prophet and asked him for charity. The Prophet did not have anything to give to him but the man kept insisting. The Prophet then told the man to go to a shop and buy whatever he needs and tell the shop owner that the debt is upon the Prophet.

See how amazing the Prophet was! He did not think about his own debt or about filling his own stomach but he thought of a way how he could help this man who asked charity from him.

What can we learn from that incident?

Even if we have little, we should try to give. Don't wait for better times to come. If we are alive and healthy, it is the best time to give in charity.

How Should We Give?

There are different sayings from the Prophet Muhammad (saws) that tell us that whenever somebody comes to us and asks for charity, we should give to him.

We should try to give that person even if it is something that seems of little value.

And it is extremely important that we give our charity in the best of manners. Actually, we should try to understand that Allah has sent that person to us. And we need to understand that the person who asks charity from us has a

right to some of our wealth.

However, it is not only the person who asks charity from us who has a right over some of our wealth but also the person who does not ask us (Quran 51:19 and Quran 70:25).

We have to go and look and search for those who need our charity and help. We have to give in the most beautiful way and without shaming them or looking down on them.

Giving to Those Close to You

When giving charity, many of us forget the people close to us. However, our needy family members, neighbors, friends or colleagues are those who should be given priority.

Our Prophet Muhammad (saws) said that when we give to the poor, we give charity only; but when we give to our family members, we give charity and we also keep family ties.

To keep family ties is extremely important in Islam. We should be kind and friendly to our close and far relatives.

For example, if our uncle needs help to pay for his children's school and food, we should give to him first because he belongs to our family. If our parents need financial assistance, then we should try and relieve their burden first before sending money to a NGO.

Giving in Charity Spreads Happiness and Keeps Calamities Away

Giving charity with the intention of helping other people, or because we want to relieve a small part of their heavy burden, or because we want to make them happy in hard times is immensely rewarding.

We do it for those who receive our charity as much as we do it for ourselves. Giving makes us feel good. So, whenever we feel a bit down or even depressed, we should try to make someone else happy. This will surely cheer us up, inshaAllah.

Giving charity also keeps calamities away from us. Maybe because a person is regular

in giving charity, Allah will keep thieves away from his house or will keep him in good health.

Maybe because another person regularly feeds poor people, Allah will keep away discord from his family.

Giving to people who have less than us will never diminish our wealth and our provision. On the contrary, it will only bring good and blessings in our life and the life of our family.

So, let's try to give more!

Many times our beloved Prophet Muhammad (saws) mentioned the virtue of giving charity in connection with being freed from the fire of hell and the punishment from Allah for our sins.

Giving charity can wipe away our bad deeds and can protect us from a bad death.

“It is better to sit alone than in company with the bad; and it is better still to sit with the good than alone. It is better to speak to a seeker of knowledge than to remain silent; but silence is better than idle words.”

(Bukhari)

Muhammad Ibn Musa Al-Khwarizmi

Prominents in History

Khalid El Jafoufi

Mathematics is an exact science that is commonly defined as 'the way to study patterns and structures'. The verb 'to cipher' for example comes from the Arabic 'sifr' that translates to 'zero' or 'empty'. The figures ten and the number zero in particular have Arab roots. Many Muslim scholars have built the foundations of mathematical systems that have demonstrated the great usefulness of these figures.

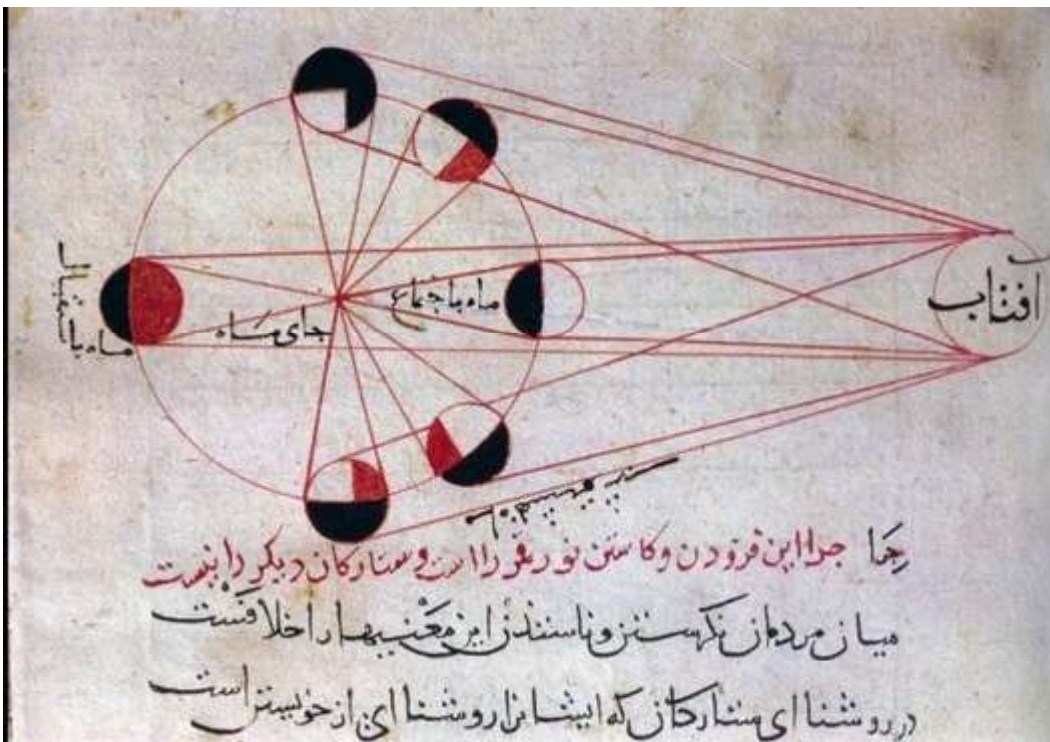
Almost every Muslim scientist has devoted a

