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RADIANT REALITY

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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.

Let us all follow him with utmost spirit.

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Question

Answer



Question.

My wife cannot wash her head during Ghusl. If she washes her head, she will have a migraine headache. What does she do?

Answer.

It is compulsory to wash the entire head during Ghusl for males and females. However, if the washing of the head during Ghusl is detrimental to the health of a female or there is fear of aggravating her illness, then it will be permissible for a female to make Masah of the head instead.

Note: If there is NO detriment to health or aggravation to illness, it will be compulsory to wash the entire head. In such a case, making Masah will not suffice. (Masaail Rifaat Qaasimi 1/144/145)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

We were about to perform salaah in a strange place when we noticed some people saying their prayers in a certain direction and assumed that they were facing qiblah, and we also faced the same direction. is it fine?

Answer.

In the enquired case, it was necessary for you to try your level best to determine the Qiblah direction before performing Salaah. It was

incorrect for you to follow a group of people assuming that they were performing Salaah in the right Qiblah direction.

If you had tried your level best to determine the Qiblah direction before performing Salaah and you later discovered that the Qiblah direction was incorrect, your Salaah will be valid.

However, if you did not try your level best in determining the Qiblah direction before performing Salaah and later discovered that the Qiblah direction was incorrect, your Salaah will be invalid and will have to be repeated.

In either case, if the Qiblah direction turned out to be correct, your Salaah will be valid and will not have to be repeated. (Shaami 1/433)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Wagyu is a breed of cattle that originated in Japan. As part of their daily diet, Wagyu cattle are fed beer to stimulate their appetite. Is Wagyu beef halaal to eat if it is slaughtered in a halaal way?

Answer.

As a general principle, it is not permissible to feed haraam substances to an animal. If haraam substances, like wine etc. forms part of the main diet of a halaal animal and thereafter,

it had been slaughtered in a halaal way, it will be impermissible to consume the meat of such an animal. The main diet of the halaal animal will have to be altered or changed a few days before it is slaughtered in order for it to be halaal for consumption.

In the enquired case, the same would apply to Wagyu beef.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

In the old days, the men would divorce their wives before they passed away. Upon their deaths, the divorced wives would not receive anything from the dead husband's estate. They would say that the husband divorced her before he passed away and that is why she does not inherit. Was this correct?

Answer.

If a husband has issued a Talaq-e-Rajee (revocable divorce) to his wife and he passes away during her Iddah period, the divorced wife will be entitled to inherit a wife's share from the deceased husband's estate. In this case, if the divorced wife's Iddah period terminates, she will not be entitled to inherit from the deceased husband's estate.

On the other hand, if a husband issued a Talaq-e-Baain (irrevocable divorce) to his wife and he passes away during her Iddah period, the divorced wife will not be entitled to inherit from the deceased husband's estate, before or after the termination of her Iddah period.

In either of the above cases, (whether the husband issued a revocable or irrevocable divorce) and the husband passed away during her Iddah period due to suffering from a terminal illness, for e.g. cancer from which he was housebound and he had never recovered, the divorced wife will be entitled to inherit a wife's shares from the deceased husband's estate. (Tabyeenu Haqaaq 2/245/246)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

I would like confirmation regarding wills. Is it Farz to have my will done according to Islam? I am currently single and not married and if I die before marrying, as per Shariah, my siblings shall inherit in my estate. I am not 100% comfortable with this, as my brothers have not played any role in my life. The roles they played were minimal. For me to think that my estate will be distributed amongst them is a bitter pill to swallow. Is it a sin if I chose to distribute my estate among my nieces and nephews or to a Masjid or to an orphanage?

Answer.

To ensure that an Islamic distribution takes place after one's demise, it becomes incumbent (Waajib) on a Muslim to sign an Islamic Will and make Shariah Compliant Estate Planning decisions as the failure to do, will result in an un-Islamic distribution.

During one's lifetime, one has the full option of gifting to whomsoever he/she wishes. A gift given during one's lifetime will not form part of one's estate and will belong to the person to whom it had been given. However, it is not permissible to do so in a manner and with the explicit intention and pretext of depriving one's heirs after one's demise. In such a case, whilst such a gift may be valid, one will be sinful.

Nevertheless, if you wish to gift or give in charity during your lifetime without an explicit intention or pretext of depriving any of your heirs, it will be permissible.

*Mufti Ismaeel
Question.*

I am working for a company and the company I work for has taken out an insurance policy for me. They are paying for it and I am not paying for it at all. Will the pay-out be permissible for my beneficiaries? Will it be Halaal?

Answer. In the enquired case, it will be permissible for your beneficiaries to benefit and utilize the proceeds of the Insurance Policy.

This is based on the fact that as an employee, you did not enact or contribute towards the Insurance Policy in any way. It was solely taken out and funded by your company.

Hence, the proceeds of the Insurance Policy to your beneficiaries will be regarded as a gift to your beneficiaries, and therefore Halaal and permissible.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

My friends invited me to a Halloween event recently. It is called Scream fest. You enter a series of Mazes and Scary people pop out and scare you. Although, I will not actually be celebrating Halloween, it is Halloween related. It is not a party so alhamdulillah there will be no alcohol consumed. Is it forbidden for me to go to this event because it is Halloween related, or is it permissible, as I believe I am not actually celebrating Halloween.

Answer.

It is not permissible to attend a Scream-fest event. Two reasons for this prohibition are:

1. It is linked to Halloween which is an event tracing its roots to paganism, satanism and demonism. Even in present times, this link still exists.
2. The idea of frightening and scaring people, which is considered fun in some societies, is prohibited in Islam. Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam has stated, "It is not lawful for a Muslim to frighten another Muslim." (Sunan Abu Dawud)

Causing distress to another is prohibited in Islam even if done under the guise of fun and entertainment. Some people may laugh such things off, but events that provoke intense fear can, sometimes, scar a person for life.

Mufti Moosa

Question.

Will it be permissible for a person to marry his daughter in law's sister?

Answer.

A father is a non-mahram (stranger) to his daughter-in-law's sister. Hence, it will be permissible for a father to marry her. (Shaami 3/31)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

With the recent Eid celebrations we noticed that many of those performing Qurbani read Salaah with clothing that had dried blood on it. Is this permissible?

The blood that flows from a Qurbani animal upon slaughter is impure. If it comes on the skin or clothes and is more than the size of a rupee coin*, then it will not be permissible to perform Salaah without washing it off. Salaah performed with this amount of blood on the body or clothing, whether the blood has dried or not, is invalid and will have to be repeated. This ruling applies to the blood that is released from the time of slaughter until the blood stops dripping from the animal.

The residual blood that, thereafter, remains in the meat of the animal is not considered impure. If this blood comes onto the body or clothing, it will not render the body or clothing impure. (Hindiyyah Vol. 1 pg. 46)

*Rupee refers to the Islamic silver coin that was approx. 2.75mm in diameter. (Ahsanul Fataawa Vol. 1 pg. 89)

Mufti Moosa

Question.

Can zakaat, lillah, sadaqah and interest money be given to organisations involved in aid and relief work in places like Burma and Syria? Would one's obligation or intention in respect of the above be discharged and what condition should be stipulated when effecting such payments?

Answer.

It is permissible. However, since all these various types of wealth differ in their laws and

the avenues they should be spent in, one should inform the organisation of the type of wealth he is giving them, so that they may use it in the correct avenue.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

Is namaz valid in night suits or T-shirt and trousers for girls?

Answer.

A female should ensure that her entire body is covered with clothes that are non-transparent and loose fitting. Similarly the clothing should be such that it does not reveal the shape of the body. If the clothing is see-through and the body beneath is visible, then the Salaah will not be valid. Furthermore, the clothing should be of such a nature that it is keeping to the highly esteemed position of salaah and of standing before Allah Ta'ala. Hence it is best for a female to wear a namaaz burqa or an abaayah at the time of standing before Allah Ta'ala in salaah.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

Is there any hadith with reference which states it is sunnah to enter the Masjid with the right foot and leave with the left foot? If there isn't any hadith which states one should leave the Masjid with the left foot, is it permissible and better to leave the Masjid with the right foot if one intends to do something good when leaving the Masjid?

Answer.

It is sunnah to enter the Masjid with the right foot and leave with the left foot. This is established in the Hadith. Hadhrat Anas (Radhiallahu Anhu) reports: "It is from the sunnah (established from the words of Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam)) that when you enter the Masjid you should enter with your right foot; and when you leave the Masjid, you should leave with your left foot."

Question.

What is the mas'alah with regards to reading the Qur'an while the azaan is going on or to reply to the azaan.

Answer.

It is permissible for one to continue reciting the Quraan while the azaan is being called out. However, to stop the recitation and reply to the azaan is better.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

Is there any sort of marriage (Nikaah) that can take place purely and only for satisfying one's natural urges and desires?

Answer.

The institution of nikaah has been objectively effected in Shari'ah in order to produce its desired results. Apart from nikaah serving as a halaal avenue for one to fulfil his desires, the main purpose and object of nikaah is for each spouse to assist the other in leading a life of chastity and piety. Each spouse needs to act responsibly and fulfil those duties that has been assigned to him/her from the side of Allah Ta'ala. Each spouse's main concern at the time of entering into the nikaah should be to earn the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala through upholding the laws of Shari'ah and leading a life in total conformity to the Sunnah of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam). Such a nikaah will become the means of pious progeny coming into the world and Islam spreading to the four corners of the globe. Entering into nikaah solely to satisfy one's desires and not wishing to shoulder any other responsibility and duty of the Nikaah is not the way of Islam.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

What is the status of making Salaah on a chair? If a person is not able to sit on the floor,

and he can not do the sajdahs, should he perform Salaah while doing Qiyaam and sajdahs by sign or can he do it directly on the chair? What would be the best way? And if he makes the Salaah while standing, will his Salaah be valid?

Answer. It is not permissible for one who is able to perform Salaah standing, together with making ruku' and performing the sajdah on the ground, to sit on a chair. If the one who is able to perform the Salaah in this manner sits on a chair and performs Salaah, the Salaah will not be valid. However if a person cannot manage standing and is unable to perform sajdah on the ground, then it will be permissible for him to sit on a chair and perform the Salaah with signs. He will lean forward and make ruku and he will lean forward a little lower to make the sajdah.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

What is the ruling about facing one's feet towards the Qiblah?

Answer.

It reprehensible (makrooh) and disrespectful to face one's feet in the direction of the Qiblah while sitting, lying down or sleeping.

Ml. Yusuf

Question.

Is there Zakaat on 9 carat gold?

Answer.

Gold is measured by carats. Pure gold is 24 carats. 9 carat gold contains 9 portions of gold and 15 portions of other metals i.e. 9 carat contains 37.44% of gold.

Zakaat will only be payable on the pure gold content contained in 9 carat gold jewellery, if the content (in one or several jewellery items) reaches 85 grams by itself or it reaches the value of Nisaab by adding cash on hand or by adding the value of other Zakatable goods to it.

The Zakaat amount payable will be calculated based on the value of the gold on the day

when one is obliged to pay one's Zakaat.

One should consult a jeweller to determine the gold content and calculate the Zakaat on one's jewellery.

Ml. Yusuf

Question.

What are the Sunnats related to the Adhan?

Answer.

There are five Sunnats regarding the Adhan;

1. Reply to the Adhan by repeating the words of the Mu'addhin, except when replying to Hayya alas salaah and Hayya alal falaah, one should say La hawla wa la quwwata illa billahil aliyyil azeem
2. Recite Salawaat (Salutations Upon The Messenger Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) after the Adhan.

3. Read the Dua asking for al Wasila:

Allahuma rabba hazihi-d-da'wati-t-taamah wam salatil qaa'imati aati Muhammada nil-waseelata wal fazeelata wab-asahu maqaama-m-mahmooda nil-lazi wa-attah

"O Allah, Rabb of the perfect call and established Salaah, grant Muhammed (saws) Al Wasila and superiority, and raise him to the praiseworthy position which you promised him." (Bukhari)

4. Then read this Dua:

Ash-hadul al-la ilaha illahu wahdahu la sha-reekalahu wa-ash-hadu anna Muhammadn abduhu wa rusooluhu, razeetu billahi rabban wabi Muhammadin rasoolan wabil Islami deenan

"I testify that there is none worthy of worship besides Allah, He is one and has no partner, and that Muhammed is His servant and Messenger, I am pleased with Allah as my Sustainer, Muhammed (saws) as a Messenger and Islam as my religion." (Muslim)

5. Make any Dua between Adhan and Iqamah, as Duas are readily accepted at this time. [A Translation and Commentary of Riyad Al Salihin Vol2/Page 359]

Ml. Yusuf

*Lesson from
The Qur'an*



*And the
Weighing on
that day is defi-
nite. So, those
whose scales are
heavy, they are
the successful.
[8] And those
whose scales are
light, they are
those who have
brought loss to
themselves, as
they used to be
unjust to Our
verses. [7:8,9]*

The Weighing of Deeds

A Doubt and its Answer

In the first verse, it is said: (And the Weighing on that day is definite). It means that the weighing of good and bad deeds on the day of Judgement is due and true. There is no room for doubt in it. Here, the hint given is that let no one be deceived by the idea that things which usually get to be weighed or measured are things having some weight or heaviness. Human deeds, good or bad, have no body or mass which could be weighed. How, then, would deeds be weighed? First of all, the reason is that the authority of Allah is absolute. He is powerful over everything. Why then, would it be necessary that something we cannot weigh could not be weighed by Allah Almighty as well? Then, other than that, we have before us, in our time, countless new instruments which claim to weigh or measure anything in the world. They no more need the traditional balance or scales or rod or tip. Modern instruments can weigh what nobody ever thought could be weighed, air, electric current, heat, cold, and so many other things. A meter is all you need. Now, if Allah Almighty, the Maker of makers, in His perfect power, could weigh or measure human deeds - with or without a device - what is there in it which would make it to be something far out to believe? Leaving this aside for a moment, the Creator of the Universe does have the power to transform our deeds at some time into a material presence, even give it some shape or form (interesting that people would believe something like this happening in a Spielberg movie, yet squirm at the religious view of things as would come to pass). There are many Ahadith from the Holy Prophet (saws): which confirm that human deeds will appear in particular shapes and forms during Barzakh (the post-death ~ pre-resurrection state) and Mahshar (Resurrection). Good deeds of a person will, in forms beautified, become the companions of the grave - and evil deeds would crawl all over in the form of snakes and scorpions. A hadith says that a person who has not paid the Zakah due against his wealth, that wealth will reach his grave in the shape of a poisonous snake to bite him and say: I am your wealth, I am your

treasure.

