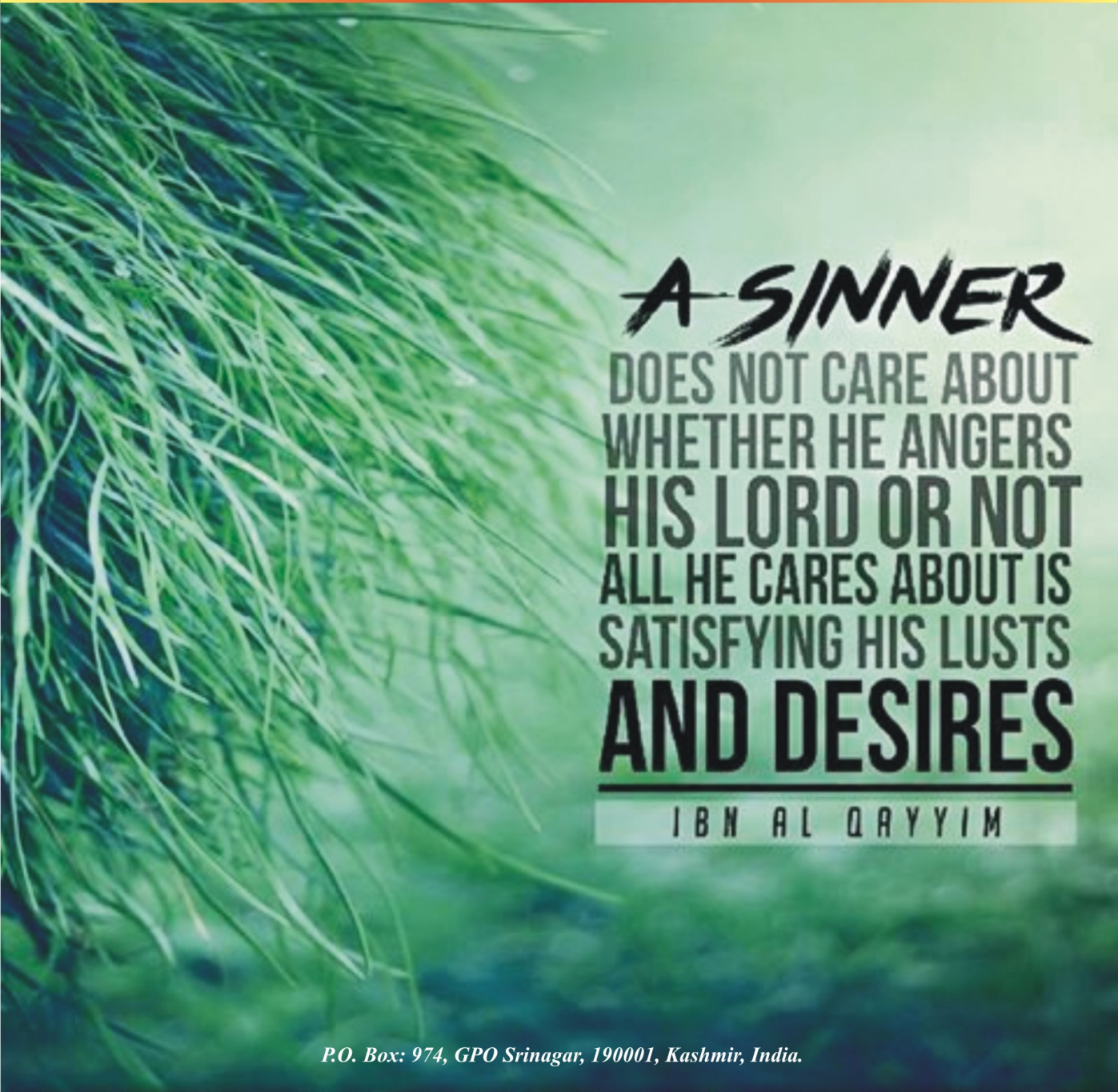


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# RADIANT REALITY

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**A SINNER**  
DOES NOT CARE ABOUT  
WHETHER HE ANGERS  
HIS LORD OR NOT  
ALL HE CARES ABOUT IS  
SATISFYING HIS LUSTS  
AND DESIRES

IBN AL QAYYIM

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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.**

**Editor, Printer & Publisher:**  
**Mawlana Hamidullah Lone**

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Editor In-Charge,-  
Radiant Reality  
P.O. Box 974  
G.P.O. Srinagar,  
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Contact:  
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# Question Answer

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## Question

I am currently employed as a doctor at a private hospital. My working hours are from 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM. If I finish my work early, can I leave before 4:00 PM?

## Answer

In an Ijaarah (employment) contract, an employee is employed in accordance to the terms and conditions of the contract. Hence, if the terms and conditions of the contract as a doctor was to work from 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM, and one arrives later than 9:30 AM or leaves earlier than 4:00 PM, it will be considered as a breach of contract.

However, if the terms and conditions of the contract is to complete an allotted amount of duties of the day after which one can leave or the person has an agreement with his employer which allows early leave, it will be permissible to leave before time.

It is best for one to clarify this matter with one's employer.

*Mufti Ismaeel*

## Question

I would like to ask a question relating to an application on my phone. I have recently downloaded the full quraan on to my iphone. Is it permissible for me to keep this phone in my pocket if I enter the bathroom even if the application is closed?

## Answer

If the Qur'an application is closed, it will be permissible to enter the toilet/bathroom with the phone.

*Mufti Ismaeel*

## Question

What is the time of performing Tahajjud Salaah? Can I perform Tahajjud Salaah at Fajr time?

## Answer

Tahajjud Salaah may be performed after the Esha Salaah until Subah Saadiq (the starting point of Fajr Salaah time). There is greater reward for Tahajjud Salaah if it is performed after half of the night has elapsed.

Tahajjud Salaah cannot be performed after Subah Saadiq or at the time of Fajr Salaah.

*Mufti Ismaeel*

## Question

I have two questions.

1) Does the husband have to inform his wife of the amount of salary he earns?

2) If a husband is going somewhere, does he have to inform his wife regarding his whereabouts? For example, he is going on a trip with friends.

## Answer

1. The husband does not have to inform his wife regarding the amount of salary he earns. However he should ensure that he fulfils all his marital obligations and responsibilities.

2. To remove suspicions and doubts and to save the wife from any inconvenience or anxiety, the husband should inform his wife regarding his whereabouts.

*Mufti Zakaria*

## Question

What is the ruling regarding placing a



branch or planting something on the grave? Similarly, what is the ruling regarding sprinkling water over the grave?

### Answer

To place a branch or to plant something on the grave is not an established practice in Deen. If a plant grows on the grave on its own, then it should be left and should not be removed. It is not a Sunnah practice to sprinkle water over the grave every time one visits the graveyard. However, after burying the deceased, it is permissible to sprinkle water over the grave in order for the soil to be settled.

Mufti Zakaria

### Question

I would like to know if there are any Ahaadith on the rights of grandparents, as today's children say that there is nothing in the Qur'an regarding grandparents, there are only verses regarding parents.

### Answer

This notion is incorrect. Our relatives also have rights upon us which we have to fulfil. The closer the relationship is, the greater will be the right they will have upon us. Hence, the rights of the grandparents are extremely great. In fact, it is close to the rights of the parents.

Mufti Zakaria

### Question

What is the ruling regarding taking infant children outside at the time of Maghrib?

### Answer

The Hadith teaches us that around the time of Maghrib children should be kept indoors. They should not be allowed to go outside as there are certain creations of Allah Ta'ala (e.g. Jinnaat and Shayaateen) that roam about at that time and may cause harm to the children. Therefore, in order to save the children from the harms of these creations, we are advised to keep them in-

doors. However, the Hadith also explains that when a portion of the night passes, then the children may be allowed to go outside.

Mufti Zakaria

### Question

As salamu Alaykum, I have done intercourse with my wife during menses, so now I want to know that what is my punishment in Islam, kindly reply as soon as possible.

### Answer

It is prohibited for a husband to have intercourse with his wife during menses. To have intercourse during menses is a major sin. (Al-Mabsuth 3/152)

Allah says in the Quran:

*“They ask you (O Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) concerning menstruation. Say, ‘It is impure so leave (intercourse with) women during (their period of) menstruation and do not go unto them (do not have conjugal relations with your wives) until they are cleansed (until the menstrual cycle is complete)’” (Surah Baqara 2; 222)*

One should feel remorseful and sincerely repent to Allah for committing such a despised act. A person should also make a firm resolution never to commit that action again.

According to the Hadith, one who commits such an action should give Sadaqa as well. (Abu Dawood)

Mufti Ismaeel

### Question

Can a person perform the Tawaaf of Umrah after Fajr and Asr? If so, can a person perform the two Raka'ats of Tawaaf after Fajr and Asr? If not? Can a person continue with the Sae' after Fajr and Asr without performing the two Raka'ats after Tawaaf?

### Answer

It is permissible to perform the Tawaaf of

Umrah after Fajr and Asr. However, it is Makrooh (disliked) to perform the two Rakaats of Tawaaf after Fajr and Asr as Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam prevented us from doing so.

Therefore, if a person performs the Tawaaf of Umrah after Fajr and Asr, the two Rakaats of Tawaaf should be postponed until after sunrise and after the Fardh of Maghrib Salaah respectively. (Shaami 2/499)

A person may perform multiple Tawaafs in this time and postpone the two Rakaats of Tawaaf for each Tawaaf performed until after sunrise or after the Fardh of Maghrib Salaah respectively. One may also perform the Sae' of Tawaaf as well in this time. (Fataawa Mahmoodiyyah 10/350)

Note: If the two Rakaats of Tawaaf are performed after Fajr and Asr, it would be valid but it should be repeated.

Jamiat Office Closure: Kindly note that the Jamiatul Ulama KZN offices will be closed from the 24th December 2016 and will re-open on the 3rd January 2017. May Allah Ta'ala keep us safe and in His obedience during the holiday period and make us see the new year stronger in our Imaan (Faith) and A'maal (Deeds), Ameen.

Kindly contact your local Ulama for Islamic guidance during our closure.

*Mufti Ismaeel*

### Question

I purchased a business and wish to insure it. What is the Shar'ee ruling regarding insuring one's business? Similarly, explain the law of insuring one's vehicle.

### Answer

Insurance is haraam in Islam due to the elements of interest and gambling being found in it. One is uncertain as to whether one will be burgled in the future or not. Any transaction wherein one pays for something which is suspended upon an uncertain event is in actual fact gambling. This is the definition of gam-

bling according to all the Ulama. In the case of gambling, one spends a certain amount of money in the hope of gaining something which is uncertain. One might lose all one's money and get nothing or one might get something more or less than what one had spent. Hence, we see the element of gambling found in an insurance policy. Further, if the insurance payout that one receives is more than the amount that one had paid to the insurance company, then in this case the extra amount that one has received is riba (interest). Hence, taking out an insurance policy is impermissible in Shari'ah.

*Mufti Zakaria*

### Question

Is it permissible to eat at a restaurant that claims to serve Halaal food but also serves alcohol?

### Answer

It is not permissible for Muslims to eat at a restaurant where alcohol is served regardless of the food being Halaal or not. The fact that alcohol is being served at the same restaurant casts doubt on the true status of the food.

More importantly, Sayyiduna Jabir bin Abdullah Radhiyallahu Anhu reports that Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wa Sallam said, "Whoever believes in Allah and the day of Judgment will not sit at a table where alcohol is served." (Musnad Ahmed)

Based on this Hadith, the Fuqahaa (jurists) have ruled that it is not permissible to eat at a venue where alcohol is being served.

*Mufti Ismaeel*

### Question

If a female deceased has no mahram relatives present at the janaazah, can non-mahram relatives bury her? Similarly, if there are no family of the female deceased present at the janaazah, can she be buried by other Muslims?

### Answer

If there are no mahram relatives of the female deceased present, then non-mahram relatives should bury her. Similarly, if there are no family of the female deceased present, then other Muslims may assist in the burial.

*Mufti Zakaria*

### Question

Is there any virtue reported in the Qur'an and Hadith in regard to placing a piece of the Ka'bah Shareef cloth in the kafan of the deceased or in the grave when burying the deceased?

### Answer

There is no special virtue reported in the Quran and Hadith with regards to placing a piece of the Ka'bah Shareef cloth in the grave with the deceased. Furthermore, if there is any name of Allah Ta'ala or verse of the Qur'an Shareef written on it, then placing the cloth with the deceased in the grave will not be permissible.

*Mufti Zakaria*

### Question

If a family member arrives late at the qabrastan and requests to see the face of the deceased relative (male or female), can he be allowed to view the face?

### Answer

This practice of allowing people to view the face of the mayyit in the qabrastan should be omitted. However, if for some reason the face of a female deceased was opened, then caution should be exercised and the face should only be shown to relatives who are mahrams of the deceased.

*Mufti Zakaria*

### Question

If a person misses sajda-e-tilawat during Salaah e.g. he was reciting a surah which had a verse on which we have to make sajda and he does not remember to do the sajda, is he required to repeat the Salaah?

### Answer

The Salaah will not have to be repeated. However, he should make istighfaar for forgetting to make the sajda-e-tilawat during the Salaah.

*Mufti Zakaria*

### Question

If the body was buried without being made to face the qiblah, what should be done?

### Answer

If one forgets to place the deceased towards the qiblah when burying him and only realizes after filling the grave with sand, then it is not permissible to re-dig the grave. However, if only the wooden strips have been placed and no soil has been thrown as yet, it will be permissible to remove the timber and place him towards the qiblah.

*Mufti Zakaria*

### Question

1. We notice that in some places the Imam makes dua immediately after the janaazah salaah. Is this correct and among the Sunnah practices of janaazah Salaah?

2. If dua after the janaazah Salaah is not correct, however, for the sake of keeping the peace, can it be done?

### Answer

1. The Janaazah Salaah is in reality a Dua to Allah Ta'ala for the deceased. Thus, there is no need for an additional Dua after the completion of the Janaazah Salaah. The practice of making an additional Dua after the Janaazah Salaah is not established from any narration from Nabi Sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam, the Sahaabah, the Taab'ieen and the entire Ummah. Hence the additional dua after the Janaazah Salaah that is practised in many places is an innovation in Deen and must be omitted.

2. Effort should be made to educate the

masses and teach them the Sunnah in every facet of life.

*Mufti Zakaria*

### Question

Who's right is it to perform the janaazah namaaz?

### Answer

The most worthy person for performing the Janaazah salaah is the Imaam of the locality provided there is nobody more knowledgeable than him from among the awliyaa of the deceased (relatives who will inherit from the deceased). If among the close relatives of the deceased (who can inherit from him) there is someone who is more knowledgeable than the Imaam, he will be more deserving than the Imaam of the locality.

If the deceased did not pass away in his own locality then the right of performing the Janaazah Saaah will be entrusted to his heirs who can inherit from him according to the sequence of the Asabaat in the law of inheritance (The Asabaat refer to the sequence of the paternal male relatives who have the potential to inherit from the deceased in the law of inheritance). However, the only difference in the sequence of the Asabaat is that the father of the deceased will receive the first right before the son, unless the son is more knowledgeable than the father.

*Mufti Zakaria*

### Question

Is it permissible to charge the customer a handling charge when he returns an item?