part of his time to mathematical research. After all, it was the way to provide insight and tools to move on to another scientific field.

Al-Khwarizmi – for many this name will not ring a bell – is without a doubt one of the most prominent mathematicians in history. Al-Khwarizmi was an Arab mathematician who lived from about 780 till 850. His name refers to his birthplace 'Khwarizm'. Currently it is known as 'Khiva', a city in Uzbekistan on the border with

Turkmenistan. Sadly, only limited information is available about his social life.

He worked in the 'House of Wisdom', which was founded in the city of Baghdad by the Muslim caliph al-Mamun. His work mainly consisted of translating scientific manuscripts of the ancient Greeks,



Hebrews and Romans from the Byzantine Empire into Arabic. Furthermore Al-Khwarizmi primarily specialised in astronomy and mathematics.

On the European continent, Al-Khwarizmi's name was assimilated to 'Algorismi' from which the name of 'algorithm' was derived. Algorithms later became useful in the creation of computer software. Computers require algorithms to count in the binary system. Today, we can no longer imagine a world without computers. Al-Khwarizmi has had a significant share in this technological ingenuity from which our digital society profits today.

Al-Khwarizmi's contributions

Al-Khwarizmi's contributions to mathematics, geography, astronomy and cartography established the basis for innovation in algebra and trigonometry. Since these contributions are too numerous to cover them completely here, I am forced to refer in general terms to some of his most famous books.

He wrote a book about algorithms titled 'Kitab Al-Jam wal-tafriq bi hisab al-hind' of which – because of the book burning during the Mongol invasion – only a Latin translation is left, namely; 'Algoritmi de numero indorum'.

In this book he describes the position system from the Hindus based on symbols for the numbers 1 until 9, and also for the number 0. The first use of the number 0 in the position system is possibly a contribution from al-Khwarizmi himself.

He also wrote a geography book called 'Kitab surat al-ard', which has been translated into French to 'Configuration de la Terre', or today simply known as 'geography'. In this book he discusses and calculates the longitude and latitude of about 2400 sites to form the basis for a world map. In this scientific discipline he improved the famous work of Ptolemy. The maps of Al-Khwarizmi however were much more accurate than those of Ptolemy, so much that they

are even the ones most consistent with the world map which we use today.

The contributions of Al-Khwarizmi to trigonometry are shown in detail in his book 'Zij al-Sindhind'. In this book there are listings of trigonometric tables for the 'Sind' and the 'Hind', better known as 'Sinus' and 'Cosinus' which now form the basis of almost all trigonometric formulas. In this book he uses trigonometric astronomical tables made to interpret the movement of the sun, the moon and the then-known planets (Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn).

Al-Khwarizmi's Algebra

The most famous of his writings, however, is 'Hisab al-jabr w'al muqabala'. Al-Jabr means 'restoration' and the West took this term as 'al-gabr' from which the word 'algebra' is derived. It is in fact the first book on algebra.

In this book Al-Khwarizmi demonstrated how to apply arithmetical methods in order to simplify everyday matters such as inheritance, the measuring of farmlands, trading, the digging of canals, geometrical calculations and so on.

Doing this he soon came to what we call 'quadratic equations'. Much of his book is devoted to solving such complex equations. The word 'al-jabr' literally means 'the bringing together of broken bones' and is on its turn derived from the verb 'djabara' which means 'to reunite'. The etymological meaning of algebra hence illustrates the underlying purpose of this field, namely the solution of linear and quadratic equations with only one unknown factor, and the solving of 'brackets' observing 'the order of operations'.