It is said in a Sahih Hadith that Al-Baqarah and 'Al-'Imran, the two Surahs of the Holy Qur'an will come on the plains of Resurrection in the form of two dense clouds and cast their shade over those who used to recite these Surahs.

Similarly, there are countless narrations from Hadith, all authentic and reported reliably, which indicate that once these good and bad deeds of ours pass away from this mortal world, they will transform into particular shapes and forms and be there on the plains of Resurrection in a material presence.

There are even verses of the Qur'an which confirm it. It is said: , that is, 'what people had done in the world, they would find that present there - 18:49.' In a verse of Surah Az-Zalzalah, it is said: , that is, 'whoever does good even the weight of a particle shall see it on the day of Qiyamah, and whoever does evil even the weight of a particle shall see that too in Qiyamah.' Things as described here obviously lend to the possibility that human deeds will come in some nuclear form of existence. This is something which needs no further interpretations as what is crucial is the compensation of deeds which will exist and be perceptible.

Under these circumstances, weighing deeds does not remain something difficult or far out.

But, human beings are what they are. Given their limited framework of reasoning, they take everything on the analogy of their own present state of being and this is the criterion they have to judge things around them. So used to it they are that they just cannot act otherwise. It is this state of being of theirs which the Qur'an has put in words which appear in Surah Ar-Rum: means that 'these people know an obvious aspect of mortal life (and that too, not the whole of it) and about the Hereafter they are totally heedless - 30:7.' In their onslaught on the obvious and the perceptible, they will shake the earth and the space to find out the unfound, but the great field of the reality of things the unfolding of which has to take place in the 'Aakhirah is something they are totally unaware of.

Therefore, in this verse, special care has been taken while saying: (And the Weighing on that day is definite) so that man, all infatuated with the obvious, may not be able to deny the weighing of deeds in the Hereafter - which stands proved from the Holy Qur'an and is the collective belief of the Muslim Ummah.

That there will be the weighing of deeds on the day of Qiyamah is a subject dealt with in many verses of the Holy Qur'an from various angles, and in Hadith, its details abound.

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

The Danger of Engaging in Idle Conversation

Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (ra) once mentioned:

It is extremely unfortunate for a person's time to be wasted in idleness, without him gaining anything. If one does not have any work to attend to, then he should at least engage himself in the chores of the home. In carrying out the chores of the home, not only will his heart perceive a sense of fulfilment and satisfaction, but he will also be engaged in ibaadah and receive reward as he is assisting his family.

When a person passes his time by sitting with people and chatting about things that are futile, then he is at great risk of falling into harm, as the conversation often turns to gossip, complaining about people, and sometimes even involves backbiting. Hence, it is vitally important that one abstain from getting involved in discussions without a genuine need. (Malfoozaat Hakeemul Ummat 8/289)

Lessons from Sahih Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

Chapter 64 : Taking help of carpenters and other craftsmen in constructing the pulpit and the mosque.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Like any other construction, craftsmen like carpenters, masons, blacksmiths and labourers are required to construct a mosque. Such workers can be engaged to construct the mosque both voluntary as well as on wages. It is preferable to engage Muslim workers and if they are not available, non-Muslims can also be hired for the purpose.

Hadith No. 436 Narrated Sahl

"The Messenger of Allah (Saws) sent a message to a woman saying, 'Ask your slave, the carpenter, to fashion a wooden structure for me to sit on.'"

Hadith No. 437 Narrated Jaabir

"That a woman said, 'Messenger of Allah, shall I have something made for you to sit on? I have a slave who is a carpenter.' He answered, 'If you like.' So she had the minbar made"

Comments

Rasulullah (Saws) used to deliver the

khutba speech in Masjid-i-Nabawi beside a pillar. An old lady in Madinah who had a servant - carpenter by profession, once offered to built a pulpit (a three step stair with a small dice on which khutba speech is delivered) for the Prophet, if allowed. In the chapter under discussion two hadiths have been quoted, one mentioning that the lady herself offered to get the pulpit built for the Prophet (S) with the help of her slave, other stating that Rasulullah (Saws) himself asked her to do so. The learned scholars of hadith say that most likely the old lady had made her request initially, and probably after some delay, Rasulullah (Saws) sent a person to remind her about the pulpit.

Lessons from this hadith

1. One can or should offer his services to pious people and help them in carrying out good deeds, as the lady did.
2. The elders may allow such services, and there is no problem in doing so.
3. The people who consider it permissible to sit while delivering the khutba speech put forward this hadith as proof. It mentions that Rasulullah (Saws) asked the lady to get a pulpit made for him so that he could sit on it. This goes in favour of the Hanafite school of thought.

Chapter 65 : One who constructs a mosque.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Here Imam Bukhari wants to convey the significance and excellence of one who constructs a mosque just to seek the pleasure of Allah.

Hadith No. 438

Narrated Ubaydullah al-Khawlani

"I heard Uthmaan ibn Affan say in response to what people were saying about him when he was rebuilding the mosque of Prophet (Saws) 'You have said more than enough (in your criticism). I heard the Prophet (Saws) say, "Whoever builds a mosque (Bukayr said, "I thought that he said, "Seeking by it the face of Allah, "), Allah will build the same for him in the Garden."

Comments

As already mentioned, the mosque of the Prophet (Saws) was small and simple during his time, and Sayyiduna Abu Bakr Siddiq and Sayyiduna Umar did some changes to it like strengthening the roof and walls and expanding its dimensions. During the caliphate of Sayyiduna Uthmaan the Muslim population increased manifold making the accommodation inadequate. Therefore, Sayyiduna Uthmaan renovated it, increased its area, constructed its walls of engraved stones and plaster, gave it a roof of teak, making it more beautiful than before. Some people raising eyebrows over the act made following allegations:

1. Since the previous construction was done by Rasulullah (Saws), Sayyiduna Abu Bakr and Sayyiduna Umar, what is the need to do more?
2. It is an unnecessary burden on bait-ul-maal (public exchequer).
3. It is being done to earn name and fame.

When these allegations reached Sayyiduna Uthmaan, he came to the mosque and proved all of them wrong by quoting the above mentioned hadith. He further said that he has heard Rasulullah (Saws) saying that one who

constructs a mosque for Allah's sake, Allah will make a house for him in the Jannat, so, constructing a mosque is in no way blameworthy. Regarding the second query, he said that the glad tiding of securing a house in Jannat is for such a person who constructs a mosque with his own money, thereby apprising the people that he was spending his own money on these changes and not using the resources of bait-ul-maal. Third allegation was itself proved wrong by the statement in this hadith viz., "Seeking by it the face of Allah", so there is no chance of having an intention of earning name and fame.

There are number of hadiths which speak about the reward of a better house which Allah will give to a person who constructs a mosque in this world with the sole intention of seeking Allah's countenance.

Chapter 66 : Holding arrows by their heads when passing through a mosque.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

While passing through a mosque with sharp objects like arrows, swords etc., it is mandatory to keep them in such a way that there remain no chance of harming a person; since people are in close contact with one another in the mosque, so one has to be extremely cautious.

Hadith No. 439

Narrated Amr

"I heard Jaabir bin Abdullah saying, "A man passed through the mosque carrying arrows. Allah's Apostle said to him, 'Hold them by their heads.'"

Comments

Allaama Ayni has quoted a hadith on the authority of Ibn Abbas which mentions that Rasulullah (Saws) said:

"Keep the mosques clean, and do not make them thoroughfare, and menstruating ladies

should not pass through them, and the people on whom ghusul has become mandatory should not stay in them except those travelling, and do not spread arrows in them, and do not unsheathe the swords in them and do not sing songs in them"
(Umdatul Qaari)

Lesions from this hadith

1. It shows how much one should respect and be concerned about others.
2. It shows how much Rasulullah (Saws) used to care about the believers.
3. It also shows the permissibility of taking weapons inside a mosque.

Chapter 67 : To pass through a mosque.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Here Imam Bukhari wants to convey that it is permissible, at the time of need, to pass through a mosque. According to the learned scholars it is not advisable to make a thoroughfare through a mosque un-necessarily; however, at the time of need it is allowed.

Hadith No. 440

Narrated Abu Burda bin Abdulla

(on the authority of his father) The Prophet said, "Whoever passes through our mosques or markets with arrows should hold them by their heads lest he should injure a Muslim."

Comments

As already stated that it is permissible to pass through the mosque at the time of need but, as stated in this hadith, one has to take certain precautions while doing so, for example, his action should not be detrimental to anyone.

Chapter 68 : Poetry in the mosque.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Poetry, in any language, is of different types. In general, it can be good as well as bad

but the terms 'good' and 'bad' are relative. What may seem good to one can be bad to other. Here, we are concerned with the Islamic perspective of poetry. The Islamic Shariah neither forbids it in totality nor gives a free licence to anyone to say anything. If it is in accordance with the Islamic principles then it is permitted to narrate it even in a mosque as seems to be the purpose of this chapter, and if it goes against then it is not permitted.

Hadith No. 441

Narrated Hassan bin Thabit Al-Ansari

I asked Abu Huraira "By Allah! Tell me the truth whether you heard the Prophet saying, 'O Hassan! Reply on behalf of Allah's Apostle. O Allah! Help him with the Holy Spirit.'" Abu Huraira said, "Yes."

Comments

Sayyiduna Hassan bin Thaabit, one of the famous companions of Rasulullah (Saws), was an excellent Arabian poet. The Arabs, by nature, were very fond of poetry, and it was in their blood. They would be seen boasting about the poetry of their ancestors. There was quite a good number of poets among the Makkan infidels as well, who would mock at Rasulullah (Saws) through their poetry. In retaliation, Rasulullah (Saws) used to ask Hassan bin Thaabit to answer them back through his masterly poetry. His poetry in favour and praise of Rasulullah (Saws) would leave them dumb and defeated.

Once, during the caliphate of Sayyiduna Umar, Hassan was reciting verses of his poetry in the mosque. In the meantime, Sayyiduna Umar appeared and hearing Hassan reciting his verses showed his displeasure. On seeing this, Hassan told him (Umar), "I used to recite this poetry in here (Masjid-i-Nabawi) when a person (i.e., Rasulullah (Saws)) better than you was between us".

Hassan also asked Abu Huraira to speak about the fact that he (Hassan) used to recite po-

etry before Rasulallah (Saws) in Masjid-i-Nabawi. When Abu Huraira replied in affirmation, Sayyiduna Umar maintained silence.

In his book Umdatul Qaari, Allaama Ayni has quoted a couple of hadiths. In one of these, which has been quoted from Tirmidhi on the authority of Sayyida Aisha, it is said: "Rasulallah (Saws) would ask to set-up a stage or dais for Hassan in the Mosque mounted on which he would condemn the infidels (through his poetry)".

Another hadith that he has quoted is from Sahih Ibn Khuzaimah, which reads: "Rasulallah (Saws) forbade from singing songs in the mosque."

There is no contradiction between the two. If the poetry is good and also satisfying the Islamic constraints, it is permissible, and if otherwise then obviously it is not permitted.

Invocation of Rasulallah (Saws)

Rasulallah (Saws) invoked Allah in favour of Hassan bin Thaabit in the following words:

*‘O Allah! help him with the
Rooh-ul-Quds (Holy Spirit).*

Rooh-ul-Quds is another name of the chief angel—Jibraeel (AS). The learned scholars say that Jibraeel is called 'Rooh-ul-Quds' because he was created from purity (quds meaning pure and clean). Some of the scholars say that quds is an attribute of Allah and one of His Names, therefore, Rooh-ul-Quds would mean (Roohullah), and Jibraeel (AS) is called 'Rooh' because he enlivens the soul.

The True Source

*Recently, many people have asked me how to cope when the people we seek inspiration from turn out to be flawed. The answer is simple. Remember this: the light you receive from that teacher did not come*from* them. It came*through* them. The source of that light was, is and will always remain in Allah. A broken mirror can still reflect light. And the break in the mirror does not take away from the Reality or illumination of the light.*

My dear global family, I am cracked, as you are. Why? Because I am human, as you are. Please never attach any benefit I or other teachers give you, to our person. We are only tools. And like all machines, we are limited. In life, capacity, and virtue. Remember that all light belongs to Allah. If He wills, He allows us to be a tiny - albeit flawed - carrier of that light. But we are never, ever, the source.

ISLAMIC *Straight Talk*

BROTHERHOOD

A lecture by Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall

I have to talk to you to-day about Islamic brotherhood as an ideal and an institution. To begin with, I will quote but one passage, out of a hundred which I could quote in this connection, from the Holy Quran :

"O ye who believe! Observe your duty to Allah with right observance, and die not till ye have surrendered (unto him).

"And hold fast, all of you together, to the cable of Allah, and do not separate. And remember Allah's favour unto you: how ye were enemies and He made friendship between your hearts and (how) ye were on the brink a fire, and He did save you from it. Thus "Allah maketh clear His revelations unto you in order that ye may be guided."