### Answer

When the seller and buyer mutually agree upon cancelling the sale, the entire amount has to be refunded to the customer. It is not permissible for the seller to hold back any amount. Hence it is not permissible for the seller to charge the buyer a handling charge at the time of cancellation.

*Mufti Zakaria*

### Question

Is it necessary to face the Qiblah whilst slaughtering an animal?

### Answer

It is Mustahab (preferable) for a person slaughtering and the animal being slaughtered to face the Qiblah. (Fataawa Darul Uloom Zakaariyyah 6/134)

*Mufti Ismaeel*

### Question

I was in Ihraam of Umrah and I made my Tawaaf and Sae' of Umrah without Wudhu. Then I found out that my Tawaaf and Sae' was not valid so I repeated my Tawaaf and Sae' with Wudhu. Is there any penalty for the first Tawaaf and Sae' that was done without Wudhu. Keep in mind that I repeated it?

### Answer

It is necessary for a person to be in a state of Wudhu whilst performing the Tawaaf and Sae' of Umrah. If the Tawaaf and Sae' of Umrah was performed without Wudhu, they would have to be repeated.

In the enquired case, as you had repeated your Tawaaf and Sae' of Umrah with Wudhu, your Umrah is valid and there is no penalty for it. (Al Bahrur-Raa'iq 3/23)

*Mufti Ismaeel*

### Question

A person owns many acres of land which is his only source of income. However if he sells some portion of the land or all of it then he will have sufficient wealth to perform Hajj. Is Hajj compulsory upon him?

### Answer

If he is able to sell that amount of land which will suffice for his Hajj expenses and retain sufficient land for his livelihood then Hajj will be fardh upon him.

*Mufti Zakaria*

# The Natural System of Distribution of Wealth

*We have distributed among them their livelihood (43:32)*

This is to say that Allah in His infinite wisdom, has devised such a system for the world that everybody is dependent on another for meeting his needs. Thus all the people, bound in this mutual inter-dependence, are fulfilling the needs of the whole society. This verse has made it quite clear that Allah Almighty has not assigned the work of distributing livelihood to any human organization or authority that works out a plan (as claimed by the socialist theory) how to define the needs of a society, how to meet those needs, how to allocate the means of production to various channels, and how to distribute the income, and on what basis. Instead, all these functions rest with Allah Ta'ala. What it means is that by making every person dependent upon another, an automatic system has been developed that may solve these issues, with the only condition that it is not hindered by unnatural factors like monopolies etc. This system of mutual interdependence is known in modern economic terminology as the 'supply and demand mechanism'. The natural law of 'supply and demand' is that shortage in the supply of an item results in an increase in its price, and thus attracts more factors of production towards its production, so that they may earn more profit. But when the production outpaces the demand, its prices decrease, and so does the profit, there-

by diverting the means of production towards more profitable items. Islam has employed this natural mechanism of supply and demand to produce and distribute wealth, and has not assigned the distribution of livelihood to any organization under ordinary circumstances. The reason is that human planning, however advanced it may be, cannot take into account every element of human necessities; such social issues are usually resolved through a natural process that works in an automatic manner. If such problems are entrusted to human planning, it can only result in artificial restraints imposed on the natural human freedom. For example, the fact that the hours of daylight are for working, and the night is meant for sleeping was not determined by any social contract or by human planning; it came about through nature's automatic process. Similarly, who should marry whom is automatically arranged in accordance with the natural system of personal inclinations; nobody has even thought of arranging it through planning. If the question of selecting a particular field of academic specialization is entrusted to the planning of a government, instead of one's own inclination and taste, it will result in nothing but coercion and compulsion which may, in turn, disturb and spoil the natural human life. Similarly, the economic system is taken care of



by Allah's wisdom and power; everybody knows in his heart what he wants to do, which job is more suitable for him, and which he can perform properly. As such, everybody, even if he is a sweeper, is happy loving his work, and is proud of it.

However, unlike capitalism, Islam has not given so much freedom to the individuals as allows them to accumulate wealth by any means, lawful or unlawful, and deprive others of their livelihood. Islam has therefore drawn a clear line between halal (permissible) and haram (impermissible) sources of income. It has, on the one hand, totally prohibited usury or interest, speculative transactions, hoarding and gambling (which in its technical sense in Islamic law is much more general than its lexical meaning in English), and on the other hand, has levied zakah, 'ushr, etc., even on permitted income. And thus Islam has closed the doors of those social ills that are found in the present day capitalistic system. If despite all this, monopolies are created at any time, government has been permitted to intervene and break them up. Details on this subject can be seen in the author's Urdu books on 'The Issue of Interest' 'Distribution of Wealth in Islam' and 'Economic Reforms in Islamic System'.

*Adapted from Ma'ariful Qur'an  
By: Mufti Muhammad Shafi Usmani (ra)*

## PATIENCE

If PATIENCE consists of restraining sexual desire, it is called honour, the opposite of which is adultery and promiscuity.

If PATIENCE consists of controlling one's stomach, it is called self-control, the opposite of which is greed.

If PATIENCE consists of keeping quiet about that which it is not to be disclose, it is called discretion, the opposite of which is disclosing secret, lying, slander or libel.

If PATIENCE consists of being content with what is sufficient for one's needs, it is called abstemiousness, the opposite of which is covetousness.

If PATIENCE consists of controlling one's anger, it is called forbearance, the opposite of which is impulsiveness and hasty reaction.

If PATIENCE consists of refraining from hate, it is called gracefulness and steadiness, the opposite of which is to be hot-headed.

If PATIENCE consists of refraining from running away, it is called courage, the opposite of which is cowardice.

If PATIENCE consists of refraining from taking revenge, it is called forgiveness, the opposite of which is revenge.

If PATIENCE consists of refraining from being stingy, it is called generosity, the opposite of which is miserliness.

If PATIENCE consists of refraining from being lazy and helpless, it is called dynamism and initiative.

If PATIENCE consists of refraining from blaming and accusing other people, it is called chilvalry.

*Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (ra)  
Translated by Nasiruddin al-Khattab*

# Lessons from Sahih Bukhari

*Dr. Rafiq Ahmad*

## **Chapter 32 : What has come about the Qibla. Someone who did not think that the Salaah should be repeated if a person inadvertently prays towards the direction other than the Qibla.**

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) offered salam after two rak'ats of zuhr, turned to face the people and then completed the rest (after being reminded about it).

### **Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab**

The title or the Tarjamatul Baab of this chapter has two components viz.,

i. The issues related to the Qibla.

ii. The people who don't consider it necessary to repeat the salaah if inadvertently offered towards the direction other than the Qibla.

According to Ibn Hajar Asqalaani the first part i.e., 'what has come about the Qibla', indicates that the author tries to convey something more about the Qibla. However, as per Shaykhul Hadith Maulana Zakaria, the author wants to mention some miscellaneous things pertaining to the Qibla.

Regarding the second part viz., 'those who don't consider it necessary to repeat the salaah', is concerned, the jurists differ in their views. The following statements have been quoted in this regard from them:

1. If a person offers salaah towards the di-

rection he presumes is leading to the Qibla, and later the direction is confirmed correct; there is no confusion or controversy in this case.

2. If the presumed direction of the Qibla comes out to be wrong, then:

i. As per Imam Maalik and Imam Zuhri, if such a person comes to know about the correct direction during the stipulated time limits of that particular salaah, he should repeat his salaah, and in case the time has expired then there is no need for him to repeat the salaah.

ii. As per Imam Abu Haneefa, Imam Ahmad, and one of the statements of Imam Shaafa'ee, there is no need to repeat the salaah; Imam Bukhari also concurs with them.

iii. Allaama Ayni quotes Imam Shaafa'ee's view that if a person, who has offered his salaah in a wrong direction, doesn't come to know about his mistake, he needs not to repeat his salaah; however, he has to repeat his salaah in case he comes to know about his mistake. Shah Waliullah Muhaddith Delhvi says:

"Apparently this title points towards the view taken by Imam Abu Haneefa that if a person offering his salaah fixes the Qibla direction as per his presumption during a dark night and offers salaah towards a direction other than the true Qibla, his salaah is valid and he needs not to repeat it". (Sharah Taraajum)

Imam Bukhari's point:

Quoting the hadith in the Tarjamatul Baab, Imam Bukhari tries to convey that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) turned away from the Qibla after completing two rak'ats of Zuhr. On being informed about the omission, he completed the remaining two rak'ats without repeating the already offered two rak'ats.

### Hadith No. 393

#### Narrated Umar (bin Al-Khattab)

*My Lord agreed with me in three things:*

1. *I said, "O Allah's Apostle, I wish we took the station of Abraham as our praying place (for some of our prayers). So came the Divine Inspiration: And take you (people) the station of Abraham as a place of prayer (for some of your prayers e.g. two Rak'ats of Tawaaf of Ka'ba)".*

(2:125)

2. *And as regards the (verse of) the veiling of the women, I said, 'O Allah's Apostle! I wish you ordered your wives to cover themselves from the men because good and bad one's talk to them.' So the verse of the veiling of the women was revealed.*

3. *Once the wives of the Prophet made a united front against the Prophet and I said to them, 'It may be if he (the Prophet) divorced you, (all) that his Lord (Allah) will give him instead of you wives better than you.' So this verse (the same as I had said) was revealed."* (66:5).

### Comments

According to Sayyiduna Umar, Allah, on three occasions, revealed to the Prophet what he (Umar) wished for. Once he submitted his wish to Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) to offer prayers at the station of Sayyiduna Ibrahim (AS) (Maqaam-i-Ibrahim), and Allah revealed the following verse:

*Make from the Station of Ibrahim a place of prayer. (2:125)*

The second time he requested Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) to direct his wives

(the mothers of the believers) to observe veil, as they were being looked at by chaste as well as unchaste people. The following verse was revealed:

*O prophet, say to your wives, "If you intend (to have the pleasure of) worldly life and its charm, then come on, and I shall give you some stuff, and release you in a handsome fashion. (33:28)*

Once it so happened that the wives of Rasulullah assembled together to put some of their demands before him. At this juncture Sayyiduna Umar came and told them, 'It may be if he (the Prophet) divorced you, (all) that his Lord (Allah) will give him instead of you wives better than you.' It was the third occasion when in agreement to what Sayyiduna Umar wished, Allah revealed the following verse to Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam):

*It is hoped that, if he divorces you, Allah will give him in your place wives better than you, submissive to Allah, believing, devout, penitent, steadfast in worship, fasting, previously married and virgins. (66:5)*

Only three incidents where Allah has endorsed the wishes of Sayyiduna Umar have been mentioned here. Allaama Qastalaani has quoted twenty two such instances; Allaama Sayooti in his Taarikhul Khulafaa has also quoted more than twenty such occasions. He has in particular written a book on the subject. (Eidhahul Bukhari).

### Hadith No. 394

#### Narrated Abdullah bin Umar

*While the people were offering the Fajr prayer at Quba (near Medina), someone came to them and said: "It has been revealed to Allah's Apostle tonight, and he has been ordered to pray facing the Ka'ba." So turn your faces to the Ka'ba. Those people were facing Sham (Jerusalem) so they turned their faces towards Ka'ba (at Makkah).*

## Comments

According to Abdullah bin Umar, once people were offering Fajr salaah at Quba—a place near Madinah, when someone came and informed them that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has been commanded by Allah through the divine revelation to take the Ka'ba as the Qibla. Since these people were offering their salaah facing Baitul Maqdis (Syria), they turned towards the Ka'ba during the salaah itself.

### Hadith No. 395

#### Narrated Abdullah

*“Once the Prophet offered five Rak'ats in Zuhr prayer. He was asked, “Is there an increase in the prayer?” The Prophet said, “And what is it?” They said, “You have prayed five Rak'ats.’ So he bent his legs and performed two prostrations (of Sahu).*

## Comments

The issue has been already discussed in the previous chapter.

## Chapter 33 : Scraping off sputum from the mosque using the hand.

### Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

In the foregone chapters Imam Bukhari discussed the issues related to the Qibla, and now he starts the chapters related to a mosque. Since Qibla plays a significant role vis-à-vis a mosque that is why Imam Bukhari has immediately discussed the issues related to a mosque after mentioning those pertaining to the Qibla.

### Hadith No. 396

#### Narrated Anas bin Maalik

*The Prophet saw some sputum in the direction of the Qibla (on the wall of the Masjid) and he disliked that and the sign of disgust was apparent from his face. So he got up and scraped it*

*off with his hand and said, “Whenever anyone of you stands for the prayer, he is speaking in private to his Lord or his Lord is between him and his Qibla. So, none of you should spit in the direction of the Qibla but one can spit to the left or under his foot.” The Prophet then took the corner of his sheet and spat in it and folded it and said, “Or you can do like this. “*

### Hadith No. 397

#### Narrated Abdullah bin Umar

*Allah's Apostle saw sputum on the wall of the mosque in the direction of the Qibla and scraped it off. He faced the people and said, “Whenever any one of you is praying, he should not spit in front of him because in the prayer Allah is in front of him.”*

### Hadith No. 398

#### Narrated Aisha

*(The mother of faithful believers) Allah's Apostle saw some nasal secretions, expectoration or sputum on the wall of the mosque in the direction of the Qibla and scraped it off.*

## Comments

Sayyiduna Anas bin Maalik narrates that once Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) noticed expectoration or sputum on the wall of the mosque. It was so disliking to him that he got up and scraped it off with his own hand, and said, “Whenever anyone of you stands for the prayer, he is speaking in private to his Lord or his Lord is between him and his Qibla. So, none of you should spit in the direction of the Qibla but one can spit to the left or under his foot.” Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) then took the corner of his cloak and spat in it and folded it and said, “or you can do like this”, and scraped it.

## Lessons from the hadith

1. Clean the mosque yourself: If a person

*Cont'd on page 23*



# The Secret Tales of a Super-Power

*Syed Iqbal Zaheer*

When Bertrand Russell, the most avid materialistic philosopher of the last century, visited the United States of America for the first time, he immediately fell in love with it. His heart went out describing the mouth-watering developments of the country. In contrast to the dim lighted British cities, with its dying industries, roads with gaping holes, main street structures hiding their ugliness behind canvas shades, downtown buildings drooping down from age, and the heavy Gothic mist that hung in the air, the American cities were humming with industries that produced the latest in everything, eight-lane roads bursting with shiny cars of the most exquisite design, newly constructed glass clad buildings that peeped into the clouds, markets filled with latest technological products, signs of innovation visible through every shop window and symbols of an unprecedented prosperity spread all over. He was stunned by the development, modernity and innovation.

But, although a philosopher, he never took the question of 'why' to any great depth, babyishly attributing the development and progress to liberalism, science, technology, innovation and, of course, American genius.

Many have now begun to look seriously into the question of the 'why' ignored by Bertie. One of them is Walden Bellow, a professor of sociol-

ogy and public administration. He presents his findings in a book called *Dilemmas of Domination, the Unmaking of the American Empire*, (Metropolitan Books, New York, 2005).

Cool and collected, forceful but unemotional, armed with information, data and statistics drawn from the original sources, he opens the black boxes of finance and economy, world trade and banking, financial treaties and protocols, imperialism and democracy, USA/ EU unity and rivalry, policies of World Bank and IMF, conflicts between North and South, manipulations and arm twisting, to reveal the financial reasons (apart from others, not discussed) that helped the United States achieve the superpower status, and the policies and ideologies that are dismantling it now.