The complicated part of his extensive book is that he defines everything with words while he hardly ever uses symbols for his variables, which makes his book very difficult to read for mathematicians nowadays. However, this has everything to do with the fact that there was no "scientific language" at hand yet. To support his evidence, he used geometrical methods to help his readers form a mental imagine.

From Edge of Despair to Glory in Islam

Aesha L. al-Saeed

A personal account of an American woman's quest for the truth which led her from the evangelical Christian faith of her forefathers to the light of Islam

One day when I was six years old, my parents gave me a shiny quarter, as they did every Sunday morning and told me to put it in the collection plate for church 'to give it to Jesus for his work.'

When I returned, however, the quarter was still in my purse. I was frank in explaining that I hadn't given my money for Jesus because 'he was absent.'

My parents were more amused than concerned, probably thinking that my genes would prevail, having descended from a family with three Christian ministers as my grandparents.

I attended an Episcopal private school where we studied world religions during my last year of elementary school. I was intrigued with my father's Swedenborgian faith for a time, as it injected an element of mysticism into his essays on faith, however, the trinity was a point of contention for me, as I felt it wasn't logical. How could one father (The Great Spirit), plus what was called 'His Son' (Jesus), and one Holy Ghost (who I now understand to be Angel Gabriel) all be together as one, inside one being?

It was logically impossible, and I had been raised to use rational thought to make decisions in my life, I knew I couldn't accept the creed of three equaling one.

I continued reading the Bible every Sunday with my father after dinner, looking for answers and enjoying stories of historical prophets, at the same time not feeling totally satisfied. I was told I should not question but simply believe in good faith. However I never was one for blind following, and I needed to feel the proof on my own.

In high school, I met some students from the Middle East who were Muslims. Noticing my inner dissatisfaction, one asked if I had ever read about Islam, and suggested that I make use of our school library to discover more information about it. I was elated to discover that there was even a copy of Qur'an which I checked out to borrow.

When I brought some books home, my grandfather encouraged me to learn, and reassured my family that Islam contained a good moral code of living.

He himself had immigrated to in 1913 when he was a boy from a Russian province next to Turkey on the Black Sea, and remembered hearing the call to prayer, and that some of our relatives had Arabic-Muslim names, such as Maryam and Sophia.

The more I read, the more my understanding and excitement grew. I found the answers to all my questions, and more! Everyday I looked forward to reading more, and my discoveries enlightened me. Islam was clear, logical, with explanations and guidance for every aspect of

worship and human relations.

At the age of 17, I began regular salah (prayer) and completed my first Ramadan fast. If I went to the park, or out with friends, I would stash a bag of dates (if I had them), a bottle of water, and maybe a sandwich or can of food, and break my fast wherever I was at that moments. My non-Muslim friends would good naturedly remind me of the sun's setting so I could break my fast.

That summer I took the train for two days to Bloomington, Indiana to attend the Muslim Students Association's lectures and seminars to learn more about my new faith.

I stayed on campus with other Muslims for a week, and my faith blossomed. I returned home with a prayer rug, prayer beads, books, and several scarves, although unfortunately I did not have the courage to continue wearing the scarves once I left.

I attended Portland State University, with a major in teaching English as a second language, and a minor in Middle Eastern studies. I hoped to go to Saudi Arabia to work, visit Makkah and Madina and perform Haj.

In my last year of study, I began to push myself too hard, too fast. I began to doubt I would realize my goals, and became depressed. Trying to compete with my friends in graduating early, I did myself a disservice by overloading myself with extra classes which resulted in my having a nervous breakdown.

As I stood one evening overlooking beautiful lights of the city from a high rise building, I thought how easy it would be to just step off into the air and end it all.

However, suicide in Islam was a big sin (I didn't know that at the time), but I knew how it would deeply hurt my close relatives and friends if I 'took the easy way out.' Besides, I reasoned with myself, there's still that tiny chance that Merciful Allah might let me get to Makkah after all, so why not wait to find out?

Indeed, Allah works on His own timetable,

and everything has a plan if it is good for us.

Advised to make a fresh start, I moved to Houston, Texas to seek employment, instead of study. I thought if I could start out on my own in a strange city, I could certainly later get the courage to go to the Middle East. I hoped that my three years of Arabic studies would help me find a job in ARAMCO or one of the other major companies in Texas.

After arriving in Houston now wearing hijab, I searched for the mosque in the telephone directory and asked there if I could find a Muslim girl to be my roommate. Allah was generous, and one welcomed me into the community as a sister. I soon after found work and my confidence grew.