These two verses of the Holy Quran are a reminder of the progress already made in a few months owing to the advent of Islam, and a command to all the Muslims to continue in the way of progress by clinging to the cable of Allah, the Sacred Law, and never again to return to the unhallowed state of warring tribes and hostile classes which had reached such a pitch as to threaten human culture in Arabia with

complete destruction. Our Prophet (saws) said: The Muslims are as a wall one part supporting another. The Muslims are all one body. If the eye is injured the whole body suffers, and if the foot is injured, the whole body suffers.

In his speech from Jebel Arafat to a great multitude of men, who but a few month or years before had all been conscienceless idolators, on the occasion of the Hajjat-al-Wada, "the farewell pilgrimage," his last visit to Mecca, he said : "O people, listen to my words with understanding for I know not whether, after this year, I shall ever be among you in this place."

"Your lives and property are sacred and inviolable one to another until you appear before your Lord, even as this day and this month are sacred for all, and remember you will have to appear before your Lord who will demand from you an account of all your acts."

"The Lord hath prescribed to every man his share of inheritance ; no testament to the prejudice of heirs is lawful."

"The child belongeth to the parent, and the violator of wedlock shall be stoned."

"Whoever falsely claimeth another for his father or his master, the curse of God and of the angels and of all mankind shall be upon him, "O peo-

ple, ye have rights over your wives and your wives have lights over you. It is their duty not to bleak their wifely faith, nor commit any act of manifest indecency. If they do so ye have authority to confine them in separate rooms and to punish them but not severely.”

“But if they refrain, clothe them and feed them properly. Treat your women with loving kindness, for they are with you as prisoners and captives. They have no power over anything that concerneth them. Lo, ye have taken them on the security of Allah and made their persons lawful to you by the words of Allah.”

“Be faithful to the trust imposed on you, and shun transgression.”

“Usury is forbidden, the debtor shall return only the principal; and the beginning will be made with the loans of my uncle Abbas, son of Abdul Mutallib.”

“Henceforth the vengeance for blood practised: in the time of ignorance is forbidden, and the feud of blood is abolished beginning with the murder of my cousin Rabia’ ibn Harith ibn Abdul Mutallib.”

“And your slaves! See that ye feed them with such food as ye yourselves eat, and clothe them with the stuff ye yourselves wear; and if they commit a fault which ye are not ready to forgive, then part with them, for they are servants of your Lord, and must not be ill-treated.

The slaves who say their prayers are your brothers.

“O people ! Listen to my words and understand them. Know that all Muslims are brothers one to another; ye are one fraternity. No thing belonging to one of you is lawful to his brother unless given out of free goodwill.

Guard yourselves from committing injustice.

“Let him that is present tell it to him who is absent. Haply he who shall be told will remember better than him who hath heard.”

At the end of his discourse the Holy Prophet, moved by the sight of the devotion of that multitude, most of whom had been the enemies of Islam but a little while ago, exclaimed:

“O Lord, I have delivered my message, and accomplished my work.”

The hosts below made answer with one voice: “Aye, that thou hast!”

He said:

“O Lord, I beseech Thee, be Thou witness to it !”

Had ever man such fulness of success ? Was ever man more humble in his hour of triumph?

Notice how Muhammad (saws) never was content with precept. He always strengthened precept with example. Though he had become, in fact, the Emperor of Arabia, he never sat upon a throne and issued edicts. He was always one among his-people, his leadership being that of the Imam before the congregation, setting the example, foremost in obedience to the law which he himself proclaimed. When he proclaimed the brotherhood of Muslims he did not exempt himself.

He was, and is, the elder brother of all Muslims. Of all he taught he is the great example.

Now this subject of human brotherhood is one upon which the Muslims have no apologies to make to any other creed or nation or community. Here they have a great achievement, as clearly visible to-day as when the Prophet spoke, to show for an example to the nation.

Other religious communities declare their belief in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, but they have shown no practical result of that belief to help a struggling world; so little help has their ideal been that the struggling world, in its convulsive efforts to escape from misery, has turned its back upon religion as one of its oppressors, and sought help in other humanistic formulas, associated, through reliance on a false analogy, not with religion but with atheism or agnosticism--“Liberty, equality, fraternity “--the materialistic gospel of Karl Marx, and so forth.

“Liberty, equality, fraternity.” Which is practicable? Liberty and equality in human society must always be only relative, for they are positively unattainable. The liberty of an individual

or a nation must be bounded by the liberties of neighbouring individuals or nations, and opinions differ as to what constitutes liberty and equality.

To talk about the rights of man as something intrinsic, existing apart from man's position in society, is to talk nonsense, from our Muslim point of view. **Man was not born with rights. He was born with instincts and gifts. He acquires rights only as he learns to curb and to control those instincts and to use those gifts for the common weal. His rights are in exact proportion to the duties he performs, and otherwise have no existence.**

To claim equality for all men is absurd, and to seek to enforce it is to seek to paralyse humanity. To claim liberty for all men is to claim a thing concerning the nature and measure of which people hold widely divergent opinions, and will, moreover, fight for their opinions.

One man's ideal of liberty is the British Constitution, and another's the Soviet System.

In the strife about liberty and equality, fraternity is quite forgotten and grows more remote than ever. Yet fraternity is attainable wherever men of honest purpose and good-will agree together to obey a certain code of Laws religiously. Yet, to look at the past history and the present condition of the world, we might think it a Utopia, if it were not for the example Islam. It is this that makes one inclined to propound the axiom that no real democracy in the shape of human brotherhood can exist anywhere apart from the ideal of Theocracy.

The Prophet of Nazareth brought an ideal of human brotherhood; which depends practically on the ideal of theocracy which prevailed among the Jews. Consequently, it was never put in practice since theocracy has never been the system of Government, much less the basis of society, in Christendom.

Our Prophet not only proclaimed the fact of universal human brotherhood, but for the first time in the history of the world, made

of it a principle and fact of common law. All the ordinances of Islam tend towards it, and it is shown to be the only ground of genuine human progress. Social inequality remained; there remained those restrictions upon individual liberty which must exist in every organised society. But brotherly relations were established permanently between men and nations, however different in character and rank and wealth and power.

"The slaves who say their prayers are your brothers." And it was no mere pious phrase. They were actually so treated. In the intercourse between nations also there was established a brotherhood which still endures. The spirit of aggressive nationality was abolished among Muslims by our Prophet's saying:

"He is not of us who sides with his tribe in aggression, and he is not of us who calls others to help him in tyranny, and he is not of us who dies while assisting his tribe in injustice."

Islam became a super-nationality which extinguished nationalism in the body of Islam, and made the idea of a man's fighting for "his country right or wrong" appear a madness of the time of ignorance, as the period in Arabia before the coming of Muhammad (saws) is called. He also said that an Ethiopian slave who does right is more worthy to be made the ruler than a Sharff of Quraish who does wrong. Social service was acknowledged as the strongest claim to the respect and reverence of the community, a claim much stronger than the claim of birth or riches or brute force.

"Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you."

How can you bring that maxim home to stupid individuals and most individuals are made obtuse to social truth of this kind by self-interest except by making them feel when they do wrong to others exactly what those others felt when wrong was done to them. Hence

the law of strict retaliation, which some people seem to think, in some way cruel. It is not cruel, as enjoined on Muslims who are forbidden to go beyond the measure of the criminal's own deed. They are forbidden to make an example in punishment--that is to punish a criminal more ruthlessly than his crime demands with the idea of deterring others or intimidating them.

"Woe to you if ye indulge in exemplary punishment even of a savage dog."

Strict justice in retaliation is the only example in punishment which has genuine human value.

The laws of Allah as revealed in the Quran are simply that maxim: "Do unto others, etc." extended to collective as well as individual human conduct, codified and reasoned out in detail in such a way that the ignorant and the intelligent, the nation and the individual, alike can know for certain what their duty is in given circumstances. Usury is anti-social, is unbrotherly, because it is to take a mean advantage of a brother's need; wherefore it is written:

"Allah maketh usury barren and almsgiving fruitful. Allah loveth not an impious and guilty (creature)."

To hoard up riches also is anti-human, therefore the Muslim is adjured to spend of the wealth which God has given him, all that is superfluous i.e., in excess of his own requirements. The verse which I just quoted concerning usury contains a truth which many people have lost sight of in these days. It is that the rush for riches does not increase the sum of human culture or human happiness, which can only be done by the equitable circulation and continual dispersal of wealth--that is to say by discouraging the greed of individuals, and encouraging their generosity.

Many, even among Muslims, today speak of the law against usury as antiquated. Such people cannot have looked on the pageant of the present day with seeing eyes. A good part of

the business transactions of modern life, which the law of Islam forbids if strictly interpreted, see harmless enough when compared with the more outrageous forms of usury which every decent human being would condemn. As a substitute for the worst usury, the present financial system seems desirable. But its general social influence, upon the whole, has been against fraternity. Why do socialism, communism, syndicalism today threaten the whole structure of the capitalist order of society -- an order of society which has had a bare century of existence, and which its supporters are now hurrying to bolster up with tardy measures for the relief of suffering majorities? Why was it that when Bolshevism came to power in Russia the first thing that it did was to abolish interest. Why is it that the abolition of interest is included in every Socialist programme and Utopia? It is because the capitalist form of society is founded upon usury, and that is held by the thinkers opposed to it to be the reason why it is productive, of so much social evil and injustice.

Trade is licensed by the Shari'ah, which strictly forbids usury. Here it is well to remember that the kind of trade licensed by the Quran was not the ruthless profiteering trade of modern times, much of which, in my opinion, must be classed as usury, in the Islamic sense, in so far as it takes unfelt advantage of the crying needs of men and women. Drunkenness is anti-social; gambling is anti-social. therefore, the use of intoxicating liquor is forbidden, so are games of chance. Private property is sanctioned in Islam and strongly safeguarded; but the idea of property as belonging absolutely to the individual, to do exactly what he likes with it, and to leave it by bequest to whom he likes is antisocial, therefore, it is discountenanced. All property is a trust from God, and is held upon conditions clearly stated in the Sacred Law.

A certain portion of the income must be paid out to the poor, a certain portion to the community every year. And when a man dies

his property must be divided among certain relatives, women as well as men, in fixed proportions.

Aggressive nationalism is anti-human, therefore it was abolished, as already mentioned race and colour prejudices disappear completely in the Muslim brotherhood, and the differences of class are purged of arrogance or humiliation, and reduced to differences of occupation. Islamic civilisation is a complete system, covering every field of human thought and action from the spiritual to the menial -- a system which has been tried in practice with success.

I have traced the decline of Muslim civilisation in my previous lecture and have shown that its cause is to be found in the neglect of certain precepts of the Sacred Law.

The system of civilisation is nowhere to be found completely operative today. But there is one respect in which the Muslim Community is as far ahead of the rest of the world as it was in the days of Umar (ra) or the second Umar or Harun-ar-Rashid or Salah-ud-din or Suleyman the Magnificent, and that is brotherhood.

Where, in the whole history of the world, will you find anything to compare with this great brotherhood of all sorts and conditions of human beings bound together by a tie so strong that the fierce assaults of hostile armies, the cunning efforts of diplomacy have failed to break it? A brotherhood composed not of a single class or nation but of innumerable classes, many nations.

A League of Nations has been started to try to do a part of the work Islam has done, to bring the varying nations into unison and frame a code of international law conducive to peace and progress. But it is starting, at a disadvantage, for it admits the principles of aggressive nationalism and imperialism. It has to deal with nations which regard those anti-human principles as respectable and even noble. It is hard to see how, starting from such a point, so handicapped, it can ever reach the true solution of the

problem, which is that nations have the same rights as individuals and that the same moral, laws and standards must be applied to them as are applied in the case of individuals. **The Islamic brotherhood should be the model of the League of Nations, for here the peoples are at heart united. Shattered though the Muslim realm has been politically, the solidarity of the people remains unimpaired, unbroken. Some critics, seeing it hold firm against all pressure from without, exclaim: "The Muslims even when they pretend to be nationalists have no patriotism, only fanaticism." They would have us exchange our super-national outlook for the outlook of aggressive nationality. If Muslims did that they would indeed (in the words of the Quran) "barter that which is best for that which is lowest" as surely as did Bani Israil of old. Islam is thirteen hundred years ahead of Europe in such matters.**

There are certain ordinances, the observance of which tend to preserve and to extend this universal brotherhood of Islam; which is without comparison, for it has bound together black and white and brown and yellow people in complete agreement and equality, has reconciled the claims of rich and poor, the governor and the governed, slave and free. One of the most important of them is the daily and the weekly prayers in congregation, where all Muslims of every degree stand as equals in humanity, and the Imam, the leader, is chosen not for rank or wealth, but piety. Another is the yearly pilgrimage -- a most important institution to the culture of Islam, which is often quoted by opponents as a proof that Islam is hopelessly behind the times -- these pleasure-seeking times! On the pilgrimage, kings, peasants, nobles, workmen, rich and poor, all wear the same coarse clothing, perform the same ceremonies in the same way, equal as all mankind are equal in the hour of death. Every Muslim who is able to do so without injury to those dependent on him, has to make the pilgrimage at least once in

his life, has to make his will, arrange his worldly business, forsake his home and occupation, and embark upon a long and tedious journey for no earthly gain. There are people in the world who think that useless. I do not.

Then there is the fast of Ramadhan, the yearly month of training, when every Muslim who is not sick or on a journey, has to fast in the strictest sense of the word from dawn till after sunset, The king, the peasant--everybody. There are people in the world who think that senseless. I do not; nor will any one who takes the trouble to reflect a little on the rough vicissitudes of human life and on the kind of training men require to face them manfully. All men worthy of the name must prepare themselves to become soldiers on emergency. Most of all, those who stand for principles essential to the progress of humanity.