To get a glimpse of the author's mind, and the courage in stating his opinions, we may at the start quote him, from an article that he wrote immediately after the implosion of the two Trade Center buildings on 9/11, and included in this book:

"The assault on the World Trade Center was unpardonable, but it is important not to lose perspective, especially a historical one.... The scale and consequence of the September 11 attack are massive indeed, but this is not the worst act of mass terrorism in U.S. history, as some U.S. media

are wont to claim. The over 3000 lives lost are irreplaceable, but one must not forget that the atomic raids on Hiroshima and Nagasaki killed 210,000 people, most of them civilians, most perishing instantaneously. One may object that you can't compare the September 11 attack to the nuclear bombings since, after all, Hiroshima and Nagasaki were targets in a war. But why not, since the purpose of the nuclear bombings was not mainly to destroy military or infrastructure targets, but to terrorize and destroy the civilian population?" (p.2)

The above at the beginning of the book sets the tone and direction. The writer is no parrot of the West, is not buttering his bread, but rather is an honest professor analyzing facts and speaking out the truth. Obviously, he immediately loses audience with the West and its mainstream scoundrel media. (We have taken the word from a recent article of a Western writer).

The author proceeds to explore how the US, especially since the end of colonialism, torpedoed many developmental activity in the non-Western countries, damaging their agriculture, collapsing manufacturing activity, restricting intellectual quest, bringing down the currencies, hurting the GDP, causing serious damage to the economies, leading to rise in unemployment, heightened inflation, fall in exports, rise in imports, and, ultimately enriching its own economy (some share went, like the left-over of the lion shared by the jackals, to other Western economies). He explains how the industries and agriculture of the non-Western countries (he calls them the countries of the South), were choked systematically, through trade agreements forced on them by GATT, WTO, World Bank, IMF etc. that were filled with clauses that once signed, (quite often under duress), assured that either the countries of the South complied, or ran the risk of further destruction of their economies, leading to mass protests ending with the loss of political power by the parties that had signed those agreements. For decades the trapping, manipulating, hoodwinking and

blackmailing worked to the American advantage, while they spread poverty, stagnation, and general chaos in the countries of the South.

So, if there was all round development in the U.S. it was the blood and sweat of the masses of the underdeveloped countries forced to cough out dollars to the Western controlled IMF, World Bank, other financial institutions, and supply cheap goods and services to their markets, which were the responsible factors.

Quite opposite to the promises of growth made to the Third World countries, their engines of growth were actually sent into reverse drive. The recipes of development handed over to them proved to be only cosmetic, but rather proved to be essentially anti-developmental ideas that undid what those countries had gained in past decades. To quote the author:

"According to (Angus) Maddison (of OECD) ... the annual rate of growth of real global GDP fell from 4.9 percent in what is now regarded as the golden age of the post-World War II system, 1950-73, to 3 percent. The United Nations, confirming this trend, said that world GDP grew at an annual rate of 5.4 percent in the 1960s, 4.1 percent in the 1970s, 3 percent in the 1980s, and 2.3 in the 1990s." (p. 79)

It should be obvious that the bulk of the losses mentioned above were experienced by the Third World countries, whose GDP was far less than the global average, and gains went largely to the American economy whose GDP was far above the global average.

Poor Russel was neither educated enough in economy, nor had any idea of how the wealth of the third world was being sucked out for the development of the land he admired.

We could perhaps briefly deal with a few specific cases here.

## **Argentina**

The case of Argentina is a good one for illustration. It is also a tragic example of what happens to a country that takes the IMF and U.S.

Treasury advises seriously. On their advice, it brought down the trade barriers, liberalized foreign investments, launched a privatization program which involved the sale of some 400 state enterprises that jointly accounted for 7% of the national product. Such enterprises as airlines, oil companies, steel, insurance, telecommunications, postal services and petrochemical companies were privatized, along with the adoption of a currency board (roughly meaning abandoning the peso for the dollar) – all steps endorsed by the IMF as a result of which steps 70% of the private banks became foreign-controlled, the peso's value appreciated, and Argentine goods became uncompetitive both locally as well as in foreign markets. Argentina was forced to borrow, and the more it borrowed, the higher the interest rate it had to pay. By 2002, the GDP declined to 16.3%, unemployment shot up to 21.5%, and 53% lived below the poverty level. Thanks to conditions laid down by IMF and advice of the U.S. Treasury, once the most prosperous nation in Latin America, Argentina was “near the bottom in terms of per capita income, below Peru and parts of Central America.”

## **Mexico**

Mexico's case could be cited in brief. When it comes to siphoning out money from one economy into another, indebting a country to the point of bankruptcy, choking its exports and increasing its imports of goods and capital, Mexico is a classic example of crisis after crisis brought on by international lenders: USA, IMF, World Bank and their subsidiary financial institutions.

By 1980 the Third World governments had been tricked into massive borrowing from various Western financial institutions. The total of 400 billion dollars that had been given away to the Third World and East European countries left them \$700 billion in debt. Led by Mexico in 1982, which defaulted on quarterly payment over its \$100 billion debt, other countries, Bra-

zil, Argentina, Venezuela, the Philippines, and many other debtors fell into the same hole and declared insolvency. In the eighties the Latin American countries were jointly paying an annual interest of \$60 billion to the foreign banks, quite a chunk of which went to the US. Between 1982 and 1992, nearly \$220 billion were squeezed out of the Third World as debt services.

If American budget was in trillions, there were apparently some sources which were bringing in hard cash.

The IMF (where the U.S. has veto power) and World Bank (on which EU has its hold) virtually took over the finance of Mexico, removing the government as a mediator between the domestic private sector and foreign capital as a result of which the government lost control of the foreign funds coming into the country. But, craftily, the IMF had much earlier got the governments into signing the clause that they, the governments, would be the ultimate guarantor for the private-sector borrowings. Yet, despite that weak financial situation of Mexico, foreign capital was dumped into the country to the tune of about \$70 billion. Most of the money was directed as investment into what is known as serving the “purpose of extracting financial rent.” The World Bank and its subsidiaries played the major role. “The Capital Group, a money management giant based in Los Angeles, that ran this fund, did very well, with total returns to investors of 20% in 1987, 42% in 1988, and 94% in 1989.” (p. 110) The investors in this case were the “finance renters.” Meanwhile, by 1993 Mexico was led to remove all restraints on foreign capital movement. As a result, its exports became less competitive in international markets, but, because of flush of currency within the country, imports shot up, leading to current account deficit of 8.5% of the GDP by 1994. The Mexican GDP declined 4.5% in 1990 to 3.6% in 1991, to 2.2% in 1992, to 0.4% in 1993. The economic hit-men were having a field-day.

The IMF and American financial institutions came out with “bailout” schemes, pouring in some 50 billion dollars,

and the cumulative result was that Mexico went into recession, unemployment grew high, a significant fall in real wages occurred and the common man became poorer. But the U.S. – which managed the bailout fund in Mexico through its Exchange Stabilization Fund (ESF), a US government facility – ended with \$1.4 billion interest fund, and the ESF making a profit of \$580 million.

### **Thailand**

It was the same story of success in South Korea, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, and many other countries. The script was the same: privatization (of the telecommunication, transport, airlines, power industries, banks), allowing inflow of foreign capital, liberalization of economy, pegging the local currency to the dollar, speculative investments, etc. Consequently, between 1996 and 1997, the Bank of Thailand lost \$38.7 billion dollars of the foreign-exchange (Forex) reserves and, ultimately, when the Thai currency (bhat) had to be de-pegged from the dollar, it lost 50% of the value within few months – while, through and through, the country was faithfully following the fiscal policies laid down by the US controlled IMF, EU controlled World Bank, and other Western financial institutions. The author notes:

“Even as evidence of policy failure mounted, the [bailout] Fund barely blinked, delivering the same medicine to each ailing nation that showed up on its (IMF) doorsteps. Over 1 million people in Thailand, and 22 million people in Indonesia sank below the poverty line in a few week’s time, not even the IMF could deny the devastating results of its policy.” (p. 121)...

But that was not all. The damage was serious and the wounds inflicted were deep. As the author wrote:

“In Thailand, local authorities agreed to remove

all limitations to foreign ownership of Thai financial firms, accelerate the privatization of state enterprises, and revise bankruptcy laws along lines demanded by foreign creditors. As the U.S. trade representative, Charlene Barshefsky told Congress, the Thai government’s ‘commitments to restructure public energy, transportation, utilities, and communications – which will enhance market-driven competition and deregulation – [are expected] to create new business opportunities for U.S. firms.’” (p. 121-122).

So, business opportunities were being created for U.U. firms, with the liquidation of the economies of the Third World countries.

### **Indonesia**

The case of Indonesia was no different. The country entered into various trade agreements, without the awareness of how the rules will apply when the economy did not yield the results that were written in bold letters in the propositions presented by the Western promoters of the agreements. With reference to WTO for instance, the developing countries had a marginal role in the negotiations that led to its establishment. But, even though the Third World had little or no say in designing the provisions of the treaty, it was yet bound to every of its clauses because, under WTO rules, the countries were party to all the negotiated elements as a single package.

Indonesia was made to accept liberalization, free trade, foreign investments, de-control of the banks, privatization of key sectors, elimination of tax, tariff, etc. But one hurtful clause, not realized earlier, was that it should eliminate credit privileges the government provided to the up and coming national car and aircraft projects. That clause let it to the termination of the projects. The IMF program sought broad reform of Indonesian trade and investment policy,

“like the aircraft project, monopolies and domestic trade restrictive practices, that stifle competition by access for foreign goods and



services. The national car project and the plan to set up a passenger jet aircraft industry had elicited the strong disapproval of Detroit and Boeing respectively.” (p. 122)

## The Collusion

Events showed that the IMF was closely associated with the United States and that its staff worked in close cooperation with the U.S. Treasury in designing the most controversial, in fact, hurtful, features of the IMF’s fund programs in Asia. Consequently, except for Malaysia, where its Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad defied the IMF by imposing capital controls, the rest of the Asian tigers were transformed into sheep. Not surprisingly, when Japan proposed an Asian Monetary Fund (AMF), with a capital of \$100 billion, to help the local governments in times of crisis, the U.S. and IMF torpedoed the idea the way they torpedoed the Indonesian aircraft industry (which had already brought out a prototype passenger jetliner into the market). When Indonesia tried to revive its automobile industry in 1997, the U.S. and the European Union threatened to haul it before the WTO dispute-settlement body. Jakarta had to halt its program.

Similarly, while the WTO spoke of opening up of the markets of the Third World as well as the advanced countries, promising that bi-lateral trade would improve the countries in South and spread wealth better, it did not speak of subsidies to its own products, especially, in the agricultural sector; so that, by providing governmental subsidies to its own agricultural products, USA and EU were able to export freely, causing huge losses to the agricultural sector of the developing countries.

The U.S. experiment with China was a sort of exception. The joke goes around that a man attempting to force medicine into his stomach-troubled horse had the bad experience of the horse blowing first. Exactly this has been USA’s experience with China. The Chinese and

Americans opened their markets for each other’s goods, but the Chinese blew their products into the US market before the Americans could. The American trade deficit now runs in trillions of dollars in favor of the Chinese. But others were not as ingenious. In India, for instance, while the farmers were committing suicide in the hundreds, the local markets were stuffed to spill with US fruits, chicken, meat, and other dairy products, and India perpetually remains in trade deficit, every year importing billions worth of goods more than exporting.

To sum up, if there was innovation that Bertrand Russell saw, it was in the binding clauses that allowed for manipulations to the advantage of the Americans, and if there was ingenuity that he saw, it was in forcing the poor countries into agreements that ostensibly promised development, but in actual fact, went to fatten the American purse. And, as the author notes:

“...the price paid by the affected countries was not just their people’s suffering. They were forced to yield large tracts of their sovereign authority over their own economies. Chalmers Johnson has argued that a good case can be made that Washington’s opportunistic behavior during the Asian financial crisis reflected the fact that, ‘having defeated fascists and the communists, the U.S. now sought to defeat its last remaining rivals for global dominance: the nations of East Asia that had used the conditions of the Cold War to enrich themselves.’” (p. 121)

That was the American ingenuity at work that struck Bertrand Russell as the reward of materialism, and helped him deepen his faith in atheism, liberalism, freedom and democracy.

It was after decades, and losses on a variety of fronts that the deceptions played on them that the underdeveloped countries realized the truth of things. WTO has been a clever fraud. Says the author:

“Two realizations gradually dawned on developing countries. One was that the emergence of

*Cont’d on page 30*

# Dynamics of Salah

*The practice of overcoming .....Alienation.*

*Sabzar Ahmad Bhat*

Everything existing in the world of rationality can be problematised because there is nothing which can negate or transcend the Hegelian dialectics wherein everything is predicated on its opposite; or to put it in other words the meaning of every thesis is located in its antithesis, because the very nature of a thesis is fraught with the possibilities of an antithesis, and when this possibility gets actualised there comes into existence a real conflict in which both start displacing each other. But as per Hegelian dialectics nothing secures an absolute victory in this conflict, it rather ends up in the creation of a synthesis. Later on this synthesis also transmutes into a thesis and the process continues ad infinitum. This is also the reality of the knowledge, that is born out of its (reason's) womb called sensory knowledge, to be more specific, whole world of sensory knowledge revolves around the pivot of Hegelian dialectics, wherein absolutes are discredited by being dubbed as mere figments of imagination. It is not possible for the categories of human knowledge, born out of ratiocination, either to negate Hegelian dialectics or to falsify it.

But when the same is applied to the prophetic knowledge (gnosis), it fails to account for its profundity and immensity, because the source of the prophetic knowledge is located in the heart of "EXISTENCE", whence it directly flows to the super conscious of a prophet. The supreme self is

the teacher of a prophet who reveals to him the secrets of "Being"...(be-ing). Prophetic knowledge can't ever be either falsified or problematised because its nature is para-rational, hence inaccessible to the snares /categories of reason. Reason can only count and name the mysteries of nature, whereas prophetic vision simplifies them for the man with an average IQ (intuitive quotient). Even the people with para-normal IQ surrender before the depths of this vision. Prophets reach to the heart of existence by transcending the illusory play of reason, so there is no question of calibrating the depths of prophetic vision via the categories of reason. The only function of rational categories is to fumble through the surface of "existence", without ever being able to have a glimpse of its depths, that is why Iqbal calls them "*Charag-i-Rahguzar* - The Street Lamp", which has no access to the heart of "existence". Prophetic vision is absolute and accessible only to the light of faith. When it is subjected to the objective tests of rationality, it resists to yield its profundity, so whatever is prescribed by a prophet must be received with absolute surrender without letting the reason to become an interlocutor, because there is every possibility of landing into deception at its hands. A Muslims - with regard to fasting, haj, zakat, salah, or professing and contemplating the first article of faith called "kalima" from the depths of his being - should always be receptive to these

main mediums of Allah's grace because they are the conduits through which "EXISTENCE" channelises its grace to the depths of a Muslim's "being". If someone disengages himself from these practices, the "EXISTENCE" in this case loses nothing, but the person alienates from that grace which had kept him intact even during the most turbulent periods of this mundane life. This yawning chasm of alienation is what is called *Azaab* (affliction), because every wound is healed by the graceful hands of time except the affliction of alienation, which hardens into a permanent abyss with every passing day until a man repents and returns back to the channels of grace.