One evening, at an International costume party, I met a polite gentleman who I later found to be an intelligent Saudi student. We married shortly thereafter, and through him God has let my dreams come true. We have three lovely children, and he has taken me on Haj.

I am content and satisfied and greatly thankful to the Almighty God, who certainly answers earnest Dua'a (supplications) if it is good for us. If we are patient, and have Iman (faith), Allah does help us even in ways we don't expect.

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And if you are inclined to declare your own willingness to accept some responsibility for addressing these violent and dysfunctional behaviours, you might like to sign the on-line pledge of 'The People's Charter to Create a Nonviolent World' and to join those participating in 'The Flame Tree Project to Save Life on Earth.'<http://tinyurl.com/flametree>

You might have had a good laugh at some of the examples above. The real challenge is to ask yourself this question: where do I evade responsibility? And to then ponder how you will take responsibility in future.

[Courtesy: Global Research]

It is in the heart not in the money

SADULLAH KHAN

The way people relate to wealth influences most aspects of their personal lives. For many people, where there is wealth there is attention.

If you became wealthy overnight...

What will the first thing you would do?

Is charity one of your primary focuses?

How much more charity will you give? ... and what is your proof?

Biblical text encourages each person to give in proportion to the way God has blessed them [Deuteronomy 16:17] Many believe that the more they have, the more generous they'll become; but is that really the case. To become more generous, you have to have a spirit of generosity in the first place.

It's Not really about the Money, It's actually about the Heart

Real generosity is not dependant so much on income as it is on the capacity of the heart. There are many who have the means to give, but not the heart to give. And there are many, who, the more they have the less they give. Henry Ward Beecher warned; "watch, lest prosperity destroy generosity".

Father, Unlike Son

In the 1950s J.P. Getty was the richest man in world. He is known to have disliked the attention his wealth brought, but not because of

his humility but because of people's request for donations, he "despised passive acceptance of money"; had a pay-phone installed in his house for guests; delayed ransom for his grandson's kidnapping for 6 months and only paid a fraction of the ransom after his grandson's ear was cut off and sent to him.

J.P. Getty Jr. inherited relatively a small part of his father's estate yet gave millions in charity saying, "I am privileged to be the heir to huge wealth and I regard myself as custodian of that money for the benefit of people who need it more than I do."

Even when you do give of your material wealth, do not give merely from the top of your wallet, but rather give from the bottom of your heart. Also, it is not material help only. Whatever one can do to enhance the situation of others is considered generosity. Prophet Muhammad said; "There is charity due on every part of the body every day." He went on to say: "to bring justice between people is charity, to help a person with transport and helping with baggage is charity, a good, kind word is charity, every step towards prayer is charity, removing harmful things from the way is charity and giving water to the thirsty is charity. A person's true wealth lies in the good they accrue for the Hereafter through good deeds in this world. When a person dies people say 'what has he left behind?'

while angels say ‘what has he sent forth?’ “

To give of your self is the best kind of giving. Prophet Muhammad said: “When you give of yourself then you truly are a Believer”.

The great Lebanese poet and writer Khalil Gibran echoed the same sentiments when he said: “You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give.”

So, if you genuinely desire to become a generous person, don’t wait for your income to change; change the attitude of your heart.

Stinginess

As for those who are stingy due to fear that generosity will deplete their wealth, Prophet Muhammad said: A person says, “ ‘this is my wealth, my things’ but all that he really has is three; What he consumes and digests, what he wears and wears out, or what he gives in charity and it continues to benefit; The rest you leave behind when you depart from this world.”

Martin Luther King Jr. said: “Every person must decide whether he will walk in the light of creative altruism or in the darkness of destructive selfishness.”

Note that the stingy person is far from people, far from Allah, far from paradise and closer to the fire of Hell. (Prophet Muhammad)

Positive Aspects of Giving

The Company of the generous is delightful. The generous focus on other than themselves, and their generosity not only makes them likeable but also makes the world a happier and better place.

Life should not really be about how much money we accrue, but rather how many people we serve; because the greater your giving, the greater your living. Giving does not devalue your worth and the Prophet said that “charity does not decrease wealth”. Remember, we are here to enrich the world, and if we ever forget that we impoverish ourselves.

In helping others we enhance ourselves, for

when you light another’s path you can’t help but cast light on your own path. Realize that no one stands taller in success than the one who bends down to help those in need. We become enriched by enriching the lives of others. The Prophet said that a Believer feels good doing good. So do not do good merely to feel good, but rather feel good doing good.