In reality, all these ordinances do but ring the changes on the Prophet's saying:--

“Die before you die,”

the sacrifice of man's will to the will of God as revealed in the Quran and manifested in creation, which is Islam itself. In the daily prayers, the prayer-mat signifies the grave, the rakaa (bowing) means submission to the will of God as Sovereign of this world, and the Sujud (prostration) is a figurative death, surrender to our Lord as Monarch of the Day of Judgment.

If Ramadhan, the Muslim changes his whole round of life and rich and poor endure the pangs of hunger till, when sunset comes, the king gives heartfelt thanks to God for such a simple matter as a glass of water.

In the pilgrimage the Muslim goes as to his death, having settled all his worldly business paid up all his debts, made his will and freed himself from earthly cares.

Life with its pleasures and pursuits, divides mankind and makes men rivals, enemies. Death---the mighty and makes leveller as it has been called--makes all men brothers.

It is a perpetual warning, set before all of us,

never to forget that all are brothers in the sight of God, and that our pride, ambitions, wealth and power, all that here makes distinction between man and man, will fall from us when we reach that awful boundary. Death is, indeed, the most important fact of life, and a scheme of life which strove or belittle it would be misleading. At the same time, to spend one's life in contemplation of the fact of death would be to neglect the duties of this world, of which Allah is King as much as of the others. Islam presents us with a way of life by following which men lose the fear of death and view it in its true perspective. And the way is joyous, anything but gloomy. These things are simple for the simple, and profound for men of intellect. For all, they are the firmest ground of human brotherhood.

Islam is, as I have said, in this matter of fraternity, as far ahead of the rest of the world today as it was in its days of splendour. By that I do not mean that there has been no falling off, but merely that nowhere else is to be found even the smallest attempt at such a human brotherhood. There has been falling off, and, as in every other case where Muslim culture has declined, it can be traced to the neglect of some provision of the Shari'ah. In this case it is due to the neglect of Zakah--the Muslim poor rate. The Arabic Word Zakah means growth by cultivation.

When Zakah was regularly collected and distributed and any surplus put into the Beytul-Mal, a sort of bank which backed the efforts of the whole community, we read that there were no needy Muslims. In countries where it is still regularly collected and distributed--as, for instance, Najd--there are no needy Muslims. In countries where it is neglected they abound. This neglect, and the consequent misfortune of the Muslim brotherhood, is not the fault of the people. It is the fault of the despotic Governments of former days who took all such matters out of the people's control, and so in time deprived them of initiative, malting them wait for Government officials to do things for them,

even things which it was their Muslim right and duty to do for themselves. It should be the first care of every group of Muslims who seek progress to revive Zakah and the Beyt-ul-Mal with proper safeguards.

Indeed they would do well to study the whole Muslim system of finance. People seem to think that there was no such thing, that Muslims are by nature unbusinesslike, and that there was never a Muslim financier till English training gave us Mr. Hydari.

There were many great Muslim financiers, and the Muslim system of finance was a complete system. Only it is difficult for modern men of affairs even to begin to understand it, because its aim was no private profit or State profit, but public benefit, the welfare and progress of the whole Muslim brotherhood. It was a potent factor in the success of the Muslim civilization, and the decline of the civilisation synchronised with the gradual neglect of it. Books have been

written on it by Western Orientalists -- notably a large volume by an American University Professor who treats it as a serious contribution to civilised thought. Being framed in strict accordance with the Sacred Law, that old Muslim system, which was practised with success in a huge Empire, is of special interest to those Muslims who find their conscience troubled by the present system of finance and commerce.

It is the surest, simplest, most effective way

for building up a strong community or restoring a broken or decayed one; but it is a way requiring some degree of sacrifice from everyone. If we obey the Shari'ah we have to spend what God has given us, not only money but all other gifts, in God's way, not our own way. The modern world says "Save all you can, bank it, invest it, place it out at interest." The Holy Quran says "Spend whatever remains over "-- that is, after you have satisfied your and the needs of those dependent on you, have paid your poor rate, and bestowed a due amount in charity -- and spend

If we obey the Shari'ah we have to spend what God has given us, not only money but all other gifts, in God's way, not our own way. The modern world says "Save all you can, bank it, invest it, place it out at interest." The Holy Quran says "Spend whatever remains over "-- that is, after you have satisfied your and the needs of those dependent on you, have paid your poor rate, and bestowed a due amount in charity -- and spend it in such a way as directly to benefit, our fellow-men, to encourage the deserving, and increase the sense of human brotherhood.

it in such a way as directly to benefit, our fellow-men, to encourage the deserving, and increase the sense of human brotherhood. It absolutely forbids usury, which means deserving profit from a brother's need, as it forbids Israf, which means the squandering of money or of other gifts of God on things frivolous and vain, of no real use to anyone. Some of its injunctions seem amazing at the present day until one realises that

they refer to a state of society founded not on the idea of competition but on that of brotherhood--a state of society in which no one is allowed to starve, a state of society which, so long as it existed in a flourishing condition, was the most successful that the world has ever known from the point of view of the greatest good of the greatest number. It seems to me essential that Muslims of today should study carefully the proper Muslim system of finance.

Another great cause of deterioration is neglect of the command that every Muslim, male and female, shall be educated; which neglect is nowhere so deplorably apparent as in India. In other Muslim countries--in the Turkish Empire and in Egypt, for example, a system of universal education did exist, and there were schools for everybody before the modern education came in vogue. It was an ancient system of education, which had once been in advance of the world-standard, but had become old and somnolent and purblind. But every Muslim did at least acquire a working knowledge of the teachings of Islam and his religious duties. In India there is not even that. There are people classed as Muslims here in India who only know the Kalima, if they know that; who are absolutely ignorant of all religion. Then, in every country, many were chary of admitting European knowledge and so fell behind, saw others placed above them for reasons which they could not understand, became disheartened and aggrieved--a fruitful source of poverty. All this can be remedied in time, and many are at work to remedy it. But while it is so it must dim for all on-lookers the brightness of the great-example of fraternity which Muslims do in truth set to the world.

Wars between Muslim potentates, differences of political opinions, divergences of race and colour do not affect this bond of brotherhood. That is something which outsiders always fail to understand. There is something in the words "I am a Muslim" and in the greeting "AsSalamu Aleykum" which touches the heart, of every other Muslim. We differ not as outside people differ, radically. We differ not concerning ends, but only means. The end which every Muslim has in view is the end which Islam has in view, namely the building up, of worldwide human brotherhood in allegiance to the One God. We differ only as to the way in which it is to be done; and the spread of proper Muslim education, allowing everybody to have access to the words of the Quran and to compare their reading with the requirements of the age in which we live, will very largely mitigate our differences, and remove misconceptions with regard to the scope of the Muslim brotherhood, which properly includes not only Muslims. technically so-called, but all who seek to establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

*The Prophet (saw) said:
When you pray over the
dead, make a sincere suppli-
cation for him.*

(Abi Dawud)

*A righteous deed is that you
perform an action seeking no
praise except from Allah."*

Ali ibn Abi Taalib (ra)

*Ibn 'Umar said, "Mod-
esty and belief are together.
If one of them is removed,
the other is removed."*

Ibn Umar (ra)

*"My heart is at ease know-
ing that what was meant for
me will never miss me, and
that what misses me was nev-
er meant for me."*

Imam Al-Shafi'i

In Exchange of a Well in Jannah

When the Sahaabah (ra) migrated to Madeenah Munawwarah, many of them were not used to the water of Madeenah Munawwarah. However, one of the water sources from which the Muhaajireen (ra) were able to drink comfortably was a certain well which belonged to a Sahaabi from the tribe of Ghifaar. The name of the well was ‘Roomah’, and this Sahaabi would earn his livelihood by selling the water of this well.

Rasulullah (saws) approached this Sahaabi and asked him, “Will you exchange this well (by giving it in the path of Allah for the benefit of the Muslims) for a well in Jannah?” The Sahaabi replied, “O Rasul of Allah (saws)! My dependents and I do not have any means of income besides this well.”

Hearing of what had transpired, ‘Uthmaan (ra) went to the Sahaabi who was the owner of the well and paid him thirty-five thousand dirhams (silver coins) for the well of Roomah.

‘Uthmaan (ra) thereafter went to Rasulullah (saws) and asked, “Will you promise me the same reward that you promised him? (i.e. If I acquire the well and give it in the path of Allah for the benefit of the Muslims, will I also receive a well in Jannah?)” Rasulullah (saws) replied, “Yes.” ‘Uthmaan (ra) responded, “I have given the well of Roomah in the path of Allah.” (Fat-hul Baari vol. 5, pg. 511)

Lessons:

1. We should always be on the lookout for opportunities to reap great rewards and earn Jannah. When ‘Uthmaan (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) heard of the reward promised by Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam), he immediately used his wealth to purchase the well and give it in the path of Allah, thereby earning the reward promised by Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam).
2. Bringing comfort to people who are in discomfort and difficulty is a means of earning great reward from Allah. This can be done in numerous ways such as giving alms and charity, feeding, physically assisting those in need, etc.

Diversity of Juristic Opinions

The purpose of Shari'ah is simply to serve and achieve the well-being and the well-fare of people. Achieving this purpose needs some indicators or adilla (sing. dalil) which guide the scholastic efforts in Islamic scholarship to determine the interpretation and modes of application of God's divine law (Shari'ah). In Islamic legal theory, the dalil, the indicator, mark, guide or evidence is a fundamental building block of the search for the divine will and guidance. As a sign of God's mercy and compassion, God created or enunciated numerous indicators serving as guidance to human goodness, well-being and ultimately divine will. Moreover, God ordained that human beings exert a persistent effort in investigating the divine indicators or the evidence of God's will so that the objectives of Shari'ah may be fulfilled. The most obvious type of indicators is an authoritative text such as the Quran but Muslim jurists also recognized that God's wisdom is manifested through a vast matrix of indicators found in God's physical and metaphysical creation. Hence, other than text, God's signs and indicators could manifest themselves through reason and rationality, intuitions, and human custom and practice.

Most indicators are divided into rational proofs and textual proofs. As to rational proofs, jurisprudential theory further differentiated between pure reason and practical or applied

reason. Foundational legal principles and legal presumptions, such as the presumption of innocence or the presumption of permissibility and the presumption of continuity are derived from pure reason. Interpretive tools such as qiyas and istihsan and hermeneutic categories are all instances of applied or practical reason.

In Islamic jurisprudence, the diversity and complexity of the divine indicators are considered part of the functionality and suitability of Islamic law for all times and places. The fact that the indicators are not typically precise, deterministic, or unidimensional allows jurists to read the indicators in light of the demands of time and place. So for example, it is often noted that one of the founding fathers of Islamic jurisprudence, al-Shafi'i had one set of legal opinions that he thought properly applied in Iraq but changed his positions and rulings when he moved to Egypt to account for the changed circumstances and social differences between the two regions. The same idea is embodied by the Islamic legal maxim: "It may not be denied that laws will change with the change of circumstances".

One of the most important aspects of the epistemological paradigm on which Islamic jurisprudence was built was the presumption that on most matters the divine will is unattainable and even if attainable no person or institution has the authority to claim certitude in realizing

this will. This is why the classical jurists rarely spoke in terms of legal certainties. Rather, as is apparent in the linguistic practices of the classical juristic culture, Muslim jurist for the most part spoke in terms of probabilities or in terms of the preponderance of evidence and belief (ghalabat al-zann). As the influential classical jurist al- Juwaini stated: “The most a mujtahid would claim was a preponderance of belief and the balancing of the evidence. However, certainty was never claimed by any of them. If we were charged with finding the truth we would not have been forgiven for failing to find it”.

Muslim jurists emphasized that only God possesses perfect knowledge, human knowledge in legal matters is tentative or even speculative; it must rely on the weighing of competing factors and the assertion of judgment based on an assessment of the balance of evidence on any given matter. Thus Muslim jurists developed a rigorous field of analytical jurisprudence known as tarjih which dealt with the methodological principles according to which jurists would investigate, assign relative weight, and balance conflicting evidence in order to reach a preponderance of belief about potentially correct determinations.

Contemporary fundamentalists and essentialistic orientations imagine Islamic law to be highly deterministic and casuistic, but this is in sharp contrast to the epistemology and institutions of the Islamic legal tradition that supported the existence of multiple equally orthodox and authoritative legal schools of thought, all of which are valid representations of the divine will. Indeed, the Islamic legal traditions were founded on markedly pluralistic, discursive and exploratory ethos that came to be at the very heart of its distinctive character. Thus one of the foundational ideas of Islamic jurisprudence, variously attributed to the eponyms of the Hanafi and Shafi’i schools of law, Abu Hanifa and al- Shafi’i asserted: “We believe that our opinions are correct but we are always cognizant

of the fact that our opinions may be wrong. We also believe that the opinions of our opponents are wrong but we are always cognizant of the fact that they may be correct.” This was much more than a pious declaration of humility or fair-mindedness. Muslim jurists believed that as long as a jurist exerted due diligence and was not negligent in searching the indicators and investigating the pertinent evidence, the resulting determination had an equal claim of legitimacy and authenticity. In fact, Malik ibn Anas, eponym of the Maliki school of thought, argued that different jurists have developed various juristic methods and determinations in different parts of the Muslim world and that it would be wrong to try to streamline or force the various methods into one. Moreover, Malik bin Anas resisted the efforts of the Abbasid Caliph al- Mansur to impose the legal rulings of Malik as the uniform law of the land, arguing that no one, including the state, has the authority to sanctify one school of thought as the true law of God while all others are denounced as corruptions or heresies.

Similar efforts by the Abbasid Caliph Harun al- Rashid and other rulers to have the state become the sole representative of God’s will were defeated as well. According to classical legal reasoning, no one jurists, institution or juristic tradition may have an exclusive claim over the divine truth and hence the state does not have the authority to recognize the orthodoxy of one school of thought to the exclusion of all others.