Now coming to the question of salah, it is the roof and crown of Islamic modes of prayer. Since it is an immediate antidote to the poison of alienation, it fills up one's heart with full grace, leaving no space for alienation to stay in the "being" of a believer. A regular practitioner of salah never suffers from the bites of meaninglessness/existential crisis because he comes closer to the absolute source of meaning through it. Coming to the symbolic nature of salah; every move that a believer makes during a salah is not a meaningless act which he has to perform practice, but

a symbolic transmutation of intuitive contemplation of the signs of Isness (ALLAH), accepting its majesty and surrendering to its glory - so far as I have been able to understand it. Qiyam (contemplation over the signs of the Supreme Self, which is represented by narrating the verses of quran), rukuh (which represents accepting the majesty of the Supreme Self), and sujood (represents an absolute surrender to His glory). When these phases of "being" are successfully crossed by a believer, he qualifies himself for absolute grace - too profound to be contained in the categories of human language. When the grace of that Supreme Self starts enveloping the inner and outer space of a believer, he reaches to the state of absolute peace immune to every sort of disturbance. Salah activates the sources of pure bliss in the believers "being". It is the only way to defeat the mighty force of alienation which otherwise rends asunder the threads of one's self. Worldly possessions like fame, wealth, woman etc., are hand in glove with this ghost of alienation, and help it to reign the internal kingdom of man. The only mantra to ward off or sometimes exorcise this ghost from the kingdom of heart is Salah.

### Poor Behaviour!

There was once a family who saw a beggar standing at the door of their home. As they did not wish to give him anything, they tried to turn him away saying, "May Allah open your way."

The beggar, however, was undeterred and asked for a slice of bread. Hearing his request, the family responded, "We don't have any."

Still undeterred, the beggar next asked, "Some wheat? Chicken? Barley?" They replied, "Sorry, but we don't have any." So the beggar asked, "How about some fat, olive oil or milk?" They answered, "Sorry, but we don't have any of those either."

Finally, the beggar asked them for water. They said, "We don't have any water."

In utter frustration, the beggar burst out, "What are you doing, sitting at home? You should join me and beg as you are obviously even more in need than I am!"

*(Al-Mustatraf vol. 2, pg. 379)*

# The Significance of Emotions

Tarek Younis

*Emotion: an often-neglected, yet significant component of our psychological configuration.*

Our psychological configuration consists of several components, all of which are interrelated:

- The spiritual component, as we say the fitrah, which naturally predisposes us with an inclination towards God and good.
- The cognitive component, which assumes all types of mental processes we can have.
- The emotional component, which covers the range of emotions we experience, such as anger, sadness, fear, shame, and guilt.

The purpose of this article is to focus exclusively on the emotional component, as it is oft-neglected amongst Muslims; indeed our community habitually focuses on our spiritual and cognitive components instead. This imbalance is significant for two reasons:

First of all, I contend that many – if not most – of the problems we face as individuals can directly be related to our emotional regulation.

Second of all, by neglecting the emotional component, we undervalue the emotional intelligence of the Prophet (SAWS), who was a mercy to mankind on the basis of all three components combined. We consequently overlook his emotional character, perhaps even reducing

him to a man of rules and regulations devoid of any feelings at all. An ayah that specifically highlights this trait was revealed after the battle of Uhud, in which Allah says:

*“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in the matter. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely [upon Him].”(3:159)*

The ayah (verse) demonstrates how the Prophet (SAWS) was perfectly attuned to the emotional state of his followers– had it been otherwise, his companions would have disbanded. Indeed, the Prophet (SAWS) knew very well the importance of recognizing our emotions; his life was the quintessential example of emotional expression – when and how to express them – with the ultimate objective of developing our emotional intelligence.

## **What is the emotional component?**

The experience of emotions is inevitable. Thus we do not exercise our free will in choos-



ing not to have them, rather we practice free will in deciding what to do with them when they arise. There are several key points with regards to emotional intelligence that must be understood.

First of all, it's important to realize that if God has created us with emotions, such as anger, sadness, fear, etc., then they must serve a purpose that is ultimately to our benefit. In fact, research has shown that our well-being – how happy you are, how good you feel, etc. – is entirely a function of our emotional make-up. Keep in mind, much like everything else we were given, emotions were created to enhance healthy living but it also carries the potential of being abused.

Second of all, the emotional component is incapable of reason; instead, it requires our rational brain to reflect on the valuable emotional information it produces. For example, when you're scared, you try to use that information to rationalize what you're afraid of. It is the collaboration of emotion and reason that results in a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Third of all, we use emotions to give meaning to things. People reflect on their emotional feelings to make sense of their experiences. For example, someone may create meaning via the feeling of calmness that they experience when sitting in a religious institution, and they may thus appreciate the experience in a manner that attributes the calmness coming from God. The emotional component indeed plays a major role in our convictions and worldviews, which is quite often neglected in debates and arguments. This is especially important with regards to da'wah (calling people to Islam); the most common da'wah method I see amongst da'iis (those who do da'wah), I would say it's almost exclusively a rational approach. I personally do not advocate an entirely rational approach to da'wah as that would presuppose that humans are entirely rational creatures. Rather, we must appreciate that our emotions play an equally significant (if not more so) role in the decisions

we make. Significantly, if you speak to people who accepted Islam, not everyone will agree that they converted because it was an entirely reasonable choice; many, for example, say it was because of the love they felt for Allah, Islam, or indeed, the Muslim community. Although the general Western population places a superior emphasis on "rationality" than anything else, do not neglect the person's feelings in the process. The meaning they will construct following your da'wah engagement will almost certainly depend on the emotions they were feeling in the process.

Finally, the emotional component consists of two processes: the facility of experiencing emotions and the capacity to regulate it. Indeed, the over and under-regulation of emotions is a significant cause of psychological distress. Let's take the core emotion of fear as an example, and briefly examine how the Prophet (SAWS) regulated it. Fear is a powerful, adaptive emotion that screams "danger!" It quickly generates a tremendous amount of energy (hence, your heart is racing, adrenaline, etc.) so you can immediately seek protection. In the time of the Prophet (SAWS), there was one context that we're sure was fear-invoking for his companions: war. How did the Prophet (SAWS) show us how to regulate our fear in these unquestionably fearful times? Did he under-regulate it by staying at home in hiding, overcome by the need to protect himself? Did he over-regulate it by running towards the enemy on his own, without any consideration for his own being? Of course not, the Prophet (SAWS) was instead the perfect example of emotional regulation. You see, fear is just a warning sign for danger, and this is an incredibly valuable emotional information; instead of attacking the enemy carelessly (ignoring the fear), or staying at home (overcome by fear), he put on body armor and planned his attacks precisely. Hence, fear is a valuable asset from Allah that tells us to be careful. We shouldn't let it

*Con'td on page 30*

# Why do We Search for Skills

*Dr. Muhammad bin Abd al-Rahman al-Aarifi*

I once visited a deprived town to deliver a lecture, after which there came to me a teacher from outside the town. He said, "I hope you can help us finance some students."

I said, "Strange! Aren't the schools government funded, and therefore free?"

He said, "Indeed they are, but we would like to fund their university education."

I said, "Well, the universities are also government funded. They even offer student grants."

He said, "Allow me to explain to you..."

"Go ahead", I said.

He said, "Our students graduate from their secondary school with no less than 99%. They are so clever that if their intelligence was divided amongst the ummah, it would suffice! But when a student becomes determined to travel outside his town to study Medicine, Engineering, Islamic Law, Computer Science or anything else, his father prevents him from going, saying, 'What you know is sufficient! Now, remain with me and be a shepherd!'"

I screamed impulsively, "Be a shepherd?!"

He said, "Yes, a shepherd!"

And indeed, the poor boy stays with his father and becomes a shepherd, whilst all his abilities are wasted. Years go by and he remains a shepherd. He may even get married and have

children whom he may treat exactly as he was treated by his father. Hence, all his children also become shepherds!

I asked, "So what's the solution?"

He said, "The solution is to convince the father to employ someone as a shepherd for a few hundred riyals, which we will pay, and allow his son to take full advantage of his skills and abilities. Of course, we will also continue to fund his son until he graduates."

The teacher then lowered his head and said, "It is inexcusable that such skills and talents in people are wasted when they long to utilise them."

I contemplated upon what he had said and realised that we cannot reach the pinnacle except by taking advantage of the abilities we have and acquiring those that we do not.

Yes, I would challenge anyone to find a successful person, be they successful in academia, preaching, lecturing, business, medicine, engineering, or influencing others; or be they successful in family life, such as a successful father with his children, or a successful wife with her husband; or be they successful in their social life, such as a person who is successful with his neighbours and colleagues - and I mean a truly successful person, not one who simply climbs

upon others' shoulders! - I would challenge anyone to find me any such highly successful person who does not practise certain interpersonal skills through which he has been able to achieve such success, whether they realise it or not.

Some people may exercise such interpersonal skills instinctively, while others may have to learn them in order to be successful, and these latter people are the types of successful personalities whose lives we would like to study and whose methods we would closely seek to follow in order to discover how they were successful, and to find out whether or not we can take their route to success.

A while ago, I listened to an interview with one of the most affluent people in the world, Shaykh Sulayman al-Rajihi, and found him to be a mountain in terms of his manners and thoughts. This man owns billions, possesses immense real estate, has built hundreds of mosques, and has sponsored thousands of orphans. He is hugely successful. He spoke of his humble beginnings around fifty years ago, when he was a regular person who would only have enough money to feed himself for the day, and sometimes not even that. He mentioned that he would sometimes clean people's houses to feed himself and continue working at night at a shop or money exchange. He discussed how he was once at the bottom of the mountain, and how he continued to climb until he reached the summit.

I thought about the abilities and skills he possesses and realised that many of us are well capable of being like him, if Allah grants us the ability. If one learns these skills, exercises them, perseveres and remains steadfast, then yes, he can surely be like him.

Another reason for us to search for these skills is that some of us may have certain abilities, which we remain unaware of, or which nobody has assisted us in discovering, such as the skills of delivering a lecture, business acumen, or possessing general knowledge.

One may discover these skills on his own,

through a teacher's or a work colleague's help, or even through a sincere brother, however few they may be! However, these skills may remain buried inside the person until his personality becomes as stale as anyone else's, and this is when we all lose out on another leader, lecturer or scholar, or perhaps a successful husband, or a caring father.

Here we will mention certain skills which we would like to remind you of if you already possess them, or which we would like to train you in if you don't. So come along!

### **A thought...**

When you climb a mountain, look to the top and not to the rocks that surround you. Make sure of where you step as you climb, and do not leap in case you lose your footing.

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*Cont'd from page 12*

finds any dirt or an impure thing in a mosque, he should clean it himself and not wait for somebody else to do the job, as is evident from the act of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

2. Keep some cloth, handkerchief etc., along with: It is better to keep some cloth, handkerchief, tissue paper etc., handy during salaah so that if a need arises one can spit in it.

3. A Musalli is in direct conversation with Allah: Salaah is a highly exalted form of worship, rather, the best of all worships. The spiritual ascent which a person attains in salaah cannot be attained in any other form of worship. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said that a Musalli (person offering salaah) is in direct and close conversation with his Lord during the time. It is a great honour and illimitable blessing offered to a believer.

4. Masjid—a highly respectable place: This hadith makes it clear that a mosque is a place which should be given due respect as mentioned in various hadiths. Any sort of desecration or disregard may in some cases even put a question mark on the Iman of a believer.

# The Works of Heart

*Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jeelani (ra)*

When the heart acts in accordance with the Book and the Sunna, it draws near. Once it has become close, it will come to know and see its credits and faults, what belongs to Allah (mighty and glorified is He) and what belongs to others, and what belongs to the truth and what belongs to falsehood.

When this heart becomes pure and sound, it will hear the call of the True One from its six directions. It will hear the call of every prophet, messenger, saint, and truthful person (Allah's prayer and peace be on all of them). At this stage, it will draw near to Him so that its life will mean nearness to Him and its death will mean remoteness from Him. Its satisfaction will be in having private conversation with Him. It will become totally content with that to the exclusion of anything else. It will not care if this world turned its back to it and will not care about hunger, thirst, nakedness, and all diseases.

Woe to you! All what you are about and all what you are involved in are illusion within illusion which Allah will pay no attention to. This business is not achieved by deeds of the body but by works of the heart. Our Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) has said: "Renunciation is here, piety is here, sincerity is here," and he pointed to his breast.

This heart will not be sound and will not attain success until it gives up every beloved, cuts off every object of attachment, and renounces every creature. Give up and you will be reward-

ed with much better than what you abandoned. The Prophet (SAWS) has said: "When a person gives up something [for the sake of Allah], Allah compensates him with something better." O Allah, wake our hearts up so that they attend to you, awaken us from our forgetfulness Of You, and "give us good in this world and good in the hereafter and protect us from the torment of the Fire."

When this heart has become sound and planted its feet firm at the door of the True One, it will fall in the wilderness of "be, and it is," in its valleys, and in its sea. It will exist there sometimes with its words, sometimes with its aspiration, and sometimes with its sight. It will start to behave as commanded by Allah (mighty and glorified is He) and it isolates itself from any detachments; it will become in a state of extinction, and only He will remain. Only a minority of you believe in this; the majority do not. Believing in this is sainthood and putting it into practice is attainment. No one denies the spiritual states of the righteous people other than a hypocritical impostor who is riding on his passion.

This business is based on having sound belief and applying the outward of the Law which will cause the person to inherit knowingness of Allah (mighty and glorified is He) and Knowledge of Him. The Law will come to be between him and the creatures, whereas Knowledge will be between him and his Lord (mighty and glorified is He). His outward deeds will be as little



as an atom in comparison with the mountain of his inward deeds. His limbs and senses will rest but his heart will never do. The eyes in his head may doze off but the eyes of his heart will never sleep. His heart will work unceasingly and remember Allah while he is asleep. When will you know this world so that you give it up and divorce it?

Wayfaring is the wayfaring of the hearts and attainment is the attainment of the innermost beings. When the innermost beings achieve attainment they become kings and the limbs and senses become followers and an entourage. When the heart arrives at the door it asks for permission for the innermost being to enter. The innermost being enters and then the heart follows.

O young man, consult the Book and the Sunna in all of your affairs. When you find a certain matter of your religion confusing say: "What do you say about it, O Book of Allah? What do you say about it, O Sunna? What do you say about this problem, O Messenger of Allah (SAWS)? What do you say about it, O my shaikh who has shown me the way to the Messenger (SAWS)? What do you say about it, O Messenger of Allah (SAWS) who has shown me the way to the Sender?" If you do this, your problem will be solved and the darkness you are in will disappear. When anything poses a problem for you, ask about it outwardly the people of the Law and inwardly your heart. The Prophet (SAWS) once said to a righteous man: "Consult your heart even if the legal experts have offered you advice." See what your inward says even though you have sought the opinions of legal experts. See what is in your heart and what it suggests even if the legal experts have offered you their opinions. Seek the advice of the ushers, doorkeepers, and ministers then enter into the presence of the king and see what he has to say. If the heart agreed, this is a welcome agreement, but if it disagreed, follow its ruling and ignore the ruling of anyone else.