In a humorous incident, a beggar asked a woman for money and she said; “I’ll give you a dollar, not because you deserve it but because it pleases me”. So the beggar said; “Thanks Maam, why don’t you give me \$100 and you could feel really, really good about it.”

By living a life that is helpful, one’s life becomes significant. “Life’s most persistent and urgent question is ... What are we doing for others?” (civil rights leader, Martin Luther King Jr.) How we answer that question is in a way a good measure of our spirit of generosity.

Spirit of Generosity

Characteristic of a true Believer: When asked about the characteristics of a Believer, Imam Zainul ‘Abideen said: “Righteousness in privacy, generosity even when needy, patience during misfortunes, sense of control when angry and truthfulness even when fearful.”

Kindness: Giving requires compassion, mercy, and love. Each person should give what he has decided in his heart to give; not reluctantly nor under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. [2 Corinthians 9:7]

Selflessness: Eventually, what we do for ourselves alone dies with us, but what we do for others outlives us. Wise are the words that reminds us:

He who lives for himself, lives small, and dies small and will be forgotten,

And he who lives for others, lives big, and dies big and will be remembered

Our function in life is not merely to have and to hold, but to give and to serve, to get and not to forget. “The service we render to others

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How can We not Love God

D. Nassar

“The heart will not find complete happiness except by loving God and by striving towards what is dear to Him.”

We face constant opportunities to compare and seek validation from others.

Whether scrolling through a social media site or talking with a group of friends, we see what the world considers success and fight the innate desire to see how we measure up.

As we ascertain how we measure up in the world’s opinion, there’s a risk of forgetting that what is more significant is our personal relationship with God. It is this that should determine our sense of success and self-worth.

It is God’s opinion of us that should matter most, and by centering our lives on God and His plan for us, we, as Muslims, will definitely feel a greater sense of accomplishment in our daily lives. Believe it or not, it is much easier to measure up to God’s measure of success than to that of His creations.

Maybe we already think we know God but the way we know Him isn’t working for us. We’re not enjoying the relationship, but why?

Here’s the real secret, we can fulfill the commands of the Quran which orders us to obey God better by falling in love with God than by

trying to obey everything.

Islam even teaches us that the first thing the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), said to the people of Madinah was:

O people! Love God with all of your hearts for what He has given you from blessings.

Seriously, how can we not love God?

If we try to think of all the reasons why we love other people or things, and then of course (on a different parallel) apply it to God, we should see that truly it is Him that deserves our love, and since we are created to be naturally inclined to love, it is only the love of God that can satisfy this need.

All this boils down to an insight shared by scholar Ibn Taymiyyah who relayed that:

“The heart will not find complete happiness except by loving God and by striving towards what is dear to Him.”

It is clear that God wants all that person is and has to give. He commands us to love Him with everything we are, with every ounce of our being.

Feelings cannot be commanded, so it must be understood that love is not a feeling or an emotion. Love is a decision. For us as believers,

God wants us to decide to love Him in all that we do, for all of our lives.

To Love is to Obey

To love God is to obey His word. He is greatly delighted when we obey because He knows that only then will we be the most blessed. He does not want us to act religious and just go through the motions. And He knows all and sees through that kind of hypocrisy. He wants heart, soul, mind and strength.

It's not that our obedience to God isn't significant or relevant; it's simply not the center of the wheel. More so, the hub of our lives is our relationship with God.

Our behavior and obedience radiate like spokes from the center of our lives and allow us to roll forward.

When we put our external behavior as the turning point, we get stuck. As mentioned earlier, the forward motion must be fueled by the love for God.

Sometimes (I know I fall into the group), we are trying to be good people by doing godly things, reading the Quran, praying and serving those in need.

But we're sometimes doing it out of a sense of religious duty and obligation, not because we're in love with God and want to know Him and offer up our lives to Him. This results in us wondering why our spiritual lives are so dry. Aren't we doing everything a good practicing Muslim should do?

To Love is to Know

To love God we need to get to know Him, and this is like any other relation can only be done through communication, by prayer and supplication. When we call someone on the phone, we generally ask to speak to them by name. It's the same with prayer.

During this life, we praise Him and thank Him for the blessings in our life. We have much

to be grateful for in our lives: family, friends, homes, our gifts and talents.

Showing gratitude and respect to God helps us be humble and willing to submit to His Will for us rather than focusing on our own wants.

The Quran reads:

Say, O Muhammad, "If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger and struggle in His cause, then wait until Allah executes His command. And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people. (9:24)

Remember, God's commands are always in our best interest, as we are His creations. God is love and God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. His ways are always the best, designed for maximum benefits and blessings in abundance for His creations.

By getting to know God, and not just including Him but making Him a priority into our life, we allow Him to help us reach our full potential.