One of the clearest expressions of the philosophical foundations of this position was that made by the Shafi’i jurist al- Juwayni in writing: “It is as if God has said to human beings, “My command to My servants is in accordance with the preponderance of their beliefs. So whoever preponderantly believes that they are obligated to do something, acting upon it becomes My command.” Al Juwayni goes on to explain that God’s command to human beings is to diligently

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Feminists and Sexual Harassment

Zara Faris

“Sexual harassment” in streets, transportation and places of work seems to be endemic to many societies, including London – 43% of female Londoners say they have been sexually harassed in London’s public spaces (YouGov). The legal recognition of sexual harassment in the work place in the 1970’s was considered to be a success of feminism, and ongoing feminist campaigns now seek to legislate against “street harassment” in the same way. However, the feminist drive to legislate against “unwanted” sexual attention from men hypocritically ignores two fundamental realities of sexual dynamics in Western societies.

Firstly, feminists ignore that women too engage in sexual advances upon men, so they do not rail against sexual attention in general but only against sexual attention from men they dislike. If she finds him attractive, he’s described as a handsome admirer that had the ‘guts’ to pursue her; if she does not find him attractive, he’s described as a disgusting pervert that had the ‘audacity’ to pursue her. For example, feminists say that women dress only to “feel good about themselves”, rather than to attract men, but the reality is that not only do women dress to attract men, but they dress to attract the right men – and advances from others who happen to

be caught in the line of fire of a woman’s public display, end up being condemned as sexual harassment.

In other words, sexual harassment seems to be less about what the man does, and more about who the man is. As long as women remain the sole arbiters in deciding what is or is not “sexual harassment”, men are somehow required to be mind-readers in order to avoid crossing ‘the circle of salt’ drawn around women who they should have known were ‘out of their league’. Feminists seem to be suggesting that the solution to sexual tension in Western society is that men should abandon pursuing relationships completely and leave the job entirely to women.

Secondly, sexual harassment measures seem to be a chastity belt designed only for men and not for women. The reason women have been victims of “sexual harassment” so much more often than men is that women control the criteria for it in the first place. When the man is pursuing the woman it is called “harassment”; but when the woman pursues the man, it is called “seduction”. The assumption is that a woman’s sexual appetite is natural and innocent, but a man’s sexual appetite is predatory and unnatural. If a man were to expose a woman to a regular onslaught of unsolicited sexual stimuli, cre-

ating an “offensive” and “hostile” environment for women, this would most certainly be classified as sexual harassment – but this is exactly the environment that women regularly create by the sexualisation of their public appearance, even in the work place, without objection from society or feminists.

Feminist campaigns go as far as to cry “human rights violations” when it comes to men harassing women, arguing that it limits women’s access to public spaces – but they do not protest that men’s access to public spaces is limited too when women are barely clothed in public, especially during summer time, exposing men to unrelenting and unsolicited sexual stimuli, creating a hostile, frustrating and uncomfortable environment for men. The imposition of female sexuality upon men in the public space interferes with men’s public, professional and private lives.

The reality in the West is that liberalism has eroded the previous cultural formalities which regulated interactions of courtship between men and women. These formalities helped to manage expectations between men and women and keep public areas free from becoming sexual arenas. Now, men and women are left to engage each other haphazardly, without security or trust, and being vulnerable to exploitation. This has given rise to the anarchic dynamic known colloquially in the West as “the game”, where people come not for serious purposes – but to ‘play’.

In this milieu, feminists, under the guise of “sexual harassment”, campaign for the law to act as a selection process, giving women the power to punish and reward men based on the whims of female vanity. This will result in nothing but malformed legislation and a malfunctioning society. This unclear and anarchic *laissez-faire* “system” comes from and is essential to liberalism, where laws and values are no longer sourced from a higher, objective moral authority, such as God. Rather, values, laws and morals become

no more than the product of one interest group against another. Sexual harassment laws, excited by feminist campaigning, protect one gender and villainise the other.

Islam provides a social system to regulate the interaction between men and women, and provides a system for courtship without the risks we find in liberal societies. Islam recognises that men and women need to work together in order for society to live and prosper; but also that men and women are naturally attracted to one another. Whilst enjoying this attraction is encouraged within the context of marriage in Islam, it also realises that this attraction can become a threat to the institution of marriage or family where it is outside of the loving and committed bond of marriage. Rather than expect us all to be perfect (which nobody is), Islam aims to minimise sexual tension in society in the first place, so that men and women can go about interacting with each other in fulfilling their interests in society – be it advancing technology, economy, education, or going about one’s daily errands with minimum temptation, distraction or worry.

So, Islam prescribes a number of safeguards, including that both men and women should “lower their gaze” from one another and both men and women should dress modestly (as enjoined by the Shariah). These measures compel men and women to value each other not based on looks but on virtue and personality; it also minimises insecurities arising from women comparing themselves to other women, and it also protects men’s desires from being exploited.

Whilst liberalism leaves men and women to blindly and chaotically risk accosting each other in the pursuit of relationships, Islam seeks to organise courtship between men and women so that they are both honoured in the right way and relationships are pursued for serious purposes. This leaves the public and professional life free from the vagaries and frustrations of sexual politics, so that people can go about their lives without fear of being distracted or harassed.

A Prayer from Iqbal

Muhammad Ghilan, Phd

But before we can do this, we must first negate our own humanity or we risk seeing ourselves in the mirror that is the other. We mistakenly conflate technological progress with moral progress. However, it can be argued that technological progress has allowed us the means to explore how further we can morally regress.

Iqbal characterized his writings as a dialogue between tradition and modernity, and his poetry as a commentary on the Quran. That is why although Iqbal gave this address nearly 80 years ago, reading it now feels as if it was given 8 days ago.

The modern age prides itself on its progress in knowledge and its matchless scientific developments. No doubt, the pride is justified. Today space and time are being annihilated and man is achieving amazing successes in unveiling the secrets of nature and harnessing its forces to his own service. But in spite of all these developments, the tyranny of imperialism struts abroad, covering its face in the masks of democracy, nationalism, communism, fascism, and heaven knows what else besides. Under these masks, in every corner of the earth, the spirit of freedom and the dignity of man are being trampled underfoot in a way of which not even the darkest period of human history presents a parallel. The so-called statesmen to whom government had entrusted leadership have proved demons of bloodshed, tyranny, and oppression. The rulers whose duty it was to protect higher humanity, to prevent man's oppression of man and to elevate the moral and intellectual level of mankind, have in their hunger for dominion and imperial possessions, shed the blood of millions and reduced millions to servitude simply in order to pander to the greed and avarice of their own particu-

My ancestors were Brahmins. They spent their lives in search of god. I am spending my life in search of man." – Muhammad Iqbal

The following is a transcript of an address Muhammad Iqbal gave on January 1st, 1938 to mark the beginning of the new year, and it was broadcast over the All India Radio. He passed away four months later on April 21st. The power of this speech is in its timeless relevance because it touches on something innate to the human condition. In pursuit of ephemeral material and territorial gains, we allow the expression of our potentiality to oppress and subjugate fellow human beings and can go as far as to shed blood.

lar groups. After subjugating and establishing their dominion over weaker peoples, they have robbed them of their possessions, of their religions, their morals, of their cultural traditions and their literatures. Then they sowed divisions among them that they should shed one another's blood and go to sleep under the opiate of serfdom so that the leech of imperialism might go on sucking their blood without interruption.

As I look back on the year that has passed and as I look at the world in the midst of the New Year's rejoicings, it may be Abyssinia or Palestine, Spain or China, the same misery prevails in every corner of man's earthly home and hundreds of thousands of men are being butchered mercilessly. Engines of destruction operated by science are wiping out the great landmarks of man's cultural achievements. The governments which are not themselves engaged in this drama of fire and blood are sucking the blood of the weaker peoples economically. It is as if the day of doom had come upon the earth, in which each man looks after the safety of his own skin, and in which no voice of human sympathy or fellowship is audible.

The world's thinkers are stricken dumb. Is this going to be the end of all this progress and evolution of civilization, they ask, that men should destroy one another in mutual hatred and make human habitation impossible on this earth? Remember, man can be maintained on

this earth only by honouring mankind, and this world will remain a battleground of ferocious beasts of prey unless and until the educational forces of the whole world are directed to inculcating in man respect for mankind. Do you not

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see that the people of Spain, though they have the same common bond of one race, one nationality, one language and one religion, are cutting one another's throats and destroying their culture and civilization by their own

hands owing to a difference in their economic creed? This one event shows clearly that national unity too is not a very durable force. Only one unity is dependable and that unity is the brotherhood of man, which is above race, nationality, colour or language. So long as this so-called democracy, this accursed nationalism, and this degraded imperialism are not shattered, so long as men do not demonstrate by their actions that they believe that the whole world is the family of God, so long as distinctions of race, colour, and geographical nationalities are not wiped out completely, they will never be able to lead a happy and contented life, and the beautiful ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity will never materialize.

Let us, therefore, begin the New Year with the prayer that God Almighty may grant humanity to those who are in places of power and government and teach them to cherish mankind.

Beneath Her Heels

Tahira Rabbani

While massaging my mother's feet one night to help her sleep, I looked at the cracks and creases of her soles and said: "So heaven is under here?" She laughed me off but was ready to give me a long speech of her turmoil and pain in raising us, hoping that we'd return her favors by respect and kindness instead of a grunt, or by sending a simple smile her way when we saw her in the room.

Now a mother of two children (with number three on the way), I hope for the same and probably more from my own brood, though I struggle far less than my own mother did. Why is it that Islam tells us heaven lies beneath a mother's feet? It raises mothers to an immense height for all that they endure through the four arduous phases of pregnancy (a fourth trimester?), a painful delivery, and a lifetime of raising children as true Muslims.

But sometimes I wonder: Do we modern mothers deserve this rank? Should we rest assured that we will?

Pregnancy

When I was first pregnant, I knew I had to make some changes. The first was to stop listen-

ing to music. No longer did I attend to it during my college commute or while I wrote my papers. I tried to remain positive and patient as my body underwent temporary and permanent changes. I would keep a positive environment through how I spoke about my pregnancy and with whom I spoke. Whenever I felt like the fetus was taking over my body, I had to repeatedly remind myself of the amazing, almost sublime experience I was having.

While non-Muslim women might face certain restrictions like not smoking or drinking during pregnancy, Muslim women often come to a subtler set of limits. Think of the kinds of things we listen to, watch on television, the places we go, the social gatherings we attend, and the company we keep. These things should change to keep a simple, Islamic environment for the unborn child. Think of how the Prophet Muhammad never attended festivals and weddings during pagan times. And when as a young man he thought to go, Allah soothed him to sleep until the events passed. This kept him pure even before the announcement of his prophethood.

Most importantly, we should all eat halal, for this has a definite effect on us. We truly are

what we eat. The fetus consumes what the mother does and purity itself is at issue. Imagine how many things we eat knowingly and unknowingly that aren't halal. Pregnancy comes with cravings, but do we really need those fries from the fast food place, which are most likely fried with other haram foods? Always question and ask about where food comes from before letting it come in contact with you.

Apart from food, mothers-to-be can take care of the words that lie on their tongues. Continual recitation of the Quran can be supplemented with dhikrof Allah. Take from the example of Allah's prophets—the Patriarch Prophet Ibrahim recited:

"O my Lord! Grant me a righteous son"
[37:100]

and when the mother of Maryam found herself pregnant she said: "O my Lord! I dedicate to you what is in my womb for your special service. So accept this of me for You are the hearer and knower of all things" [Surat Al-"Imran, 3:35].

Devotion and engagement in salah and remembrance will ensure that we be reminded of our place as His servants and that He will help us and ease for us ways to raise our children for what they were made—to be honest servants of our Lord and Creator, Allah the Most High. A mother's environment, inside and out, has a definite effect on baby.

Labor and Delivery

How great a trial for mothers is labor! And how great a sign and with what profound meaning.

Luckily, we forget it and decide to have more children—although I can't say the same for fathers. Many mothers opt for taking anesthesia if they aren't scheduled for a C-section. This eases labor tremendously. However, there are some setbacks in that a mother is at so much ease that she returns to useless talk with whoever is in the room. She might forget to remember Allah at this meritorious time. A woman's prayers

are surely accepted and answered during labor. Even if mothers-to-be take an epidural or have a C-section, it is essential to remember Allah and pray and supplicate Him because this momentous occurrence of childbirth only rarely comes our way and is yet another gift from Allah.

A mother should not forget the Sunnah of tahneek. This may be given to the newborn using something sweet, like a date softened with the mother's saliva or in water (zamzam, is good) then introduced to the baby's mouth moving it all around for him or her to taste. More sunnahs include shaving of the baby's head, giving sadaqa, and having an 'aqiqa. Pregnancy, from conception to the birth and afterward needs to—and can be—made much more meaningful when surrounded with increased remembrance of Allah and made to meet the Sunnah of the Prophet.

Postpartum

Many may think that pregnancy ends after three trimesters, but there is a fourth—the three months post-partum. Adjusting to baby, no matter how many children you have, takes time. In the same way, breastfeeding is something learned because the instinct of each child is "trained" from point zero.

Mothers today experience new hurdles in breastfeeding because most of their own mothers did not breastfeed. Hence, new moms may come across a lack of family support. It is essential to have a support group for such an important part of a mother and child's life. These women share an immense amount of knowledge about breastfeeding. Even if breastfeeding is a breeze to some, joining groups like La Leche League can be crucial for some new mothers to keep up confidence and perseverance when it comes to nursing.