Among the signs of wretchedness of the servant is the hardness of his heart, dryness of his eyes, wideness of his hopes, his niggardliness about his property, giving little importance to the commandments and prohibitions, and his dissatisfaction when tribulations strike. When you see someone of this description, be aware that he is wretched. The person with a hard heart does not show mercy to anyone and his eyes never turn moist with tears at times of happiness or times of sadness, for the dryness of his eyes is due to the hardness of his heart. How could his heart not be hard when it is full of wishes, acts of disobedience, sins, wide hopes, desires to obtain things that are not destined for him, envy for their owners, and stinginess with the obligatory alms? Additionally, he does not pay the dues of expiations, does not fulfill his vows, does not pay attention to the needs of his relatives, does not settle his debts despite his ability to do so, and even tries to delay them in the hope of avoiding payment altogether, and hates to give anything by way of charity or in fulfilling the obligatory duties. All these and the likes are signs of wretchedness. The Invincible One has said: "Has the time not yet come for the hearts of those who believe to submit with humility to the remembrance of Allah and to the truth that has come down?" (from 57.16).

The heart inside which belief in the oneness of God and nearness has developed grows bigger everyday. As it grows bigger, greater, and higher it will not see any more on the face of the earth and in heaven other than Allah. All creatures will submit to its command and there will be a secret between it and its Lord (mighty and glorified is He). Once it has reached this stage, it will gain access [to Him], attain to Him, and become the absolute ruler of its time. It will become capable while complying with the divine decree, destiny, the Law, and Knowledge. The low ranking angels will serve it. O people, believe the words of Allah (mighty and glorified is He), His Messenger (SAWS), and the righteous

among His servants! He is truthful because He has said: “And who is truer in speech than Allah?” (from 4.122). The truthfulness of the Messenger and the righteous is derived from His truthfulness.

When you stand at the door of the True One (mighty and glorified is He), you will witness something wonderful, or rather many wonders. Forget your food, drink, clothes, existence, and the praise and the dispraise of people. All these are works of the hearts. This heart will then turn into an orchard that contains trees and fruits. It will have deserts and unpopulated spaces, seas, rivers, and mountains. It will become the gathering place of human beings, jinn, angels, and spirits. This is beyond the comprehension of the creatures. O Allah, if what I am talking about is true, confirm it for the seekers, but if it is false, obliterate it! If I am following the truth, erect my edifice, raise it high, and speed up the guidance of the creatures through me. O Allah, raise our hearts to you! How long will this tiredness last? When will the cares of the heart end? When will we enjoy the banquet on the roof of the palace of nearness, looking from its balconies at Your creation? “And Allah strikes parables for people” (from 14.25).

When the heart becomes sound, it forgets everything other than the True One (mighty and glorified is He), the One whose existence has no beginning, the Perpetual One, the Eternal One. Everything else has been created at a certain moment of time. Once this heart has become sound, the words that originate from it will be a truth that no one can refute. The heart will speak to the innermost being, the innermost being to the private life, the private life to the essence, the essence to the kernel, the kernel to the consciousness. At this stage, its speech to the hearts will be like seeds that are sown in a land that is good, soft, and not saline, so they will grow into green plants.

## The Sign of Sincerity

During the period in which he was the leader of the Muslim Ummah, Sayyiduna Mu‘aawiyah (RA) once had a peace treaty with the Romans. When the peace treaty was close to expiring, he prepared the Muslim army and began proceeding to the border of the Muslim and Roman lands. His intention was to cross the border and attack the very instant the treaty terminated. The Romans were unaware of this and would have been taken by utter surprise.

While Mu‘aawiyah (RA) was proceeding, he suddenly saw a man on horseback shouting, “Allahu Akbar! Fulfill the pledge! Don’t deceive!” When they looked, they saw that it was the Sahaa-bi, ‘Amr bin ‘Abasah (RA). Mu‘aawiyah (RA) sent for him and when he arrived, he said to Mu‘aawiyah (RA), “I heard Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) saying, ‘The one who has a treaty or pledge with a people should neither make any change to the pledge nor break it until it either terminates or he first informs them equally.’”

On hearing the blessed hadeeth of Nabi (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam), Mu‘aawiyah (RA) immediately accepted correction and retreated with the entire army.

*(Sunan Abi Dawood #2759 & Sunan Tirmizi #1580)*

# The Spectacular Travels of Ibn Battuta

When it comes to globetrotting, even Marco Polo takes a back seat to this fourteenth-century voyageur.

In the year 1349 a dusty Arab horseman rode slowly toward the city of Tangier on the North African coast. For Ibn Battuta, it was the end of a long journey. When he left his home in Tangier 24 years earlier, he had not planned to travel distant roads all during the years that took him from young manhood to middle-age. From his mount, Ibn Battuta surveyed the white spires and homes of Tangier spreading in a crescent along the Atlantic Ocean. He tried to remember how the city had looked when he left it behind almost a quarter-century ago.

In 1325 Ibn Battuta had been a young man of 21, reluctantly leaving his parents to make his first hajj, or pilgrimage, to Mecca some 3,000 miles due east. He had covered those 3,000 miles and then had gone on to travel another 72,000 miles! Many Muslims made the pilgrimage to the Holy City but then returned home, for it was not an age when people were accustomed to straying from home for long periods. When Ibn Battuta began his travels, it was, in fact, more than 125 years before such renowned voyagers as Columbus, de Gama and Magellan set sail. It was no wonder, then, that Ibn Battuta returned to his native city, where his parents had died in his absence, to find himself a famous wayfarer. A contemporary described him as “the traveler

of the age,” adding’ “he who should call him the traveler of the whole body of Islam would not exceed the truth.”

Ibn Battuta was indeed the traveler of his age. His wanderings took him to Spain, Russia, Turkey, Persia, India, China and all the Arab lands. His description of the religious, political and social conditions of the lands he visited – in some cases the only record – give insight into medieval Eastern civilization. Authorities who estimate Ibn Battuta’s journeys at more than 75,000 miles say that the distance was not exceeded by anyone-including Marco Polo, Magellan or Columbus-until the age of steam.

Travelers have many reasons for visiting foreign lands. Marco Polo was a merchant and Columbus an adventurer. Ibn Battuta, however, was a theologian, poet and scholar, a humanitarian in an age when life was cheap. He left Tangier to visit the holy places of his faith and found himself curious about the wide world and eager to learn more about it.

Born in 1304, the son of Abdallah, a qadi, or local judge, Ibn Battuta as a young man received a future qadi’s customary education, essentially a thorough study of religious literature and poetry. He is, in fact, the only great traveler to describe some of the places he visited in rhymed verse. His style (translated without rhyme) can be imagined from his description of the Cairo of 1326: “I arrived at length at Cairo, mother of

cities and seat of Pharaoh the tyrant, mistress of broad regions and fruitful lands, boundless in multitude of buildings, peerless in beauty and splendour, the meeting place of comers and goers, the halting place of feeble and mighty, whose throngs surge as the waves of the sea, and can scarce be contained in her for all her size and capacity.

“On the Nile,” noted the amazed traveler, “there are 36,000 boats belonging to the Sultan and his subjects.”

From Cairo Ibn Battuta toured through Jerusalem, Aleppo and Damascus, where he joined a caravan of pilgrims bound for Mecca. These caravans were a familiar sight in Islam. They consisted of Muslims, rich and poor, ignorant and educated, soldier, merchant and scholar, who were fulfilling the duty of every Muslim to visit Mecca at least once in his lifetime if possible. In the towns and cities along the way they were fed, sheltered and entertained in rest houses and hospices maintained by generous benefactors. This traditional hospitality—which in Arab countries extends to all guests—made it possible for Ibn Battuta, who was not rich, to travel with a light purse.

He made the hajj to Mecca seven times. The second time he stayed in the city three years to study with the great Muslim scholars. This pilgrimage was preceded by a tour of Persia, including a visit to the then fabled capital of Islam, Baghdad, where he found public baths that were unmatched anywhere in the world. “Each establishment,” wrote the traveler, “has a large number of private bathrooms, every one of which has also a washbasin in the corner, with two taps supplying hot and cold water. Every bather is given three towels, one to wear round his waist when he goes in, another to wear round his waist when he comes out, and the third to dry himself with.”

At the end of three years of study in Mecca, Ibn Battuta set out for India, where he hoped to join the court of the powerful and generous

Sultan of Delhi. By this time he had made it a rule “never, so far as possible, to cover a second time any road.” He went to Jiddah, Mecca’s nearest port, where he turned down passage on a ship he considered unsafe. “This was an act of providence,” he recalls, “for the ship sailed and foundered in the open sea, and very few escaped.”

After touring through Egypt, Syria, Turkey and Russia, Ibn Battuta finally reached Delhi, where he remained in the sultan’s service as qadi for eight years. At the end of this time the sultan called him. “I have sent for you to go as my ambassador to the lung of China,” he said, “for I know your love of travel.” The trip was to be a memorable journey.

No sooner had Ibn Battuta left Delhi than he was taken prisoner by unfriendly Indians. They marked him for death, but one of the band, a young man, took pity on him and let him escape. After eating roots and nuts and hiding out in strange countryside for eight days, Ibn Battuta finally rejoined his entourage and proceeded to Calicut, a trading port near the tip of India from which he planned to sail to China.

“We entered the harbour in great pomp, the like of which I have never seen in those lands,” he noted, “but it was a joy to be followed by distress.” Then he describes the great Chinese junks that monopolized traffic to China.

The large junks had three masts and up to twelve sails, which were “never lowered, but turned according to the direction of the wind.” Three smaller vessels usually accompanied the junks to tow them if they became becalmed. The junk was the fourteenth-century equivalent of the modern ocean liner. It even carried its own fresh food: “The sailors,” notes Ibn Battuta, “have their children living on board ship, and they cultivate green stuffs, vegetables and ginger in wooden tanks.”

In Calicut Ibn Battuta loaded his party and the presents for the Chinese emperor on a junk. His own belongings were put onto a smaller ves-



sel called a kakam. The junk, as it made its way from the harbor, was caught by a sudden gale which whipped up the sea and dashed the ship onto shoals. All was lost. The smaller kakam then sailed away with all of Ibn Battuta's goods. He watched the kakam grow smaller in the distance with nothing to his name but ten dinars and the carpet he had slept on.

From past experience with foreign rulers, he wisely decided not to return to Delhi, for while the sultan was a generous man, Ibn Battuta reasoned that he might not have understood why of all the treasure and envoys, only Ibn Battuta remained intact! So the stranded ambassador, with the typical resourcefulness of a seasoned traveler, attached himself to a local Muslim potentate who appointed him qadi in the nearby Maldiv Islands. Ibn Battuta's description of the customs of these islands was the first to reach the outside world.

When Ibn Battuta finally sailed again for China, he landed at Zaytoen, the storied "Shanghai" of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, which may have been what is today the island of Amoy, opposite Formosa. He traveled through China as an ambassador, although he actually represented no one and was without credentials. Despite the fact that the Muslim and Chinese empires were not on the friendliest terms, Ibn Battuta journeyed from Zaytoen to Hangchow and Peking and back without any difficulty. On the contrary, he was feted in most places, a testimony to his charm and native diplomacy.

"There is no people in the world," noted Ibn Battuta, "wealthier than the Chinese." He called Hangchow "the biggest city I have ever seen on the face of the earth." This was the same city described by Marco Polo as "beyond dispute the finest and noblest in the world."

The Arab from Tangier turned homeward the way he had come, except that he avoided Delhi altogether. He passed once again through

Mecca and Baghdad and, in 1348, stopped at Damascus. There he enquired about one of his sons whom he had left 20 years before. He discovered that the boy had been dead 12 years and his own father 15.

The Black Plague was then raging through the Middle East. At Cairo Ibn Battuta reported a daily death toll of 21,000, a figure that historians confirm. Ibn Battuta passed through town after town scourged by the plague, but providentially he escaped infection for had he been stricken, his name would have been soon forgotten. He had not yet recorded his travels.

Even after he returned to Tangier in 1349, Ibn Battuta was not content to spend his remaining days at home, where he might have passed many a pleasant hour spinning stories of distant lands for his friends. His mother also had fallen victim to the plague during his absence, and with nothing to keep him in Tangier, he was soon planning a trip to Spain. After Spain, three years later, Ibn Battuta began his last journey. He traveled through west-central Africa, where he mistook the Niger for the Nile, and visited Timbuktu, a city that was considered legendary by Europeans because none of them had been there. In 1354 the great traveler was called to Fez by his sultan, who ordered him to dictate a record of his wanderings to a court scribe.

Strangely enough, Ibn Battuta's exploits were lost to the Western world for 300 years. Not until the nineteenth century, when his *Rihla* ('Travels') was discovered in Algeria, did his extraordinary roamings come to light. In contrast, Marco Polo dictated an account of his journeys to a contemporary while they shared a prison cell in 1296, and copies had circulated all over Europe by the fifteenth century. Had Ibn Battuta's work received the same attention, his name would rank alongside Marco Polo's as a synonym for world travel.

*Source: Islamcity*

# Reconsidering Sin

## Are Small Sins Really Small?

*Farhoon al-Qurtubi*

Many people tend to get in the habit of belittling all kind of sins, some of which could very well be monstrous. It is crucial for our success in this life as well as in the Hereafter that we all appreciate the importance of not demeaning any wrong act at all.

Instead of looking at our sin and thinking, “Well, it is a small thing,” we ought to ponder and see Whom we wronged and Whom we disobeyed. Allah, the Almighty says,

*And [you] thought it was insignificant while it is, in the sight of Allah, tremendous. [Surat Al-Nur, 24:15]*

We ought to really consider the fact that we are going against Allah’s command instead of just regarding the offense as being minor and of no consequence. We should bear in mind that we have indeed broken the rules of the Glorified and the Almighty Allah, our Creator and Lord Who can, if He chooses, overlook a great sin and hold us responsible for a little one.

The Messenger said,  
*Beware of lesser sins, for indeed the minor and lesser sins are like the parable of some people who camped on the side of a valley. Each one of them fetched a piece of wood until they*

*gathered that which they cooked their bread with. (Ahmad)*

A wise person once said,

Beware of your sins, for they are like a huge rock thrown at a house, and demolished it; the wind then would go inside and blow out the lit candles.

Most important of all, we should always remember that for each sin there is a tawba (repentance). However, keeping away from sins is far better than making tawba. Sufyan Al-Thawri said,

I once asked my teacher: who is the decent and virtuous man? He answered, “He who would not allow the companion (the Angel on one’s left shoulder recording his/her sins) on the left to write down bad deeds. I (the author) say, “The decent and virtuous man is the one who is constantly conscious of Allah’s watchfulness and does not give rest to his heart and tongue from remembering his Lord.

Accordingly, be utterly aware of all types of transgressions and sins without talking yourself into believing that some are only but insignificant and assume that Allah will forgive them. Even if they are, we should beware that this may very well turn into a habit and we may eventual-

ly slide into the darkness associated with grave and deadly sins.

Beware of following in the footsteps of those who become slaves to their whims and start to cater to all their cravings while totally ignoring what Allah and His Messenger command and forbid. Do not be fooled by the luxury in which they are living now, but be certain that ahead of them lies a day on which their feet will shake, their bodies will shiver and their color will fade. It is the day when their standing up will be very long, their reckoning will be tough and their hearts will be at their throats. They will see all their deeds written in their books on a day the length of which equals fifty thousand years. They will suffer the unbearable heat and the unendurable thirst. They will sob and cry from agony and regret. Think about that day.