He will guide us through the dark even if at times we feel that dark concept is a difficult one for us we should never discard it, simply because we don't understand it. There is so much out there that we don't understand.

Amongst the things to aspire to when striving for tranquility of the heart, loving God above all else is the greatest. When we direct our love and our emotions towards Him everything else follows. Our actions follow because they reflect what is in our heart.

It is liberating because our love is directed at the source of all our blessings, not merely the means. We see everything as coming from God and because we love Him and think well of Him, we know that everything is for a purpose

Hajj and Globalization

Sahar al-Nadi

More than 2m Muslims are currently gathering in Makkah ahead of the annual Hajj, which begins on August 19. As long as they are fit and financially able, the pilgrimage is an obligatory act of worship that followers of Islam owe to God once in their lifetime. Reenacting the faith-testing ordeals of Ibrahim (Abraham, the Biblical founder of monotheism) and his family, Muslims believe that an “accepted Hajj” will cleanse them of all their sins. Their hope is to return home as pure as the day they were born.

But until the introduction of modern transport systems, most Muslims beyond the Arab world had little expectation of completing this fifth and final pillar of Islam. Before the mid-1950s, the number of overseas pilgrims rarely exceeded 100,000 and modern Saudi institutions were still developing. Yet by the early 2000s, the total number of Hajj pilgrims had passed the 2m mark, reaching a recent peak of just over 3m in 2012.

Malcolm X and the Transforming Power of Hajj

New opportunities for pilgrimage in the jet age have put immense pressure on the infrastructure of Makkah. Hundreds have lost their

lives during periodic disasters including fires and stampedes, most recently in 2015. Undoubtedly, the Saudi authorities have invested huge sums in continually seeking to improve facilities and the overall management of the Hajj. Hajj organisers and guides I have interviewed compare overseeing the pilgrimage to hosting the Olympics every year.

But the kingdom’s Vision 2030, published by Crown Prince Salman in 2016, underlines that the Islamic tourism market has a significant role to play in diversifying Saudi Arabia’s non-oil-based economy. While the strategy is focused mainly on the Umrah (the year-round, non-obligatory minor pilgrimage), US\$50 billion investment in new transport and other infrastructure also aims to double the size of the Hajj by the end of the next decade.

An artist’s personal take on the more formal views of Makkah and Madinah which typically grace British-Muslim front rooms. Kamel Baksh, 2015., CC BY-NC-ND

Supply and demand

A look at Hajj-going among British Muslims in an age of globalisation underlines the growing role of the market for religious tourism in shaping the organisation of the pil-

grimage. At an industry event I attended earlier this year, The Council of British Hajjis, suggested that this niche sector of the UK economy is worth around £150m (£310m including Umrah).

Unlike all Muslim-majority nations, Muslim minorities in the West are not restricted to a Hajj quota of 1,000 pilgrims per million of population. Relatively prosperous, literate and increasingly socially mobile, they are generally free to perform the pilgrimage at a time of their choosing. Pilgrims in the West are also often younger than those in the rest of the Muslim world. The number of British Muslims performing Hajj each year rose from 759 in 1968 to around 25,000 by the mid-2000s – about twice the rate of UK Muslim population growth for the same period. About 100,000 now go annually for Umrah.

El-Sawy Travel was perhaps the first agency to organise a formal Hajj ‘package’ during the early 1980s. Seán McLoughlin, 2014, CC BY

In the West, secular governments play no direct role in organising Hajj. Until the 1990s, there were also just a few companies formally arranging Muslim pilgrimages in Britain. So, most UK Muslims travelled to Saudi Arabia as individuals or as part of a small community group. But during the early 2000s, in a bid to improve services to pilgrims, the Saudi authorities insisted that anyone organising Hajj should form a registered company and be properly licensed. By the mid-2000s, they also made buying a “package” from one of these organisers the only way for Muslims in the West to perform Hajj.

Rising prices

Today there are around 117 UK Hajj organisers licensed by Saudi Arabia. Each is responsible for their own annual quota of 150-450 Hajj pilgrim visas. British Muslims now have plenty of choice in terms of package op-

tions. But UK pilgrims wanting to perform Hajj in 2018 probably spent as much as £5-6,000 on their package. At an industry event last spring, I was told that a top company selling half their packages for £9,500 per person sold out in six weeks. Even an “economy” Hajj this year cost more than £4,000. Overall, the cost of Hajj-going has increased by around 25% in recent years.