Women can begin their own Islamic groups about motherhood geared toward raising children according to the Sunnah. When feeding a baby, mothers ought to ensure they are in the

state of wudu (when the postpartum period passes), recite basmala before feeding, and perhaps read the Quran aloud while feeding.

It is tempting to use the 15 to 20 minutes of strictly nursing time to make phone calls or watch television. But this becomes part of our struggle to become those mothers who our children will thank in the future. Reading the Quran could lead to spiritual good in a child and possibly early memorization and recitation. Researchers tell us that the fetus picks up on sounds and, as a baby, is calmer when hearing those same sounds. Why not use this to our advantage and read or listen to the Quran regularly so that it becomes a soothing part of our children's lives? Since Islam is a way of life, children are ready to begin learning it from before birth.

Breastfeeding has its obvious benefits for the mother as well. The mother-child relationship is more intimate. Physically, the mother's body more swiftly returns to its pre-pregnancy state. In most cases, a woman is less likely to conceive within the next six to 12 months without using any prevention. A woman also lowers her risk of getting certain cancers at a later age. Imagine how much milk a child drinks in six months, or a year, or in the full term of two years as according to the Quran:

"and mothers breast-feed their children for two years..." [2:233].

A mother (and the father) receives Allah's blessings for every drop a child drinks. Thus the bounties of nursing a child go beyond this world.

Keeping an Islamic environment from pregnancy on gives a cradle-to-grave experience of divine light to our children. While the Prophet never gave parenting "workshops" to his Companions, he did leave them (and us) his Sunnah to follow and be successful. When women strive for ideal motherhood by making pregnancy a blessing and exposing their children to Islam through their own actions, Allah will protect

them and guide them to become ideal Muslims. Then, maybe all Muslim mothers will be worthy of that high rank among the women of Heaven

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search the indicators and weigh the evidence, and God's law is suspended until a human being forms a preponderance of belief about the law. At the point that a preponderance of belief is reached, God's law becomes in accordance with the preponderance of belief formed by that particular individual. In short, therefore, if a person honestly and sincerely believes that such and such is the law of God then as to that person, that is in fact God's law. Nevertheless, this philosophy did not mean that Muslim jurists accepted legal relativism or even indeterminism in Shari'ah. As noted above, Shari'ah was considered to be the immutable, unchangeable, and objectively perfect divine truth. Human understanding of Shari'ah, however, was subjective, partial and subject to err and change. While Shari'ah is divine, fiqh (the human understanding of Shari'ah) was recognized to be only potentially so, and it is the distinction between Shari'ah and fiqh that fueled and legitimated the practice of legal pluralism in Islamic history.

Source: Dar-ul-Ifta al-Missiriyah

Loving for Others what You Love for Yourself

The Prophet (saws) said: One will not be a true believer until he wishes for his brother that which he wishes for himself.

Shaikh Muhammad Zakariyya (ra) explains: If one has to practise on this hadith and inculcate its teaching in his life, then all internal disputes and arguments will come to an end. However, when we wish to receive more while we wish for others to receive less, then how can these quarrels ever be resolved?

(Suhbat Baa Awliyaa pg. 96)

I can handle it

Sabiha Ahmad

Not too long ago, I suffered a serious medical setback that now requires me to take medication life long and prevents me from bearing any more children. My initial reaction after conversing with doctors, family members and friends, was a combination of depression, fear and confusion. My children are still young and my husband and I, only days before, were contemplating having one more. After making Istikharah, we waited to see what was meant for us. Two days later, I was rushed to the emergency room and later given the diagnosis: No more kids. This sure was a heck of a way to find out...

However, during the few days in the hospital following that fateful first day, while I was drugged up and surrounded by loved ones and lovely flowers, I had the proverbial epiphany. I know that Allah says in the Qur'an,

"On no soul does Allah place a burden greater than it can bear..." [2:286]

This usually encourages us to be patient and to remember that whatever our ailment or difficulty, if we persevere with steadfastness, we will ultimately succeed. It ensures that there is a silver lining, that there is always reward with every pain. But what I realized was that this is not only what the verse promises.

It was fortunate for me that I remembered this verse shortly after my incident, for that was the perfect time for me to reflect. When Allah

assures that my burdens will never be too great, it makes me realize that this is a promise that no one else can make. Of course, that's obvious, but what I mean is, who better to tell a human what he or she can handle than the Creator of that human? Allah created us and He knows what we can handle.

Once I realized this, I really felt like I could handle this situation better than anyone else. In fact, I was no longer depressed or afraid, as I was initially. My mood changed drastically because I didn't have to worry what would happen to me. I will be okay.

I can only wonder now, years later, why it was so difficult for me to realize this. Why did it take a life-altering situation to make me see this? I think that most of us, myself included, go through much of our lives in a bubble. We feel that whatever is happening to us is removed from the rest of the world. If we are suffering, we think we're the only ones. Any trial that comes our way makes us think, "Why me?" and even, "I can't handle this." Most of us are guilty of thinking something like this sometime in our lives.

But, rest assured, we can handle it. And more importantly, we must handle it. That's what life is all about--trials and tests that we have to pass, hurdles that we have to overcome, and all the while moving forward. More specifically, we are moving forward in a race, and the ones with the most points win. And points are not dollars or

degrees, they are deeds. How we handle a difficult situation directly affects how we will fare in the end. Just knowing that we can handle any situation life presents gives us the confidence and the courage to deal with the problem and surmount it. It's like having a personal coach, telling us, "You can do it!" If we listen, this is what Allah is telling us. He is giving us the encouragement and the support that we need; and

support from Him is more precious than any other form of backing. The key is remembering this fact in the face of tragedy.

Even now, for a brief moment, I might think to myself, "Oh God, what now?" But quickly I remind myself that this is another one of life's trials and I know I can take it. I now see these challenges as opportunities for me to get closer to my Lord, subhanahu wa ta'ala.

Listening to Lectures with the Intention of Reforming Oneself

Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (ra) once mentioned:

A person once wrote a letter to me wherein he requested that I teach and instruct him as to how he may reform his condition. In reply, I wrote to him and advised that he read twenty of my transcribed lectures and endeavour to inculcate and practice upon my teachings. I further advised him to write to me after carrying this out so that he may inform me of his condition and whether he finds any change in his life. After reading twenty of my transcribed lectures, he wrote to me saying, "I do not find any improvement and change in my life." I replied to him saying, "You either read the lectures without the intention of reforming yourself, or the lectures which you read did not contain any advice pertaining to your self-reformation, or perhaps there are no deficiencies within you which require reformation." After reading my reply, he admitted that although he read through the lectures, he did not do so with the intention of reforming himself. I therefore wrote to him saying, "This is the reason for you not finding any change and improvement in your life. Now I ask you to read these lectures again with the intention of Islaah (seeking self-reformation)." Alhamdulillah, after reading the lectures again with the correct intention, he wrote back to me informing me that he has derived immense benefit from the lectures and that he finds substantial change and improvement in his life. (Malfoozaat Hakeemul Ummat 8/318)

When *The Qur'an* Shall Walk.....

Amer Haleem

Twenty-five years ago, I read a statement in Saheeh Al-Bukhari by one of the Companions of the Prophet (saws). He said, in sum,

"If ever a man among us stood up and recited the surah of A. S. Baqarah and the surah of Al Imran, we would hold him in awe."

Breathtaking, indeed, I thought to myself. That is about an eighth of the entire Qur'an to have learned by rote!

I came to realize much later, however, the true significance of the Companions' admiration for one like this. It was not that the person who led them in salah (which is what "stood up and recited" here means) had memorized that much of the Qur'an. It was what his memorization of these two Madinan surahs signaled to them.

The Companions had a well-known method of Qur'an study in their time, which means that the Prophet (saws), knew it and approved it. Rather, it more particularly means that he had thoroughly inculcated this methodology of Qur'an study in the men and women around him. Yet "study" is too coolly academic a term to properly describe the passionate, all-engaging endeavor with the Qur'an of the men around the Messenger (saws). "Study" smacks too much like how we might pompously ex-

press our own detached and untutored efforts with the Book of Allah. Systematic and systemic immersion in the oceans of Allah's revelation--that is more the way Qur'an learning was when Islam lived!

"Living," of course, is very much the proper word to use to convey the Qur'anic experience of that Prophet-lit, luminous first generation of Islam.

When revelation poured down upon them like so much unfailing light from Heaven and the heart of the Prophet, or when his supporters finally embraced the role that the illustrious title of 'Companion' conferred upon them, and rose up to meet it, the Companions would set out to "drink" the Qur'an in, like the desert soaks up summer sunlight, or its thirsty dweller laps up sweet water from an unexpected oasis.

Here is how they did it.

First, they labored to memorize the Qur'an by heart--no more than ten verses at a time. Then, they worked tirelessly to understand its language and meaning intellectually. Then they strove with every cell of their minds and bodies to implement its instructions, injunctions, value set, and ideals in the physical-emotional world in which they lived. Then they stilled themselves by sheer will, in the day and the night, to reflect on the overarching implica-

tions, the extended inferences, the fathomless connotations of the meaning of those verses in life and in death, in the Hereafter, and in the finite and infinite universes of the human experience with the mundane and the divine.

Only after the completion of this rigorous learning cycle did they allow themselves to go on to the next ten verses of the Qur'an.

All the scholars of Islam, from Ibn Abbas, the Qur'an sage, to Abu Hamid al-Ghazali of The Revival of the Religious Sciences fame, to Ibn Taymiyyah, the restorer of the Sunnah, to contemporary Qur'an commentators--all are agreed that this was, in fact, the method of Qur'an learning in the time of the Messenger(-saws)--which brings us to the verses now to be discussed.

"For if ever there were a [Heavenly] Recitation with which mountains could be moved, or with which the earth could be cut to pieces, or with which the dead could be spoken to

But assuredly, the command belongs entirely to Allah." [13:31]

And also, the much-recited, but less understood, twenty-first verse of the surah of Al-Hashr:

"Had We sent this Qur'an down upon a mountain, you would have most surely seen it utterly humbled, breaking apart, from fear of Allah. And such are the parables we set forth for all people, so that they may reflect." [59:21]

Both these verses tell the vulnerable believer, you desire overwhelming force, power in the world that cannot be withstood, and you say you seek it for good and for the sake of Allah. Yet here, in this Qur'an, inheres more power than the heavens, the earth, and the anchoring mountains upon it can themselves bear up under.

Moreover, it is given to you freely. Yet how is it, O human being, to be unleashed and wielded by you?

In the verse of the surah of Al-Ra'd, there is an interesting gap left between the hypothetical statement of Allah, "For if ever..." and the conjunctive clause that follows it "But assuredly, the command belongs entirely to Allah." What is the message in the breach? In the verse of the surah of Al-Hashr, once more the echo of this intriguing hint resounds, again in the divine hypothetical, "Had We sent this Qur'an down upon a mountain"

The point in these verses is two-fold:

1. If ever there were a revelation possessed of enough potency of divine truth from Allah to literally crack open the world for fear of the consequences of disobeying Him, then it is this revelation, this Qur'an, that Allah has sent down, which confines the decisive energy to remove any and all seemingly unmovable obstacles from the path of its trajectory unto man and the Hereafter.

2. Allah, in fact, did not choose to reveal this Qur'an to a mountain, to the earth, to the skies--all of which were offered the trust of volitional faith, but rejected it. Rather, Allah chose to reveal the Qur'an to humankind in a sign they could comprehend on their own and communicate to one another, by way of a human messenger who was just like them, save for his election by Allah to the task of first reception, explication, and exemplification.

The challenge for humanity, then, to which these verses alert us, is that it is left to the believers to find a way to mediate this divine force packed into the Qur'an into the world. For Allah could well have set His words in stone, hurling them in perpetuity against this mountainside and that, whereby people of every generation and location would have come to watch these mountains successively crumble, and thereby be admonished to fear Allah, even as these great mountains--a much greater crea-

tion than us--feared Him.

Or, He could have placed His words in the clouds until they cracked the sky with their weightiness and fell to the earth, shredding it utterly, such that we who walked the land would feel with every precarious step the very fear of Allah in us at this divine moment, as we perished.

Or, He could have placed this revelation in our water, and so when we drank it, every one of us would have internalized it and been transformed by it into supermen, imbued with Allah's will and word.

"But..." as the Qur'an says, the reality is that Allah chose to honor humankind by sending down in its midst a revealed Book as the Heavenly Recitation to end all divine dispensations. It is for this reason to be held in high honor-touched only by the pure, opened with a prayer, beautified by the voice, illuminated by the hand', memorized by the heart, and stored with esteem.

Yet these due honors, Allah has decreed, shall not bring the Qur'an to bear in the world--not if we are merely to ensconce it in silk, print it with gold, enshrine it in high casings, touch it for blessings, adorn ourselves with its inscribed amulets, attach it to our walls, suspend it from our rearview mirrors, open it to random verses in search of hurried answers in times of crushing confusion, even drink the dust that gathers upon it and swear by its truth. Not even if we memorize the Qur'an from Al-Fatihah to An-Nas shall its miracle come into our lives, ff we know of it no more than uttered sounds that sink no deeper than our collarbones.

No. The Qur'an is not a charm, an icon, an artifact, or holy relic. It will not yield its awesome power in the physical realm--as Allah so graphically portrays it--unmediated by the human spirit and relegated to casual engagement. Rather, it is the will of the Qur'an's Revealer that its vested, quiescent, earth-shattering power can only come into the world by way

of the saturated, believing human heart that struggles systematically every day and by every means to learn it and "do" it until he or she "becomes" it--in remembrance, in intellection, in action, and in deliberation.

This is the compulsory task of each and every Muslim, old or young, female or male, to devise a life plan, a daily endeavor to resuscitate his or her own heart to life with the Qur'an, and thereby to bring the Qur'an to life in the world. In a sentence, every Muslim's mission statement should read simply, "To become the Qur'an walking."