That day is the Day of Resurrection, the day of Al-Rajifah (the first blowing of the Trumpet, which will cause the earth and heavens to shake and life to end), the Day of Al-Radifah (the second Blowing, which will cause everybody to come out of his grave). It is the Day of Remorse, the day when all excuses will be of no avail and Allah will pronounce,

*O you who disbelieve! Make no excuses today.*

*[Surat Al-Tahrim, 66:7]*

On that day, no father will avail his son, nor will a son avail his father at all. It really is,

*The Day you see it, every nursing mother will forget her nursling, and every pregnant one will drop her load, and you shall see mankind as in a drunken state, but severe will be the torment of Allah. [Surat Al-Hajj, 22:2]*

On that day, all deeds are cut off, all wealth and riches vanish, all voices are silenced and all earthly kings stand with humility and fear. All tongues are sealed and all limbs are given the order to speak out. Such will be the affairs of those who spent their lives in blind subservience to their vain desires.

But if you want to join the saved ones, make sure to be like them—hold yourself responsi-

ble for everything you do. Try to walk in their shoes, and never fool yourself by merely being around them, for Allah will not gather in Paradise except Al-Salihin and those who follow in their footsteps. Beware Allah's declaration,

*As for him who feared standing before his Lord [by holding himself accountable] and restrained himself from impure evil desires and lusts, Paradise will be his abode. [Al-Nazi'at, 79:40-41]*

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*Cont'd from page 21*

overpower us, nor should we ever ignore it.

This is obviously an enormous topic. Indeed, philosophers and scholars have discussed the significance of the emotional component for millennia. As such, there were but a few thoughts on the importance of emotions, and I pray in the future we can discuss specific emotions – anger, sadness, fear, and shame – individually by reflecting on their purpose and, significantly, their abuse.

*Tarek Younis is a fourth year PhD/PsyD psychology student at the Université du Québec à Montréal*

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*Cont'd from page 16*

the WTO served not so much to promote global trade as to further the interests of the U.S. corporations seeking new markets world-wide. The other was that the WTO was an antidevelopment organization.” (p. 139)

Bertrand Russell then, having been a Westerner, might not turn in his grave. But we know that if the U.S. is a superpower today, it is not merely because of certain fortuitous factors and events, it was also because peoples of the Third World were starving to provide the finance for their innovative activities and technological developments.

*YMD-June, 2012*

# The Majesty of Makkah

*Maulana Khalid Dhorat*

If you gaze long enough at the Ka'bah, you will come to realize that there is much more than meets the eye about this elegantly-draped, empty, cubed-shaped building. There are no neon lights on it to seize your imagination, no intricate architecture to marvel at, and certainly no attractions directly around it, besides endless lines of marble tiles, to interest one. Yet, it's very difficult to tear one's gaze away from it without a feeling of guilt. So what keeps your eyes glued to the Ka'bah?

There are few things that can NOT be put into words, and the electric feeling one experiences when setting one's gaze on the Ka'bah, when lovingly touching the Hajr-e-Aswad (Heavenly Stone), and when performing salaah in the Hateem (area demarcated by a low wall, which is technically, within the Ka'bah itself), are included in them. A wave of awe overpowers one, and you no more see with your physical sight, nor hear with your physical ears or think with your physical brain. The light of spirituality takes over as your soul starts communicating with the soul of the Ka'bah. The feeling is beyond description. You come to realize that you have just honoured your "labbaik" (I am present) when you responded to Prophet Abraham's (may peace be upon him) call over 3000 years ago, when he stood atop Mount Abu Qubais, calling out to everyone till the Last Day, to visit

the Ka'bah. Suddenly, the world ceases to exist and everything around you vanishes. It is just yourself and your Lord, the Almighty, in sacred communion – just as millions of angels are doing directly above the worldly Ka'bah, in the seventh heaven, around a sacred house called Baitul Ma'moor.

This climax of meeting with your Lord is not only spiritually significant, but geographically important too. For those, like myself, who forgot our geography taught to us in school, we learnt that millions of years ago, long before the Ice Age or even the Dinosaur Age, the entire world was submerged in water. Suddenly, a mysterious bubble appeared, and from there a piece of dry land made its appearance. This dry land then rose 277 meters above sea level and spread out to take the form of what we know today as the continents. The Ka'bah, also known as the "Navel of the Earth," is built upon the exact spot of this bubble.

This geographically significant spot is situated on a 00 line of magnetic declination, making it in perfect alignment with magnetic north. In simple language, the Ka'bah is situated at an equal distance to the earth's circumference in all directions. The Golden Ratio Point (1.618) of the earth, thus, is right at the spot of the Ka'bah. About 2 billion Muslims honour the Ka'bah by facing it in their prayers five times a day.



## Modernization of Makkah

There is no doubt that the landscape of Makkah has changed to such an extent that almost all the signs of the last day have appeared therein. These include the “belly of the mountains being ripped up,” - an allusion to all the underground motorways, many high-rise buildings that would be higher than the mountains and would dwarf the Ka’bah, and the dessert becoming a place of greenery and entertainment. The magnificent “Makkah Clock” which is visible from all four directions, is 2000 feet high (the Big Ben Clock of London is only 316 feet high) and when fully lit, is visible from a distance of 35 kms. Twenty years ago, a ziyaret (visit) of the landmarks of Islam in Makkah would be a spiritually refreshing experience whence one could “feel” the past coming alive; sadly today, it’s just a few minutes’ drive past a few remaining spots of what was the previous glory of Islam. If the Afrikaaners of South Africa have preserved the Voortrekker Monument to remember their shameful Apartheid legacy, why are we tearing down our beautiful legacy of justice, love and peace?

Makkah is perhaps today the fastest Muslim city to be modernized. The new expansion to the Grand Mosque has been designed by Atkins to resemble a huge pavilion or stadium, subliminally implanting the message that the Ka’bah is nothing more than a “holy attraction.” A photo or a video of one posing in front of the Ka’bah is more significant than touching it or crying in prayers facing it. In order to feed the ever-growing number of pilgrims, chickens are imported from Brazil and other countries, the halaal status of which has also been questioned by the local ‘Ulema. Even the Zam Zam water has not been spared from “modernization.” According to recent tests, the inviolable Holy Water which was originally quite thick, is being mixed with chemicals to “purify and preserve” it by western standards. This is the reason why no one has direct access to the underground well itself. The

Muslim ummah is paying dearly for this “purification” as in Makkah, a 10L bottle of Zam Zam would cost you Rs25- (about R79-), and a gallon of fuel (also about 10L), only Rs5- (about R18-). Indeed nothing reminds one of this sacred city, except the Ka’bah itself.

Many will take the opportunity of cursing the King for all this modernization; but the truth is that the King, just like all other shrewd businessmen, simply seen an opportunity, and seized it. He knows how the pilgrims have abandoned simplicity for luxury, pomp and show, so he is making most of marketing ‘Umrah and Hajj as “the ideal holiday and shopping destination,” just in case his oil fields run dry tomorrow. It’s a case of supply and demand, and at the moment, he has many customers! However, if the ummah returns to simplicity, then the Almighty will appoint such rulers who will love their sword more than their wine and music.

## Don’t be Distracted

If only the Ka’bah reminds you of this Holy City, then the Ka’bah is the place where you should be at for most of your stay in Makkah – not in the luxurious malls with all its western designer stores. Every second is prime time at the Ka’bah. Do not lift your eyes off the Ka’bah, or gaze in admiration at the other buildings (especially the Clock Tower) whilst in the Grand Mosque. This is the highest form of disrespect. As you throw yourself at the mercy of the Almighty or if you are engaged in doing tawaaf (circling the Ka’bah seven times to complete one circuit) and if such tawaaf is done with due decorum and humility, then it is in these conditions that you will experience certain life-altering realities. These realities are many and experienced differently by people, but can be briefly enumerated as follows:

1. Your tawaaf starts at the point of Hajr-e-Aswad, or the Heavenly Stone. This stone looks normal, but it is far from normal. It’s so

valuable that if all the kings of the world were to purchase it with all the gold they own, it will still not be for sale. It is truly a Stone that belongs to the Muslim nation. It signifies our origin in paradise, and our ultimate end to be in paradise too;

2. Whilst lost in the huge crowds, dressed in those two simple pieces of cloth, you realize that you are just a number, helplessly flowing with the endless tide of humanity. As you diminish in significance, so does the greatness of the Almighty grow in proportion in your heart. You are so helpless in the state of ihram (consecration), that the many flies can even sense it. They will sit on you and taunt you, knowing that they cannot be killed. If a life of fly is sacred, isn't the life, honour and dignity of your fellow brothers and sisters more sacred?

3. As you begin to experience tiredness in your tawaaf, and think of taking a break, you realize that the Majesty of the Almighty didn't increase a bit by your extra devotions. In fact, you will tire yourself completely in devotions to Him, but it will not benefit the Almighty the least. He is independent and Supreme. You need to follow His rules and regulations for your own benefit. If you do not, you are simply pushed out of the line;

4. You realize that the greatest form of worship is in MOVEMENT – continuous movement until death overtakes you. You can ask the Almighty as much as you want, but you have to work according to a certain system to achieve your goals. This system is to be found in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. In addition, our enemies are not afraid of our worship sitting on one place, but they are afraid of our actions;

5. Tawaaf teaches you not to be distracted from your true goal in life. Why is this? Because you see many people from all over the world – white, black, tall, short, thin, fat – all in the same motion as you. If you begin to admire how the Arabs tie their scarves in 100 different ways, how the Turks form a huge chain, and how lovely the

Indonesians chant their zikrs, you will lose focus, but others will reach their destination;

6. Lastly, everyone finds a place in the Grand Mosque, no matter how crowded it is. Likewise, the Almighty has given us all a role to play in life, no matter how insignificant we may think it to be. Let us identify our strengths, stop our bickering and divisions, and reach our destination before it's too late.

The greatest consolation when leaving Makkah is that, although the mercy of the Almighty is at its peak here, but the Almighty Himself is everywhere. He is aware of all of our movements, wherever we are – even at the tip of the North Pole. We leave his House with great sorrow, having captured its essence in our heart, and cherishing those sacred moments for ever.

To all those embarking on the journey to this Ancient House, I bid you 'Umrah and Hajj Mabroor in advance.

## Companion of the Qur'an

It will be said to the companion of the Qur'an:  
"Recite and rise in status, recite as you used to recite in the world, for your status will be at the last verse that you recite"

Tirmidhi

# Preparing to Depart

*A Lecture by Sheikh Ali ibn Abdur-Rahman al-Huthaifi*

Everyone in this life strives to attain whatever benefits him, sets right his affairs, and secures his livelihood. Some people seek to set right their religious affairs along with their worldly affairs. These are the ones whom Allah will give in this world that which is good and in the hereafter that which is good, and whom He will save from the torment of the Fire. Other people seek only this worldly life and lose their share in the hereafter. These are the ones who enjoy themselves and eat as cattle eat, and the Fire will be their abode.

*Every concern and every act has an appointed term in which it will come to an end. Allah, Exalted be He, says: "And that to your Lord (Allah) is the End (Return of everything)." (An-Najm: 42)*

Glorified be our Lord, Who has made all hearts occupied with various concerns and worries, and Who has created everyone with will and determination, so that he can do or abandon anything whenever he wants, and Allah's will is dominant over all other wills and desires.

*Allah, Exalted be He, says: "And you cannot will unless (it be) that Allah wills – the Lord of the 'Alamin (mankind, jinn and all that exists)." (At-Takwir: 29)*

Whatever Allah wills, will be; and whatever

He does not will, will never be. Death is the fate of every creature on earth and the end of every living thing in this worldly life. Allah has decreed it for all creation, even the angels, such as Jibril, Mika'il, and Israfil, peace and blessings be upon them. The Angel of Death will also die, just like all the other angels. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

*"Whatsoever is on it (the earth) will perish. And the Face of your Lord full of Majesty and Honour will remain forever." (Ar-Rahman: 26-27)*

Death is the end of this worldly life and the beginning of the hereafter. When it strikes, the enjoyment of the worldly life will cease, and after that, everyone will either enjoy great bliss or suffer painful torment. Death is also one of the signs of the power of Allah, Might and Majesty be to Him, and a manifestation of His dominance over His creation. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

*"He is the Irresistible, (Supreme) over His slaves, and He sends guardians (angels guarding and writing all of one's good and bad deeds) over you, until when death approaches one of you, Our Messengers (angel of death and his assistants) take his soul, and they never neglect their duty." (Al-An'am: 61)*

All creatures are equal when it comes to

death; for Allah, Glorified be He, has justly decreed death for all of them. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

*“Everyone shall taste death. Then unto Us you shall be returned.” (Al-‘Ankabut: 57)*

Death disrupts all worldly pleasures, puts an end to all one’s acts, dissipates all gatherings, and deprives people of whatever they are familiar with and find pleasure in. Allah is the Only One Who determines death, just as He is the Only One Who gives life. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

*“And it is He Who gives life and causes death, and His is the alternation of night and day. Will you not then understand?” (Al-Mu’minun: 80)*

Death cannot be held back by a gatekeeper or pushed away by a guard. No wealth, son, or companion can avail one anything when death comes. No one can escape death, whether young or old, rich or poor, great or lowly. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

*“Wheresoever you may be, death will overtake you even if you are in fortresses built up strong and high!” ... (An-Nisa’: 78)*

Allah, Exalted be He, also says: “Say (to them):

*“Verily, the death from which you flee will surely meet you, then you will be sent back to (Allah), the All-Knower of the unseen and the seen, and He will tell you what you used to do.” (Al-Jumu’ah: 8)*

Death comes suddenly, at an appointed time. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

*“And Allah grants respite to none when his appointed time (death) comes. And Allah is Well-Acquainted with what you do.” (Al-Munafiqun: 11)*

Death does not take leave before it comes from the one who is to die, except in the case of the prophets, peace and blessings be upon them, because of the honour bestowed upon them by Allah. The Prophet (SAWS) said, “No prophet dies until Allah grants him the choice

between eternal life in this world and death, and he chooses death.”

It is the will of Allah, Exalted be He, that the children of Adam depart this worldly life through death, to cut off all strings with it, so that no believer will long for it at all. Anas ibn Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Prophet (SAWS) said: “No one who has a place near Allah will desire to return to this world even if he should be given all that is on the earth, except for martyrs, who will wish to return to the world and be killed ten times because of the honour that they received by virtue of their martyrdom.” (Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Death is an unavoidable calamity. The pain that a dying man goes through is indescribably severe and intense. During death, the spirit is taken out from the veins, flesh, and nerves. Any severe pain is incomparable to that of death. ‘Aishah, may Allah be pleased with her, said: “I saw the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) while he was dying. He had a drinking bowl with water in it. He would dip his hand into the bowl, wipe his face, and then say, “O Allah! Help me over the pangs of death and the agonies of death.” (Reported by at-Tirmidhi)

According to some other narrations of this hadith, the Prophet (SAWS) would then say, “Death indeed has its agonies.”

A man once said to his dying father, who was still conscious, “Describe death to me so that I may take heed of it.” His father replied, “O my son! It is as if hooked thorns were pulled within me, and as if I were breathing through a needle’s eye.” Another dying man was asked, “How do you feel?” He answered, “As if daggers were stabbing me from the inside.” Another one was asked, “What is the pain of death like?” He replied, “It is as though fire were burning within my body.”