Pilgrims must circumambulate the Ka’ba anticlockwise seven times (tawaf). Peter Sanders, mid-1990s, CC BY-NC-ND

Long-established pilgrim welfare charities such as the Association of British Hujjaj (established 1998) complain that high prices reflect UK organisers’ profiteering. But the bigger picture is that the restructured Hajj industry in Saudi Arabia is increasingly privatised and commercialised. The 2-3m Muslims arriving to the city of Makkah for one key week in the calendar create a huge demand for travel, accommodation and other services. And for all its investments in pilgrimage infrastructure, the Saudi government does not control the pricing of flights, rents and so on. Certain local subsidies are being reduced and Saudi VAT and municipality taxes have increased recently, too.

Members of the UK’s newly formed Licensed Hajj Organisers national trade association (established 2016) are in a risky business. In the tourism industry, payments are usually made in arrears, but UK Hajj organisers often make large down payments before packages are even sold. And because they lack the bargaining power of large Muslim governments, Hajj organisers in the West can pay a premium for some services. Political and economic instability, such as wars in the Middle East and the negative impact of Brexit on the pound, also affect pricing.

Regulation and the future

The new leadership of Licensed Hajj Organisers are keenly aware of the complex is-

sues faced by the Hajj and Umrah industry. Few UK Hajj organisers can sell their entire quota without maintaining relationships with networks of sub-agents. Spot checks for “Hajj fraud” by Trading Standards suggest that long selling chains and a lack of proper documentation can encourage “over-selling” and even criminal scams.

Modern Challenges to the Spirit of Hajj

That there is a new willingness in the trade to hold fellow organisers to account in this regard is clear from a new code of conduct launched by Licensed Hajj Organisers before Hajj this year. At the same time, many Hajj organisers still argue that the European Package Travel Regulations, intended to regulate “package holidays”, cannot account for the logistical and business complexities of Hajj.

Transformations in the organisation of Hajj-going in Britain represent only a local case study of challenges the Hajj and Umrah industry is facing worldwide. Piety and commerce have always existed cheek-by-jowl in Makkah. But the development of a consumer-capitalist model of religious tourism on the scale envisaged by Saudi Arabia is unprecedented. Great chains of buying and selling as well as believing now connect Muslims to the birthplace of Islam. But there are major issues to resolve across quite different regimes of regulation. For some, this suggests a need for greater international governance of the Hajj and Umrah.

Cont'd from page 9

whom they took to be lowly, reached stations unimaginable and won signal honour and recognition both in this world and in the Akhirah, just because they chose to follow the Messenger of Allah. Then, let them go about saying: Were these poor people the only ones to deserve honours and rewards from Allah and to have been so blessed at the expense of us, the noble ones?

According to Kashshaf and other classic commentaries, this saying of theirs is an outcome of their trial taken through poor and weak Muslims. They failed in this test. Rather than ponder over this great demonstration of Allah's absolute power and conclude therefrom that nobility does not depend on wealth or power, instead, it does on morals and deeds - they started blaming Allah for giving them the honour while they were the ones deserving of it. In answer, Allah once again pointed out to the reality behind it by saying: (Is it not that Allah knows the grateful best?) It means that Allah knows best as to who has the taste for truth and aptitude for gratitude. In other words, in the real sense, a person of nobility and honour is he who recognizes the right of his Benefactor and is grateful to Him, and it is he who is deserving of all reward and honour - and definitely not the one who, day in and day out, despite being soaked with the blessings of his Provider and Benefactor, goes on disobeying Him.

Cont'd from page 26

‘Yes, that is right. No Muslim is afflicted with any hurt, even if it is no more than the pricking of a thorn, but Allah wipes off his sins because of it and his sins fall away from him as leaves fall from a tree.’

Abu Hurairah said: “The Noble Prophet (saws) remarked:

“The example of a believer is like a fresh tender plant; from whichever direction the wind blows, it bends the plant. But when the wind dies down, it straightens up again. (Similarly a believer is tested by afflictions to strengthen his faith and heart, and he remains patient and firm). And an evil person is like a pine tree which remains hard and stiff until Allah breaks it whenever He wills.” (Fiqh-us-Sunnah, volume 4, 1)

Islam and Consumerism

Muhammad Hakeem

Consumerism is spreading like a plague in today's culture. People are transformed into tireless shopping machines whose lifestyles are centered on malls, sales, and new offers. In the words of Tyler Durden, from Fight Club, the movie:

"We're consumers. We are by-products of a lifestyle obsession. Murder, crime, poverty, these things don't concern me. What concerns me are celebrity magazines, television with 500 channels, some guy's name on my underwear".

In the pre-Islamic era, also known as Jahiliyyah (period of ignorance), the Arabs were known for worshipping multiple idols, magnifying their dads and forefathers, adopting all their belief system, in addition to tribalism, racism and sexism. The Qur'an and the message of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) were revealed not only to solve those problems but also to provide guidance that fits all problems of humanity.