This can only be done if we revive the Qur'an study plan approved by the Messenger and practiced by the Companions. All other approaches are nearly folly.

It is in this light, that we may understand the knee-buckling awe with which the man among the Companions who stood up to recite the surah of Al-Baqarah and the surah of Al-Imran before them used to be held. For it meant not only that here was a human being who had memorized these two golden-winged surahs, but one that had captured their remembrance with his heart, understood full well their every verse's meanings, implemented all that they enjoined him with in his life with intent, and who had been transported by their verses to reaches very likely beyond the spiritual ken or comprehension of anyone living today with respect to the utterly profound consequences of the verses of the Qur'an and their harrowing implications for his own soul and all of humanly'.

Anyone familiar with these two surahs can attest that such a human being as this would, indeed, be a person to hold in awesome wonder. As for a community of such men and women, one would not be surprised to find them humbling mountainous social problems into dust, transforming the ailing earth back to pristine wholesomeness, and, miracle of miracles, waking us, the living dead.

Returning to God

Nikhat Sattar

One of the saddest moments in life is seeing a loved one dying. Until then, we delude ourselves, although we read, hear and even see others pass away. Nothing, however, prepares us for our own mortality like the death of the person whom we hold most dear.

Death is the utmost mystery of life: the puzzle that remains unsolved, that is shrouded in conjecture and myths and that has captured the imagination of philosophers, scholars, scientists, authors, poets and fiction writers throughout the centuries.

Death is inevitable, and the fear of it is inherent in the human heart.

However painful his life may be, and however worthless he might believe himself to be, a person will never agree to die, except in a state of extreme emotion, as is witnessed in the case of suicide. Death is perceived as the annihilation of life — a life that provides a person with a sense of being.

The Quran suggests something entirely different. Life is made up of two phases: one is transitory and short, to be spent in this world; the other is eternal and in a world unknown to anyone who lives. Death is not de-

struction but the passage of the whole living being, including body and soul, from one phase to the other, the duration of the former varying from individual to individual.

"Every soul shall have a taste of death"
(3:185).

Every living person is in a waiting room and may be called to die at any time. The room is full of entertaining games and sights that keep the inhabitants occupied, to the extent of being unaware of the ultimate call.

All of us are witness to others passing through the exit, in a Death is a return to our Creator. A return signifies going back to where we came from: in short, our real home.

one-way route. We are shocked momentarily and spend some time thinking of our own journey and where it might take us. Then we forget about it.

Death is a return to our Creator. A return signifies going back to where we came from: in short, our real home.

We spend our waiting time engrossed in various activities, depending upon our whims and

desires. If we have paid heed to advice on what to expect outside the door, we may attempt to prepare ourselves, or we may decide that this waiting room is all that there is and we will

never come to life again. In reality, this waiting time begins from the moment of our birth. As the English churchman and historian Thomas Fuller puts it, "the first breath is the beginning of death".

Death is a return to our Creator. A return signifies going back to where we came from: in short, our real home.

"To Allah We belong, and to Him is our return" (2:156).

Our stay in this world is a mere journey, to be lived briefly, but with constant reminders of our origin. Returning to God is returning home, and we will find that it was our stay in this world that was strange. Our real and natural abode is the one promised to us when we have exited to the afterlife. When our dear ones depart, we grieve over their loss and we miss them in our daily lives. But it is important to realise that we shall soon be united with them, hopefully under circumstances where no pain or worries would trouble us.

The Quran also likens death to sleep wherein the soul is taken by God and returned (when a person wakes up) but not when death has been decreed.

"It is Allah that takes the souls (of men) at death; and those that die not (He takes) during their sleep: those on whom He has passed the decree of death, He keeps back (from returning to life), but the rest He sends (to their bodies) for a term appointed..." (39:42)

There is an intermediary phase between death and the Day of Judgement. This is the aalam-i-burzakh, when the souls of dead humans exist, unknown to the physical world.

The best and worst of people are rewarded or punished immediately after death but others must wait for questioning on the Day of Judgement.

If death is a must, as all of us know, and if we are brought back to life after dying, as believers

believe, why do we not take steps to prepare for an eternal existence that may be full of joy and not one that is doomed to punishment?

What is it that covers our souls with sins and which prevents us from repenting, even when we realise our errors? We mouth platitudes and clichés of religious piety, invoking God, swearing upon our integrity and good faith and intentions, yet we remain false in action. We have limited time before the final trumpet is sounded, for none of us will have any leeway in purgatory or later. The time to correct our ways is now.

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but I used to spend a lot of time at the mosque at Holland Park. I learnt a lot from the imam there. It's the same as most mosques, everyone's supportive of each other and friendly.

The good with the bad

I've been called a terrorist. It's like water off a duck's back for me, but if it's directed at someone who I'd consider vulnerable, it makes me angry. It amuses me in a way – I'm a blue-eyed Aussie bloke with a Southern Cross tattoo, and to be discriminated against for the first time in my life is an interesting feeling. It's a weird feeling to have someone hate you, not because of anything you've done to them, or anything about you, other than what you believe. They hate you without knowing you.

I now work in community outreach. I literally reach out and look for people who need help in the community. Rather than sitting back and saying 'If you need something, call us', I tend to go out and speak to people and let them know what I do and offer my help.

Predominately, it's kids with legal issues – giving them advice about how to get a solicitor or encouraging them to follow their bail conditions so they don't re-offend and end up in jail.

At the end of the day, we don't want our young brothers occupying the correctional centres. We want them to live good lives.

Islam Saved Me from a Life of Crime

Robbie Maestracci gave up a life of crime when he converted to Islam.

I was born in Brisbane in 1981. When I was seven we moved to America. My parents had split up and dad was running hotels in Noumea and New Caledonia. Mum had some friends in the States and we went over for a vacation. She found work and one year led to two, and she eventually got remarried.

We lived between New York and New Jersey. It was amazing – like what you see on TV. The kids were all running amok. It was a lot of fun, but the wrong kind of fun.

Religion was part of my life growing up. I can remember mum encouraging me to pray when I was a boy. She used to take me to church – sometimes we'd go to a Catholic church, sometimes we'd go to a Pentecostal. But as soon as I was old enough not to go, I didn't. I can't recall praying or thinking about anything beyond the here and now as a young man.

We moved back to Australia when I was 16. Mum didn't say so at the time but I think part of the reason we came back was me. I was on the wrong path with the kids I was hanging around. Mum told me we were coming here to Australia for a vacation. It turns out it was a one-way ticket but she figured that was the only way to get me out of there.

"I was lost, I was doing bad things."

I moped around for a few years. I was really depressed because I wanted to go back to the States with my friends. I tried to go to school here but the system was completely different. Within six months of enrolling I dropped out.

I got a job doing door-to-door marketing – the sort of thing you jump into after school with no experience. Later I worked at a bank and at Centrelink – they were good jobs. But recreational drug use was always in the background. I'd go out and party on the weekends. The thing about that is, from what I've observed, recreational drugs stay in the background until something happens in your life, and they don't become so recreational or occasional any more.

That's what happened with me. I was married young at 22. I was using drugs throughout my marriage and when my marriage ended, I went into a nosedive. I'd felt like I'd failed at conventional life. I didn't deal with it well and I turned to drugs and crime.

It was a bad time. I was lost, I was doing bad things. I was a typical crim, involved in anything that was drug-related. I wasn't living a good life. I wasn't happy with myself.

In 2007, I was sentenced to 10 months in prison for drug-related offences. To be honest, it was really good for me at the time. I wasn't very

healthy at all. I was staying up for two or three nights at a time, sometimes more, partying and not eating well, so when I got locked up it was good to have food and sleep and get healthy again. Jail opened my eyes. It wasn't anywhere as bad as I thought it would be, but it's not a goal you set yourself to end up there. It's not a wonderful place or anything.

When I got out, I got straight back into it. I didn't even pause. There wasn't even a moment that I wasn't running amok, doing the same things with the same people.

Changing old habits

But somewhere along the way, doing all these bad things, I became more interested in my spiritual self – who I was as a person and my character. I realised I had become the worst version of myself.

I started changing old habits, being honest with myself and other people. I started going to a Baptist church down on the Gold Coast and got involved in feeding needy people in the area. We'd cook up a lunch on Thursdays. Doing things like that made me realise that it wasn't that hard to change – I could change.

It felt good to surround myself with nice religious people who were doing good things, as opposed to [the] people [I knew] with no religion who were doing really bad things to each other – selling drugs, or harming each other for drugs or money. It was light compared to total darkness.

I believed in God but theologically I didn't feel satisfied with Christianity. In the back of my mind, I'd always wanted to read the Koran and to go to a mosque. One day, when I was having a really bad day, I felt like I needed to reach out to someone. I found a phone number for a cab driver named Mohammed who I'd met a couple of weeks earlier. I called him and asked if I could go to the mosque with him. He asked me why, and I said, 'Look, I need guidance, I need help', so he picked me up and took me there that

evening. And that was it. I spoke with one of the imams and I watched the brothers pray and had this total feeling of serenity within myself. It was that feeling of coming home, of belonging.

"It changed my entire life."

I gave my Shahādah, the testament of faith, that night, and everything changed. I no longer had this desire to use drugs, and I've been clean now for five years. It changed my entire life. It gave me the means and the rules and the path to follow to achieve what I'd set out to achieve a year before I converted, which was to strive to become the best version of myself. When you're doing that on your own with no rules to follow, it can be a tough process.

Part of the appeal of Islam was the strength of character of the Muslim people that I'd met. The fact that they didn't use drugs and drink at all was something that really appealed to me. It was the polar opposite of how I'd been living my life and seemed to require such strength of character. As a young man, I was always drawn towards strength.

It was not just a good system [for me] to follow. I agree with all the theology – I do believe that the Koran is the last Book of Revelations. I now have a renewed interest in the Bible and the books that came before it because, from our point of view, I know that there is truth in these documents, whereas before, as a loose Christian, I don't know that I had any belief in them at all.

I'd say 99 per cent of the people in my life were supportive and happy. No one thought I could change. Whether they agree with the theology or not, they are certainly happy with the results it had in my life.

Three months after I converted my mum converted as well. She has been a massive supporter of anything positive I do in my life but in this instance, she also believes as I believe, and therefore she practices as I do.

Four years ago, I moved from the Gold Coast to Brisbane. Slacks Creek is my local mosque

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The Prophet's Mercy



Dr. A'íd al-Qarni

Allah described the Prophet (saws) as follows:

"And We have sent you (O Muhammad) not but as a mercy for the Alameen (mankind, jinns, and all that exists)". (21:107)

It is related that the Prophet (saws) said about himself: "Verily, I am nothing more than a mercy and a guide". (Darimi) Once, upon seeing his daughter's son dying, the Prophet (saws) began to cry. When someone asked him about his crying, he said, "Verily, this is mercy which Allah places in the heart of whomsoever He wills from His slaves. And verily, Allah has mercy only on those among his slaves who are themselves merciful". (Bukhari)

The Prophet (saws) was equally merciful towards relatives, friends, and stranger; after all, Allah described him as being a mercy, not just to friends and relatives, not even just to Muslims, but to all that exists.

In everything he did, the Prophet (saws) tried to make matters easy for his people. For instance, when he wanted to prolong the congregational prayer, and when he would then hear the crying of a baby, he would shorten the length of his prayer, so as to avoid making matters difficult for the baby's mother. On one occasion, when

Umamah bint Zaynab (RA) cried while Muslims were performing congregational prayer, the Prophet (saws) picked her up and continued to lead the people in prayer. Then, when he performed prostration, he placed her on the ground; and when he stood up for a new unit of the Prayer, he picked her up again". (Bukhari, Muslim)

On another occasion, when the Prophet (saws) went down to perform prostration during a congregational prayer, al-Hasan climbed onto his back. The Prophet (saws) then prolonged his prostration, and when he completed his prayer, he apologized to the other members of the congregation and then said: "Verily, this son of mine (i.e., al-Hasan) climbed on top of me, and I disliked the idea of raising my head until he first descended (of his own volition)". (Ahmad, Nasa'i)

The Prophet (saws) exhorted his companions to follow his example, saying to them: "When someone among you leads people (in prayer), then let him shorten the length of his Prayer, for among the people are the elderly, the very young, the sick, and the ones who have important errands to do." (Bukhari, Muslim)

Once, when Mu'adh (RA), while leading other, prolonged the length of his prayer, the Prophet (saws) said to him: "O Mu'adh, are you a Fattan!" (Bukhari, Muslim) A fattan is someone who puts

others to trial, or who tempts them away from what they should be doing; in the context of this hadith, the Prophet (saws) meant the following: “O Mu’adh, are you discouraging people from coming to perform congregational prayer?” The Prophet (saws) even refrained from making certain recommended practices into laws because he didn’t want to make matters difficult for Muslims; for example, he said, “Had doing so not been difficult for the people, I would have ordered them to use Siwak (a stick that is used to clean one’s teeth at the time of every prayer).” (*Bukhari, Muslim*)

The Prophet (saws) would say to his companions, “Moderation, moderation—and then you will reach (your goal of safety, salvation, etc.)” (*Ahmad*) He would also say, “I have been sent with al-Haneefiyah as-Samhah.” (*Bukhari*) Or in other words, “I have been sent a Religion that rejects falsehood and promotes pure monotheism, A Religion that is tolerant, lenient, and easy to follow.” He would also say, “The best of your Religion is the easiest of it.” (*Ahmad*) He was also known to say, “Follow a moderate guidance.” (*Ahmad, Bayhaqi*)

The Prophet (saws) said: “Do, in terms of deeds, only that which you can handle; for indeed, Allah does not become bored is until you become bored.” (*Bukhari, Muslim*) Of course, ‘boredom’ is a quality that is not befitting of Allah’s greatness, perfection, and Majesty; therefore, some of the people of knowledge have interpreted the phrase “Allah does not become bored” as follows: “He does not treat you as one who becomes bored would treat you, by cutting you off from His rewards; instead, as long as you do not become bored of doing good deeds, He will not stop bestowing upon you His rewards.”