Anyone who is inclined to remember death becomes soft-hearted, does righteous deeds, and sets right all his affairs. He will not dare to com-



mit sins or neglect religious duties, nor will he be tempted by the lure of this present life. He will long for standing before his Lord and entering the Gardens of Delight. Conversely, whoever forgets death will have a heart of stone. He will incline to the worldly life, get used to evil deeds, and have high hopes for a longer life. Therefore, remembering death is the greatest of all admonitions.

Abu-Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) said, "Often remember the destroyer of pleasures" (Reported by at-Tirmidhi and an-Nasa'i, and classified as sahih (authenticated) by ibn Hibban). This hadith refers to death, which eliminates and puts an end to all pleasures. Ubay ibn Ka'b, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "When one third of the night passed, the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) would get up and say, "O People! Remember Allah. The Rajifah (i.e., the first blowing of the Trumpet which will shake the whole universe and thus cause all life to cease) has come, followed by the Radifah (i.e., the second blowing of the Trumpet which will restore life and thus mark the Resurrection Day). Death has approached with all that it comprises." (Reported by at-Tirmidhi, who said, "It is a good (Hasan) Hadith")

Abu ad-Darda' narrated that the Prophet (SAWS) said, "Sufficient is death as an admonisher, and sufficient is time as a disperser. Today we are in houses, and tomorrow we shall be in graves" (Reported by Ibn 'Asakir).

True happiness, success, and gain lie in preparing oneself for death; for death is the first gate to Paradise or the first gate to Hellfire. The most important means to prepare for death is to fulfil the belief in the Oneness of Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, by worshipping Allah without associating partners with Him, and by avoiding all forms of polytheism. Anas ibn Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) say, "Allah, Exalted be He, says [in the Holy Hadith], 'O Son of Adam! Were

you to come to Me with sins nearly as great as the earth and were you then to stand before Me, ascribing no partners to Me, I would bring you forgiveness nearly as great as the earth." (Reported by at-Tirmidhi, who said, "It is a good (hasan) Hadith")

In addition, one should prepare for death by observing the limits and the obligations set by Allah. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

*"... the men and the women who guard their chastity (from illegal sexual acts) ... Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a great reward (i.e. Paradise)." (Al-Ahzab: 35)*

Allah, Exalted be He, also says: "... and who observe the limits set by Allah (do all that Allah has ordained and abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which Allah has forbidden). And give glad tidings to the believers." (At-Taubah: 112)

One should also prepare for death by abstaining from the major sins and evil deeds. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

*"If you avoid the great sins which you are forbidden to do, We shall expiate from you your (small) sins, and admit you to a Noble Entrance (i.e. Paradise)." (An-Nisa': 31)*

We should also prepare for death by giving people their due rights, without denial or procrastination. Allah may forgive neglecting His rights, except for associating partners with Him, but He will not forgive violating the rights of His servants and His creation unless He takes them from the oppressor and gives them back to the oppressed. In addition, one should prepare for death by writing one's last will and testament, without any negligence whatsoever in this regard. Death may come at any time, and one should always be prepared for it.

When Allah, Exalted be He, revealed the verse, And whomsoever Allah wills to guide, He opens his breast to Islam ... (Al-An'am: 125), the Prophet (SAWS) said, "It is a light that Allah casts in the heart." The Companions then asked, "O Messenger of Allah! What are its signs?" He

said, "Turning towards the eternal abode (i.e., the Hereafter), turning away from the deceptive abode (i.e., the worldly life), and preparing for death before it strikes."

The greatest happiness and achievement are attained if one's last deeds are righteous. The Prophet (SAWS) said, "Deeds are but [judged] by the last of them." Mu'adh ibn Jabal, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) said, "He whose last words are 'La ilaha illa Allah' (There is no god but Allah), will enter Paradise" (Reported by Abu-Dawud and al-Hakim, with an authenticated chain of transmission).

It is confirmed that one should kindly and compassionately prompt a dying person to recite the testimony of faith (the shahadah). The dying person should be assisted in this by reciting the shahada every now and then so that he may remember it and recite it himself. This should be done in such a manner as not to annoy him, as he is going through extreme agony. Abu-Sa'id al-Khudri, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) said, "Prompt your dying ones to recite La ilaha illa Allah (There is no god but Allah)" (Reported by Muslim).

Real misery lies in being unmindful and forgetful of death and failing to prepare for it. Those who forget death tend to have the audacity to commit sins and acts of disobedience to Allah, to disregard the Oneness of the Lord, Majesty and Glory be to Him, and to engage in acts of aggression and transgression, such as shedding protected blood, taking ill-gotten money, neglecting others' rights, and indulging in forbidden desires and pleasures until death suddenly strikes, at which time regret will be to no avail.

One's appointed time of death is never delayed. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

*"Until, when death comes to one of them (those who join partners with Allah), he says:*

*"My Lord! Send me back, so that I may do good in that which I have left behind!" No! It is but a word that he speaks, and behind them is Barzakh (a barrier) until the Day when they will be resurrected." (Al-Mu'minun: 99-100)*

On the Day of Judgment, the grief and remorse of those who neglected their duties towards Allah will intensify greatly. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

*"And follow the best of that which is sent down to you from your Lord (i.e. this Qur'an, do what it orders you to do and keep away from what it forbids), before the torment comes on you suddenly while you perceive not!" Lest a person should say: "Alas, my grief that I was undutiful to Allah (i.e. I have not done what Allah has ordered me to do), and I was indeed among those who mocked [at the truth! i.e. La ilaha illallah (none has the right to be worshipped but Allah), the Qur'an, and Muhammad (SAWS) and at the faithful believers]." Or (lest) he should say: "If only Allah had guided me, I should indeed have been among the Muttaqun (the pious)." Or (lest) he should say when he sees the torment: "If only I had another chance (to return to the world), then I should indeed be among the Muhsinun (good-doers)." Yes! Verily, there came to you My Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) and you denied them, and were proud and were among the disbelievers." (Az-Zumar: 55-59)*

May Allah bless you and me with the Great Qur'an and make us benefit from its verses and wise words and benefit from the guidance and right sayings of the Imam of Messengers. I have said what you have heard and I ask forgiveness of Allah for myself, for you, and for all Muslims. Ask Allah for forgiveness.

# Are We in a Post-Truth, Pre-Dajjal Age?

A few weeks ago, Oxford Dictionaries released their choice for the Word of the Year 2016 – an annual exercise aimed at reflecting evolving words from the passing year in language.

Its choice, whilst still gaining traction in popular usage, should hardly come as a surprise considering recent global trends and developments.

Oxford selected ‘post truth’ as its word, an adjective defined as ‘relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief’.

Explaining its choice, the prestigious dictionary acknowledged that the concept of post-truth has been in existence for at least the past decade, but highlighted a spike in usage-frequency this year in the context of the Brexit referendum in the United Kingdom and the presidential election in the United States.

“Post-truth has gone from being a peripheral term to being a mainstay in political commentary, now often being used by major publications without the need for clarification or definition in their headlines”.

From its offshoots, the word has also gained prominence in its association with a particular noun, in the phrase post-truth politics.

Post-truth politics, says Wikipedia, is a political culture in which debate is framed largely by appeals to emotion disconnected from the details of policy, and by the repeated assertion of talking points to which factual rebuttals are ignored. Under this construct, truth is deemed to be of “sec-

ondary” importance.

A defining trait of this brand of politics is that campaigners continue to repeat their talking points, even if these are found to be untrue by the media or independent experts.

Whilst there are many who stand to be implicated as post-truth practitioners – some more tactful in obfuscating their deceit than others – US President-elect Donald Trump has of late emerged as particularly striking specimen of the trend.

Mr Trump appears not to care whether his words bear any relation to reality, so long as they fire up voters, says *The Economist*. PolitiFact, a fact-checking website, has rated more of his statements “pants-on-fire” lies than of any other candidate.

There was a time, observes the publication, when evidence, consistency and scholarship held political power. Today, however, a growing number of politicians and pundits “simply no longer care”.

“They are content with what Stephen Colbert, an American comedian, calls “truthiness”: ideas which “feel right” or “should be true”. They deal in insinuation (“A lot of people are saying...” is one of Mr Trump’s favourite phrases) and question the provenance, rather than accuracy, of anything that goes against them (“They would say that, wouldn’t they?”). And when the distance between what feels true and what the facts say grows too great, it can always be bridged with a handy conspiracy theory.”

A Trump supporter recently spelt this disdain for the truth out most plainly, when questioned on CNN about anomalies in the Republican presidential candidate's infamous tweets.

Scottie Nell Hughes responded that the existence of truth itself was dubious, and that the veracity of Trump's tweets depended upon whether the person assessing them liked Trump.

"On one hand, I hear half the media saying that these are lies. But on the other half, there are many people that go 'No it's true,'" Hughes said. "And so one thing that has been interesting this entire campaign season to watch, is that people who say 'facts are facts,'— they're not really facts."

"Everybody has a way—It's kind of like looking at ratings, or looking at a glass of half-full water. Everybody has a way of interpreting them to be the truth or not true. There's no such thing, unfortunately, anymore, as facts," she added.

Regrettably, for the world, Trump is far from being a lone post-truth practitioner.

In June, Britons voted to leave the European Union on the basis of a campaign of blatant misinformation, including the "fact" that EU membership costs their country \$470m a week, which could be spent instead on the National Health Service, and that Turkey is likely to join the EU by 2020.

In Russia, a prominent journalist reported on a political consultant for President Putin saying that in Soviet times, "if they were lying they took care to prove what they were doing was 'the truth'. Now no one even tries proving 'the truth'. You can just say anything. Create realities."

As the consultant's sentiments convey, lying in political discourse is not something unique to the current era. However what is clear from recent occurrences is that the scale of the rot and its prominence do appear unparalleled, enhanced notably by the internet.

Social media and its internal networks – aided by algorithms, say experts, can become echo chambers where one political viewpoint dominates and scrutiny of claims fails, allowing a

parallel media ecosystem of websites, publishers and news channels to develop which can repeat post-truth claims without rebuttal. Of late, the web has also seen a proliferation of fake news sites showcasing articles of dubious factual content with misleading headlines, designed to be widely shared purportedly "chasing down cheap clicks at the expense of accuracy and veracity," in the process undermining the value of journalism and truth.

David Mikkelson, co-founder of the fact checking and debunking site Snopes.com, describes the introduction of social media and fake news sites as a turning point, saying "I'm not sure I'd call it a post-truth age but ... there's been an opening of the sluice-gate and everything is pouring through. The bilge keeps coming faster than you can pump."

When considered cumulatively, there is a strong case to be made that new technology, a deluge of facts and a public much less given to trust than once it was, has goaded into the social order a new depth and pervasiveness of falsehood. Should this continue, the power of truth as a tool for solving society's problems could be lastingly reduced.

The final Messenger of Allah, the Prophet Muhammad (SAWS), had forewarned his community of the corruption of the Dajjaal – the false messiah who towards the end of time, would lead people astray, and tempt them by means of the signs that he is given.

Among his titles is 'the great liar'; his name originating from the root *dajala* meaning 'to mix'.

The word *dajala* is used to denote deliberately confusing matters and being vague and ambiguous, The Dajjaal is the one who speaks in vagaries, who tells many lies and deceives many people.

The word "Dajjaal" hence became a title given to the lying, one-eyed, false messiah. The Dajjaal is so called because he will conceal his *kufr* from the people by lying to them, deceiving them and confusing them.

In the build-up to his arrival, the world will



encounter several smaller ‘Dajjals’ and will witness a widespread proliferation of lies and deceit as is elucidated in numerous Prophetic hadiths, some of which have been reproduced below:

*\*Sayyidina Abu Hurairah (RA) related that the Messenger of Allah (SAWS), said, “There will be Dajjaal Liars in my nation; they will come to you with novel speech, which neither you nor your fathers had previously heard. Beware, and let your fathers beware – do not allow them to deceive you.” (Ahmad)*

*\*Sayyidina Anas ibn Maalik (RA) related that the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) said, “Indeed, before Ad-Dajjaal there are deceptive years – the truthful one will not be believed, the liar will be believed, the trustworthy one will be accused of betrayal, the treacherous one will be trusted, and the Ruwaibidah will speak.” It was said, “And what is the Ruwaibidah?” He said, “The base wicked-doer, he will speak in the affairs of the general public (he will be trusted to rule and he will speak by the name of the people).” (Ahmad)*

*\*Narrated Hudhaifa (RA), Allah’s Apostle (SAWS) narrated to us two narrations, one of which I have seen (happening) and I am waiting for the other. He narrated that honesty was preserved in the roots of the hearts of men (in the beginning) and then they learnt it (honesty) from the Qur’an, and then they learnt it from the (Prophet’s) Sunna (tradition). He also told us about its disappearance, saying, “A man will go to sleep whereupon honesty will be taken away from his heart, and only its trace will remain, resembling the traces of fire. He then will sleep whereupon the remainder of the honesty will also be taken away (from his heart) and its trace will resemble a blister which is raised over the surface of skin, when an ember touches one’s foot; and in fact, this blister does not contain anything. So there will*

*come a day when people will deal in business with each other but there will hardly be any trustworthy persons among them. Then it will be said that in such-and-such a tribe there is such-and-such person who is honest, and a man will be admired for his intelligence, good manners and strength, though indeed he will not have belief equal to a mustard seed in his heart.” The narrator added: There came upon me a time when I did not mind dealing with anyone of you, for if he was a Muslim, his religion would prevent him from cheating; and if he was a Christian, his Muslim ruler would prevent him from cheating; but today I cannot deal except with so-and-so and so-and-so. (Saheeh Bukhari and Saheeh Muslim)*

*\*Sayyidina Abu Huraira (RA) reported: The Messenger of Allah (SAWS) said, “When the trust is lost, then wait for the Hour.” It was said, “O Messenger of Allah, how will it be lost?” The Prophet said, “When authority is given to those who do not deserve it, then wait for the Hour.” (Bukhari)*

*\*Sayyidina Jaabir ibn Samurah (RA) relates that the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) said: “There will be liars just before the Hour, so beware of them.” (Saheeh Muslim)*

There are unmistakable imprints of these narrations to detected in the occurrences of our ‘post-truth’ world today.

In fact, the very term ‘post truth’ is evidence of our tendency to sugar-coat and euphemise lies in order to make them more appealing to our whims.

“At one time we had truth and lies,” observes author and speaker, Ralph Keyes.

“Now we have truth, lies, and statements that may not be true but we consider too benign to call false. Euphemisms abound. We’re “economical with the truth,” we “sweeten it,” or tell “the truth improved.” The term deceive gives way to spin. At worst we admit to “misspeaking,” or “exercis-

ing poor judgment.” Nor do we want to accuse others of lying. We say they’re in denial. A liar is “ethically challenged,” someone for whom “the truth is temporarily unavailable.”

“This is post-truth. In the post-truth era, borders blur between truth and lies, honesty and dishonesty, fiction and nonfiction. Deceiving others becomes a challenge, a game, and ultimately a habit.”

Keyes continues:

“Post-truthfulness builds a fragile social edifice based on wariness. It erodes the foundation of trust that underlies any healthy civilization. When enough of us peddle fantasy as fact, society loses its grounding in reality. Society would crumble altogether if we assumed others were as likely to dissemble as tell the truth. We are perilously close to that point.”