Nowadays, we are experiencing a newer version of Jahiliyyah that is centered on celebrities dictating our lifestyles (replacing idols and the forefathers), using women as sex-objects in advertising (which might not be so different from burying them alive), and the most important ritual that takes place at the temple of consumerism (malls): Shopping!

The H&H Perspective (Halal /Haram)

I know that many people expect answers about every single matter from an H&H (Halal and Haram) paradigm. If you are one of them then you may not want to continue reading this article because you will not find what you are looking for.

Instead, we will try to examine the etiquette of spending and dealing with money in Islam, and hence will leave the H/H answer up to you, based on YOUR understanding of YOUR situation.

BEWARE from Omar's Stick

Jaber ibn `Abdillah narrates that `Umar ibn Khattab saw some meat in his hand. `Umar immediately asked: "what is this, Jaber?"

Jaber replied: I was craving for meat, so I managed to buy some. (It looks like meat was such a luxury item at that time, something we don't think about these days).

Umar said: So are you going to buy whenever you crave for something, Jaber? Don't you fear that the following verse might apply to you:

{And the Day those who disbelieved are exposed to the Fire [it will be said], "You exhausted your pleasures during your worldly life and enjoyed them ..."} (Al-Ahqaf 46:20)



While some people will counter this argument by quoting the hadith:

“Allah loves to see the traces of His blessings on His slave” (Tirmidhi)

It is interesting to note another narration of this hadith, which is preceded by the following:

“Enjoy eating and drinking without excessive spending and showing off, because Allah loves to see the traces of His blessings on His slave” (Narrated in Al-Mustadrak)

Keeping up with the Joneses

This is a well-known idiom in many parts of the English-speaking hemisphere, which refers to always comparing what you have (house, car, backyard, clothes, etc...) with what your neighbors, the Jones, own.

After starting as a comic strip holding the same name in 1913, this slogan redefined one of the pillars of modern consumerism: shopping and spending to show off and to compete with others, regardless of whether you need the goods or even if you can afford them in the first place.

In the age of social media and satellite channels, the Jones need not to be your next door neighbors, they might be a random family living on the other part of the world. They are definitely not happy with what they have (if they really own it) and are trying to compete with their own version (or perception) of the Jones family, and this infinite loop continues endlessly.

No one can claim that the modern capitalism invented envy, which is a trait that existed in human beings since their creation, since the

famous story of Habel and Qabeel (Abel and Cain) (Al-Ma'idah 5:27-31).

In addition, greed was built into the creation of Adam himself (Ta-Ha 20:120). However, there is a big difference between having a negative trait that you recognize and try to cure and fight, and having this trait control your life, dictate the way you identify yourself and you look to others.

Therefore, "Keeping up with the Joneses" defines a culture of consumerism. The consumerism culture is becoming like a fire that is continuously ignited by the fuels of greed and envy.

Rich man with one garment

An interesting long story is narrated in Sahih Al-Bukhari about Ka'b ibn Malik, a rich companion who did not join the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) during the expedition of Tabuk. To make a long story short, he was boycotted by the Muslims for fifty days, and no one was allowed to talk to him until further instructions are revealed from Allah in his matter.

After this lengthy period of living alienated from the Muslim society, Allah accepted the repentance of Ka'b (At-Tawbah 9:118) and the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him)

informed the Muslims about the happy news. Now listen to Ka'b himself, narrating how he got the good news:

While I was praying Fajr that morning on the rooftop of my house, I heard a man shouting on the top of Mount Sil': 'O Ka'b ibn Malik, rejoice!'

I fell prostrate, and I knew that relief had come.

The Prophet had announced my forgiveness during Fajr. A man came riding on a horse to bring me the news, but the voice of the other man on the mount has reached me first. So when I saw that man I gave him my garment as a way to thank him, and I had only one garment. So I borrowed an outfit and rushed to meet the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him)

While this story has lots of benefits and wisdom to learn from, it sheds the light on one important aspect in the life of the Companions, particularly the rich ones: They did not have a closet full of clothes and had to stand up next to it for half an hour to decide what to wear! Ka'b was known to be rich, and you may refer to the early part of this long story in Sahih Al-Bukhari for more information.

However, it was a well-known practice for them not to buy clothes more than their need (because of their proper understanding of Islam).

We really have to reframe our mindsets on how we define our needs, our budget, and our spending, if we want to achieve something in this world or in the afterlife.

{And do not make your hand [as] chained to your neck nor extend it completely and [thereby] become blamed and insolvent.} (Al-Israa' 17:29)



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