Whenever the Prophet (saws) was given two choices, he would choose the easier of the two, as long as doing so did not involve sinning. On one occasion, he reproached three men who imposed upon themselves strict and unreasonable rules for worshipping Allah. They felt that, since, unlike the Prophet (saws) performed. One of them

vowed to spend the whole of every night of his life in prayer; another made an oath to fast every day; and the third one among them vowed never to marry. The Prophet (saws) said to them: “By Allah, I fear Allah and am afraid of His to a greater degree than any person among you. And yet I stand up (to pray) and I sleep; I fast (some days), and I don’t fast (other days). So whosoever turns away from my Sunnah (my way, my guidance, etc.) is not from me”. (*Bukhari, Muslim*)

The Prophet (saws) understood that traveling was an ordeal in and of itself – given that a traveler has to forsake his home for an extended period of time, that he must endure the heat of the sun, that his sleep schedule becomes disturbed, and so on. Therefore, in order to make matters easy for his people, the Prophet (saws) legislated certain practices –or established certain precedents—that made travelling a less trying ordeal: While travelling during Ramadan, he would sometimes abstain from fasting; he would shorten the length of four-unit prayers; he would join between the dhuhr and asr prayers, and between the magrib and isha prayers. And on a rainy day, his mu’adh-dhin called out to the people, saying, “Pray in your homes.”

Gentleness, moderation, and consistency—these were all qualities that the Prophet (saws) encouraged his followers to adopt. Harshness, immoderation, and inconsistency—these were all qualities that the Prophet (saws) shunned. According to one narration, the Prophet (saws) said: “Whenever gentleness is found in something, then that thing becomes sullied and tainted.” (*Muslim*) According to another narration, the Prophet (saws) reproached Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-Aas for overburdening himself with too many acts of worship. He said, “Beware of immoderation.” (*Ahmad, Nasa’I, Ibn Majah*)

It is related that the Prophet (saws) said, “My nation is a nation that has mercy on it.” (*Ahmad, Abu Dawood*) He also said, “When I give you a command, follow it as much as you are able to.”

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The Station of

Khawf

Allaama Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawzi (ra)

From among the stations of worshipping Allah and seeking His help is the station of “fear.” Fear is one of the most important stations on the path and most beneficial for the heart.

Fear is an obligation upon everyone, as Allah has said,

So fear them not, and fear Me alone, if you are believers. [Sûrat Al-Imrân, 3:175]

(The actual word used for fear in this verse is ‘khawf.’)

Another verse says,

And Me alone you all should fear. [Sûrat Al-Baqarah, 2:40]

the actual word being a derivative of ‘rahba.’

And,

So do not fear people, but fear Me. [Sûrat Al-Mâidah, 5:44]

the actual word in Arabic being khashya.

Different connotations of these various terms in Arabic for “fear” will be discussed shortly.

Allah has praised those who possess the attribute of fear saying,

And such (are the believers) who are humbled

by the fear of their Lord... [Sûrat Al-Mu'minûn, 23:57]

Fear (of Allah’s displeasure or punishment) is not only for grave sinners, but also for the pious, observant believers, as in the following hadîth:

Âishah once asked the Prophet saying,

O Messenger of Allah, is the verse: And those who dispense their charity while their hearts fear that to their Lord they must return [Sûrat Al-Mu'minûn, 23:60] referring to someone who commits fornication, drinks alcohol and steals and still fears Allah? The Prophet (saw) replied, “No, O daughter of the Uddîq, but it refers to one who fasts, performs salah and gives charity, and fears that it may not be accepted from him. (Tirmidhi)

Al-Hasan, commenting on this, said,

By Allah, they [the Companions] obeyed Him and strove hard in it, yet they feared it might be rejected. A believer combines righteousness with fear in his heart, while a hypocrite combines evil with impunity.

The terms ‘wajal,’ ‘khawf,’ ‘khashya’ and ‘rahba,’ are used in the Quran to refer to what

we have translated as ‘fear,’ but they are not synonyms. Abu Al-Qasim Al-Junayd said, “Al-khawf is the anticipation of punishment.” Another scholar said, “Al-khawf is the moving of the heart upon the cognizance of that which is feared.”

The word khashya is more specific than khawf, for it is specific to the true knowers of Allah—as Allah has said,

Truly, those who fear Allah from among His servants are the knowers. [Sūrat Fātir, 35:28]

Hence, khashya is fear associated with the intimate knowledge (maʿrifa) of Allah—as the Prophet (saws) said,

I am most mindful of Allah among you, and most intense in fearing Him. (Bukhārī, Muslim)

Khawf is movement in its essence, while khashya is concentration, stillness, and holding of breath. For example, someone who sees a fierce enemy or a flood or something like that has two states: first, movement in order to flee from it, and this is the state of khawf. Second, his stillness in a place safe from the danger—and this is khashya.

Al-Rahba means the urge to run away from danger—which is the opposite of al-Raghaba, which means the urge of the heart to journey towards that which it likes.

Al-Wajal is the trembling of the heart upon the cognition or remembrance of someone whose power or punishment one fears.

Al-Hayba is fear associated with awe and glorification, and its greatest form is that which occurs in association with love and intimate knowledge (maʿrifa).

Al-khawf, then, is for the common believers, while al-khashya is for the scholars with profound knowledge, while al-hayba is for those nearest to Allah. The extent of one’s fear for Allah is proportional to one’s knowledge,

both formal and experiential, of Allah. As the Prophet (saws) said, I am the most knowledgeable of Allah among you, and most intense in His khashya.

In another narration of the same hadīth, the word used is khawf instead of khashya. The Prophet (saws) also said,

If you know what I know, you would laugh little and weep much, and would not enjoy intimacy with women, and would go out wandering in the wildernesses and praying to Allah. (Ahmad)

When faced with his object of fear, a man with khawf turns to fleeing and grabbing, while a man with khashya seeks the support of knowledge. For example, when a lay person is faced with an illness, he seeks to protect himself (and seeks someone who could help) while a skilled physician turns to investigating the illness and the cure.

Abû Hafs says,

Al-khawf is Allah’s lash with which He straightens up those fleeing from His door. He also sets a lamp in the heart, with which the good and the evil inside the heart can be seen—and everyone you fear from, you run away from him, except [in the case of] Allah: when you fear Him, you run towards Him for refuge.

Hence, the one who fears Allah is a refugee towards His Lord [’s mercy] and from his Lord [’s displeasure].

Abu Suleiman said,

Whenever fear (of Allah) departs a heart, it is ruined.

Ibrâhîm ibn Sufyân said,

When fear of Allah resides in hearts, it burns away the sources of lust and eradicates worldly attachments.

Dhul-Nûn said,

People will stay on the path so long as they have (Allah’s) fear—when this fear leaves them, they will go astray.

Fear, however, is not the end in itself, but a

means towards an end. When that end –Allah’s ultimate pleasure– is attained, there is no need for fear. As Allah says to the people of Paradise:

There is no fear upon them, nor do they grieve.
[*Sūrat Al-Baqarah, 2:38*]

Fear is associated with actions, while love is connected with being and attributes. When the believers enter the Realm of Allah’s eternal blessings, their love will multiply, while their fear will disappear. Hence, the place of love is higher and nobler than the place of fear.

The true and praiseworthy fear is that which stops a person from transgressing the prohibitions of Allah. But when fear exceeds this boundary, it may bring hopelessness and despair.

Abû Uthmân said,

Sincerity of fear is vigilance from sins, open and secret.

I also heard Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah say,

The praiseworthy fear is that which prevented you from transgressing the prohibitions of Allah.

The author of Al-Manazil, Shaykh Al-Harawi, said,

Al-khawf, or fear, is to do away with careless sense of security by envisioning the great news (of the Last Day).

He further said,

The beginning of fear is the fear of punishment, and this kind of fear is sufficient to establish the soundness of one’s faith. It is born out of one’s affirmation of the warning (of Allah’s punishment), recognition of one’s transgressions and consideration of the punishment.

Thus, fear is preceded by cognition and knowledge— for a man cannot fear what he does not know.

Benefiting from Sincere Fear

Two more things need to be mentioned related to fear:

- The thing or occurrence that is feared

- The way that leads one to it

Lack of knowledge of either of these leads to a concomitant lack of fear. If one does not know that a certain act leads to a feared outcome – or he knows so but does not know the value or might of that which he claims to fear– then one does not really have true fear.

Similarly, an active awareness of the punishment or loss that one fears, not just a passive and abstract knowledge of it, is an indication of the sincerity of fear and sound faith.

Another praiseworthy category of fear is to fear returning to the state of sinfulness and heedlessness after one has attained closeness to Allah and sincere fear of His displeasure—for if one feels unduly secure in one’s heedless state, it is likely that one will go back to the state of sinfulness.

Balancing Fear with Hope

The heart in its journey towards Allah is like a bird whose head is love, and hope and fear are its two wings. When the head and the two wings are sound and healthy, then the flight of the bird is good; but when the head is cut off, then it immediately dies; and when either or both wings are deficient, then the bird cannot properly fly and may become victim of any hunter or snare.

The righteous predecessors preferred to strengthen the wing of fear during good times when heedlessness is feared, and to strengthen the wing of hope at times of calamity and when near death.

Some have said that it is better to strengthen fear more than hope because when vain hopes overcome a person, he is ruined.

Others say that the best of situations is a complete balance of hope and fear with overwhelming love, for love is composite, while hope is a sharpener and fear a driver.

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Quest for Answers

Amin Valliani

One of the prime objectives of every religion is to guide its followers towards the answers of questions of ultimate significance. These questions relate to the origin of human beings, their ultimate aim in life and their position in the universe vis-à-vis their responsibilities.

Such questions include the following: who are we? Why are we here? Is there a purpose to life? Why is there evil and suffering in this world? What happens after we die?

These questions are different from ordinary ones, and mostly confront a person when faced with a crisis in life, such as the loss of loved ones, warlike situations, accidents and natural calamities, etc. Their answers are not easily found, but interrogation leads to revelation; they require deep and pensive thinking.

All people confront the big questions of existence.

The Holy Quran presents the example of Prophet Abraham in 6:76-79 when he was in a deep crisis and started searching for the ultimate truth. He first saw a star, then the moon and sun and declared each "My Lord" but when they set,

he said "I like not those who set". Eventually, he experienced the ultimate truth.

His experience is relevant to our lives as a whole as it seeks answers and life's ultimate meaning.

The Quran says:

Indeed there has been an excellent example for you in Abraham (60.4).

These questions are not confined to any specific period of history or particular culture. They are as significant today as they were thousands of years ago, and they will be as relevant thousands of years hence. Also, these questions do not occur only in some cultures and not in others. All human beings confront such big questions of existence, regardless of their background.

With constant perusal and examination of these questions unfold the mysteries of the ultimate meaning of human existence, enlivening faith and providing us with a road to experience the source of which we are the rays.

The present education system does not focus on these questions. It primarily focuses on hu-

The present education system primarily focuses on human beings as physical bodies and social beings with relation with the world around.

man beings as physical bodies and social beings with relations with the world around. Generally, when a child grows up he or she is admitted to a pre-primary school where he/she is taught basic alphabets, numerals, shapes, colours and names of objects etc.

At the primary level, the same child is taught about the country's basic information, simple math, basic linguistic skills such as sentence making and word formation/breaking etc. At secondary or university level, the student is prepared to earn money and thus taught some more advanced subjects like science and mathematics etc. But nowhere in the whole education system is the student taught about his spiritual origin as to where he has come from and where to return after death and fundamentally who he is and what the purpose of life is.

However, these questions of ultimate significance rise in many human minds but the majority ignores them because of their over-involvement with the material world. People are constantly engaged in material activities and feel comfort in blindly following the ways of their forefathers. Yet some thoughtful people who take these questions seriously are led to the path of spirituality. They are curious with inquiring minds.

Once they realise their spiritual origin, they gain peace of mind and adopt an attitude of goodwill towards all humanity. They consider entire humanity as one, springing from a common origin therefore, deserving equal treatment and service. They identify their interests with humanity and the welfare of all living creatures becomes close to their hearts.

The Holy Quran refers to such people in many of its verses. For example, in verse 3:191, they implore:

"Our Lord! You have not created this without purpose".

They remember their origin and say:

"... Truly! To Allah we belong and truly, to

Him we shall return (2:156)."

The Creator wants us to think about Him through His signs, spread in the all-encompassing universe. He is the Creator and humanity must seek Him. This is the main objective of our life and that is why we are all here. It is His desire that we rely on and experience His strength, love, justice, holiness and compassion. So He says to all who are willing,

"... I am indeed near. ... I respond to the invocations of the supplicant when he calls on Me. ... (2:186)".

We may begin to pose these questions as we grow more curious about ourselves and our universe. We are led to reflect on the many puzzling mysteries of our existence, and whether it is possible to solve them.

Religious faith is not a cellar to which one can flee for safety to avoid stormy circumstances of life. It is, instead, an inner spiritual strength that allows us to deal with the many situations in life.

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The ease the Prophet (saws) promoted through his personal example is the very ease that Allah, the Exalted, promotes in various verses of His Book:

"And We shall make easy for you (O Muhammad) the easy way (i.e., the doing of righteous deeds). (87:8)

"Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope...." (2:286)

"So keep your duty to Allah and fear Him as much as you can...." (64:16)

"...Allah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you...." (2:185)

"...And He has not laid upon you in religion any hardship...." (22:78)

Appeal

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