The rapid disintegration of a set of moral values governing interactions in the world does breed the sense of bleakness conveyed in the assessments above. This degeneracy is not exclusive to politics, but is equally evident in academia, law, medicine, commerce and even family life. Yet, in spite of its newfound prominence, for the believer, there is but one choice – to buck the tide.

Truth saves and falsehood destroys.

As the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) is reported to have said:

*“Seek truthfulness even if it will bring you ruin, in it is your real salvation”.*

Allah’s beloved (SAWS) advised further:

*“You must be truthful, for truthfulness leads to righteousness and righteousness leads to Paradise. A man will keep speaking the truth and striving to speak the truth until he will be recorded with Allah as a siddeeq (speaker of the truth). Beware of telling lies, for lying leads to wickedness and wickedness leads to Hellfire. A man will keep telling lies and encouraging lies until he is recorded with Allah as a liar.” (Saheeh Muslim, 4721)*

O Allah! Purify our hearts from hypocrisy, our actions from showing off, our tongues from lying and our eyes from treachery. Indeed You know the treachery of the eyes and what is hidden in the chests.

*Source: Jamiat-ul-Ulema, S.Africa*

## **The Value of Du‘aa**

It was the habit of ‘Aaishah (ra) that whenever a beggar asked her for something and made du‘aa for her (as is the habit of many beggars), together with giving the beggar whatever he had asked for, she would also return the du‘aa of the beggar. Hence someone once asked her, “Why do you give the beggar what he asks for and also make du‘aa for him?”

‘Aaishah (ra) responded, “If I give the beggar wealth and he gives me du‘aa, then what he has given me is in reality more valuable than what I gave him. Hence, I will owe him for his favour. I therefore return his du‘aa with a similar du‘aa, so that I will not be indebted to him for his du‘aa, and thereafter give him whatever he asks for. In this manner, I ensure that I receive the full reward of my sadaqah.”

*(Al-Mafaateeh fi Sharhil Masaabeeh)*

# The Extraordinary Goal

*M. Yawar Baig*

The most beautiful story from the Seerah that I can recall about the extraordinary goal of Rasulullah (SAWS), about the absolute certainty with which he believed in his message; the truth of it, the importance of it and the criticality of it for the wellbeing of all mankind is as follows. The story relates to the early days of Islam in Makkah where it had no support and Rasulullah«: was preaching his message almost alone.

The narrator said; 'I was standing on a hilltop in Mina after Haj. The plain was covered with the tents of the pilgrims who had come to make Haj. It was the height of summer and the middle of the day, very hot and dry. In this heat I saw a man going from tent to tent, inviting people to the worship of Allah alone and warning them not to indulge in idolatry. Some would listen to him but turn away. Others would rebuff him. Still others would physically push him away. I didn't see anyone accepting his message. In the heat of the day I saw the man stop by a rock near his own tent to rest. His daughter came out of the tent with some water and washed her father's face and gave him some water to drink. She was very sad to see his state and said, 'O! Father, what have they done to you?'

The man replied, 'Don't be sad my daughter. A day will come when this message will reach every temporary or permanent dwelling on the

face of the earth.' If there were no other proof of the Divine Mission of Rasulullah (SAWS), this story would be enough proof in itself. Who but a Messenger of Allah (SAWS) could have the courage, fortitude and perseverance to continue on a mission when there was no material proof to show that it would ever succeed? Who but someone with total certainty in the worth of his mission and faith that in the end it would be successful could find the energy to continue onwards in the face of disappointment after disappointment? Who but a Nabi could have a heart big enough to take rejection after rejection, yet not falter in the least about taking his message to people who showed no sign of appreciating or wanting it?

It may be surprising for some to reflect on the nature of this goal as expressed by the statement of Rasulullah (SAWS) to his daughter when he said, 'Don't be sad my daughter. A day will come when this message will reach every temporary or permanent dwelling on the face of the earth.' Here was a man talking about his message reaching every temporary and permanent dwelling on earth when he couldn't even get it to reach the dwellings which he could personally call at. Here was a man speaking about freeing the world when he couldn't even guarantee his own freedom. Here was a man who was concerned about the eternal wellbeing of uncaring strangers.

But then, it is in the very nature of the extraordinary goal to inspire extraordinary effort. People don't rise to low expectations. They rise to high expectations. A climber standing at the base camp of Mount Everest doesn't need a motivational lecture. The mountain motivates him. The thought of the joy that he will feel when he finally breasts the last ridge and stands on the peak motivates him while he is still standing at the base and continues to motivate him as he goes through hour after hour of grueling effort. It is the difficulty of the climb itself that is the motivation. After all, ask yourself, how motivated would you be to walk 11 km down the road from your home? To climb Everest is, no doubt, to walk on the earth but it is the incline which adds value. The satisfaction at the achievement of a goal is directly proportional to its difficulty.

What could be more difficult than to talk about revolutionary change, not simply incremental change but much more seminal and intrinsic - a change of belief. It is very important to understand the huge challenge that this poses because all action is a result of belief. People act in accordance with their beliefs, consciously or unconsciously. For example, people may act in accordance with religious beliefs, consciously and practice certain things and they act according to their belief that a particular course of action is profitable and invest in it. On the other hand, a person gets up and goes to work because of his unconscious belief that he will live that day and beyond it and that the world is not coming to an end. So beliefs form the very foundation of all our thought and action. To have that system challenged and to be told that it is completely false and that it would lead to eternal punishment was not easy. Yet Rasulullah's (SAWS) own belief in the truth of his message was such that nothing deterred him from taking it to the people. It is reported that he went to the house of Abu Jahl, one of his worst enemies, more than 100 times in the hope that he would accept the message of Islam. Who but a Nabi would work to save the

one who did his best to cause him as much harm as possible?

Another thing about working towards an extraordinary goal is that the work itself is training. As the Arabs say, 'If it doesn't break your back, it only strengthens you.' So also in working towards an extraordinary goal, one is only strengthened. This was also the case of Rasulullah and the early Muslims. All the opposition, torture and punishment only made them and their connection with Allah stronger and made them more resilient. The extraordinary goal makes the effort feel worthwhile. If it is worth doing, then it is worth the effort. And what could be more worthy of effort and sacrifice than the effort to save all of mankind from the Hellfire and enter them into Jannah? Rasulullah (SAWS) and the Sahaba saw what we call sacrifice as their investment in earning the pleasure of Allah and so it was possible for them to make it without hesitation.



*Cont'd from page 46*

### **Task 3: Spread Awareness.**

Use the information you gain from task 3. Educate others about the issue, starting with your family and friends. Make Facebook posters, arrange short lectures at your masjid, start a monthly road cleaning program.

Even easier – support movements that are already out there doing the job:

Support your government's initiatives towards a healthier country.

Find local and online support groups.

Find, support, donate to and volunteer for organisations working on the issue through research, spreading awareness and finding efficient solutions, for individuals, businesses, and communities.



# Maximize Your Reward with Allah in the Plastic Crisis

*Tabassum Mosleh*

IMAGINE A WHIRLING bowl of soup. Suspended throughout it are tiny pieces of, not pepper, but plastics. Now imagine that the bowl is 20 kilometers in diameter, and multiply that a million times. That's roughly the size of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. It is "a collection of marine debris in the North Pacific Ocean." (National Geographic Encyclopedia)

Most of this debris is made up of plastics because that's the only thing that doesn't assimilate with the environment. "Most of this debris comes from plastic bags, bottle caps, plastic water bottles, and Styrofoam cups." (National Geographic Encyclopedia)

## **The Magnitude of the Problem**

"The weight of every man, woman and child on Earth is equaled by our plastic production every two years." (Algalita)

If you just look all around you right now, you'll probably get an idea of how much plastic we use. Most of the things around us are of plastic – from the paint on the walls to the keyboard with which I'm typing this. Why? Because it's cheap, light weight, easy to make and transport, and un-perishable. In that last word lies the key to the problem.

Plastic doesn't decompose. Unlike everything else on the planet, plastic doesn't go back to the earth to be recycled and reused in a natural pro-

cess. So what happens to all the trash bags, empty chips packets, disposable spoons etc. that we throw away every day? It just piles up on our landfills ("Around 10% by weight of the municipal waste stream is plastic." (Thompson 2), or is washed away through water channels and accumulated in the oceans, to be broken down into tinier and tinier fragments by the sun. These fragments are called micro-plastics and could measure anywhere between 5 millimeters to several micrometers. These molecules just keep floating around in the water like pepper in a bowl of soup, garnishing mammoth areas of plastic soup in our beautiful oceans. And that's not all. About twice that amount of plastic sinks to the bottom of the ocean. (National Geographic Encyclopedia)

## **How are plastics harmful?**

1. Food chain Pollution: Fishes, birds and marine mammals (over 260 species) ingest it directly. Some even mistake it as food. As it can't be digested, it remains in their stomachs, causing ulcers and other problems and reducing their population. The problem travels up the food chain and reaches humans. There is less seafood in our restaurants, and whatever there is, is likely to be infected with plastics as well.

2. Ghost-fishing: Fishing nets nowadays are also made of plastics because of their durability and low cost. But once these nets are discarded,

Marine mammals (such as seals) get entangled in them and have no option except to wait for death by suffocation or starvation. This phenomenon is known as ghost-fishing.

3. Depletion of Plankton: Plastics on the surface of the oceans block sunlight from reaching the plankton and algae below, causing a decrease in their populations and the populations of the fish that eat them. And the problem travels up the food chain and reaches humans.

4. Release of Toxins into the Environment: Plastics both give out and absorb harmful chemicals. Different kinds of plastics contain and attract different toxins. "As plastics break down through photo degradation, they leach out colorants and chemicals, such as bisphenol A (BPA), that have been linked to environmental and health problems. Conversely, plastics can also absorb pollutants, such as PCBs, from the seawater. These chemicals can then enter the food chain when consumed by marine life. "(National Geographic Encyclopedia) These toxins can harm us in many ways. They have been correlated with reproductive abnormalities, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, abnormalities in liver enzymes, reduced semen quality and levels of testosterone, disruption of the endocrine system, especially the thyroid and pituitary functions. (Thompson 5-6)

5. Trapping of Hydrocarbons. Plastics trap energy, causing depletion of fossil fuel reserves. (Thompson 1) The energy used up to produce, transport, and process plastics cannot be recovered, and the amount of natural gas and crude oil used as raw materials to produce plastic products remain trapped inside them.

### **The Problem is Exacerbating at an Alarming Rate**

Think of it this way. Commodity plastics (which consists of the vast majority of plastic things we use) was discovered 63 years ago and was first commercially used 60 years ago. (Andrady). That means it took 60 years to produce and accumulate almost all the plastic on the earth

that is present right now. And since plastics are so cheap, easy to produce and durable, we're always inventing new ways of using it. "The quantity of plastics produced in the first 10 years of the current century is likely to approach the quantity produced in the entire century that preceded." (Thompson 1) And that was predicted seven years ago.

Keeping in mind that plastic consumption is ever increasing, can you imagine what could happen in the next 60 years?

"There could be more plastics than fish in the ocean (by weight) by 2050." (World Economic Forum)

### **Who Will Solve the Problem?**

Governments in different countries are taking steps to solve the plastic problem. Our government (Bangladesh), for instance, banned the use of plastic shopping bags some years ago (though it continues to be widely used — nonetheless illegally).

When it comes to the oceans, we have a bigger problem – the oceans don't belong to any country.

"Because the Great Pacific Garbage Patch is so far from any country's coastline, no nation will take responsibility or provide the funding to clean it up. Charles Moore, the man who discovered the vortex, says cleaning up the garbage patch would 'bankrupt any country' that tried it." (National Geographic Encyclopedia)

And that's just one garbage patch.

"Administration's Marine Debris Program has estimated that it would take 67 ships one year to clean up less than one percent of the North Pacific Ocean." (National Geographic Encyclopedia)

YOU can solve the problem.

Well, the problem does seem too massive for even nations to do anything effective. What can humble you and I do?

What we can do is to start a good sunnah.

*Whoever starts a good tradition which is followed [by others], then for him is [accounted] a reward, as well as the likes of the rewards of*

*whoever follows him [in that practice], there being nothing diminished from [the followers'] rewards. And whoever starts a bad tradition which is followed[by others], then for him is [accounted] its sin, as well as the likes of the sins of whoever follows him, there being nothing diminished from [any of] their sins. (Tirmidhi)*

### Why Should You Care?

1. Because you are a Believer, and it's part of imân to care about the world. The Prophet (SAWS) said,

*Faith has over seventy branches or over sixty branches, ... the humblest of which is the removal of what is injurious from the path. (Muslim)*

2. Because we are responsible for our world and will be held accountable for it on the Day of Judgment.

*Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned so He may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done that perhaps they will return [to righteousness]. [Sûrat Al-Rûm, 30:41]*

3. Because the effects of our actions do not cease after we die. They continue to burden those we leave behind. What kind of a world are we going to leave for our children?

So where do we start? Here are three simple tasks to get us started right off:

### Task 1: Understand the magnitude of the problem, and your part in it.

When I was doing research for writing this article, I was shocked beyond measure, though I knew a bit about it before hand. The extent of damage we have done to this beautiful world brought tears of pain and regret to my eyes. All those plastic water bottles you and I threw away in the last ten years, whose sole purpose was to provide us with 500 ml water, have probably end-

ed up in the stomachs of some poor albatrosses that lie painfully dying of ulcer somewhere in the Pacific.

Do some research yourself. Watch documentaries and read research reports. Remind yourself that the problem is real, and it is BIG. We tend to soon forget problems that aren't right in front of our eyes. Keep the desire to bring a change alive in your heart by constant reminders.

### Task 2: Start with disposable plastic products.

"Scientists and explorers agree that limiting or eliminating our use of disposable plastics and increasing our use of biodegradable resources will be the best way to clean up the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. (National Geographic Encyclopedia)"

Easier said than done. Limiting the use of disposable plastics entails a complete change of lifestyle. We will need to give up almost all our daily purchase items – from trash bags to toothpaste. Even a person with cast-iron willpower will find it impossible to make a complete change instantly.

The key is to make a start somewhere. Start with one or two changes and progress bit by bit. Think of plastic things that you use and dispose of most frequently, and probably use one time only. Make a resolution of replacing at least one such item with a healthy alternative. Here are some examples for you to pick and choose:

Plastic Product	Alternative
Trash bags	Combustible grocery bags
Potato chips in plastic bags	Fresh French fries in paper bags
Ballpens and gel pens	Fountain pens
Sanitary napkins	Menstrual cups
Disposable plates, spoons, cups etc.	Ceramic, steel, or disposable clay crockeries
Toothpaste and toothbrush	Miswak
Disposable shopping bags	Shopping baskets or jute shopping bags

*Cont'd on page 43*

## Appeal

*'Radiant Reality' is the only Islamic monthly in English published from Srinagar since almost two decades now. It is only by the Grace of Almighty Allah and the blessed supplications of our esteemed readers that it continues to remain in print without fail. Apart from its regular subscribers, the magazine is distributed among the student community in and outside the state free of charge, whose cost is borne by some dedicated individuals. With unprecedented escalation in the cost of paper and printing, it is becoming somewhat difficult for us to meet the expenses incurred. The esteemed readers are, therefore, requested to subscribe for the magazine and also encourage others for the purpose. Besides, those who would like to join us in spreading the message of Islam far and wide, may contribute by way of voluntary donation starting from at least Rs.100/- per month.*

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