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Contents

1. Editorial—Realigning Ourselves with Allah	2
2. Question Answer	3
3. Lesson from the Qur'an	5
4. Lesson from Sahih al-Bukhari	7
5. Sincerity in Deeds	10
6. Insult Against Islam: A Muslim's Response	13
7. Source of Liberalist Ideologies	15
8. Heart, Look for it in Three Places	17
9. Till Depression is No More	19
10. Don't Wait, Live Productively While Young	21
11. I Listened to My Inner Voice	25
12. Speaking Without Knowledge	26
13. What is the "Right" Religion?	28
14. Medina Charter and Pluralism	31
15. What Islam Offers the Earth	34
16. Sunnah of Love	36
17. Ridhaa	40

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EDITORIAL

All thanks for Almighty, the most Merciful and Exalted

Realigning Ourselves with Allah

Allah promises in the Qur'an: "It is Our duty to assist the believers." However, we find that from the 1930's there was always a decline in the condition of the Ummah, so where is the promise of Allah? The promise of Allah is there and in place, but for every promise there are conditions. Thus, the problem lies within our own selves. Therefore, the first level is to identify the problem and thereafter look for a remedial procedure. The procedure also has to be an efficient one. If someone has a heart problem and is given aspirin, then it may suppress the pain etc., but it has not treated it from the root. This is what we are doing presently, where we take steps, but they are not lasting. Allah says that there is a procedure which is a two point plan: (1) Repent – be remorseful over your mistakes. (2) Turn to Allah correctly. When this is done then there would be two results: (1) problems related to rozi and sustenance will be taken care of (2) you will gain power and might.

Mere istighfaar is insufficient. Together with that you need to straighten up and get on track. You cannot show remorse out of convenience, that because you are in a problem you are making istighfaar. When you do not straighten yourself then you cannot come up with a comprehensive plan. Look at the situation in Syria etc. Though organisations are doing a sterling job, but it is just a temporary relief. It is not a comprehensive plan. So we have to straighten up and realign ourselves with Allah. Though it

cannot be achieved all at once, but there has to be a start. The greatest problem that we face nowadays is that we have forgotten about the life of the hereafter.

When the 'Aad were warned of the punishment of Allah then there were different types of responses; some totally denied the message while among others there were those who felt that we need to be guided but we do not require a nabi. We can acquire guidance by ourselves, as we are men just as he (the nabi) is. When you do not listen to a nabi and feel that you can do everything by yourself then your understanding also becomes corrupt. Filth and evil begin to seem as good. You will have to go by someone's reasoning and explanation and that is the teachings of the Quraan and hadeeth. Doesn't Allah deserve something when He has honoured us so greatly and saved us from disgrace. Imagine if Allah had exposed all our thoughts and fantasies that ran through our minds from the time we became of age. What would become of us?

Allah says that He is the First i.e. there is none that precedes Him, and He is Apparent i.e. His existence is apparent and it prevails over everything else. In everything you can see Allah if you have a sense of justice. He can be understood in everything though we may consider those things to be insignificant. Even the human seed that man pours out is a sign of the existence of Allah. Hence, there is no reason for man to deny Allah's existence.

Question Answer

Question

Do old women have to wear Hijab as there is a verse in Surah al-Nur which indicates that they don't have to? Please explain.

Answer

Firstly, let us look at the translation of the Qur'anic verse towards which you have alluded. Allah Most High says in Surah al-Nur:

"And the Qawa'id among women who do not hope for marriage, it is no sin on them if they discard their (outer) clothing in such a way as not to show their adornment. But to refrain is better for them. And Allah is all-Hearer, all-Knower." (V, 60)

The great scholar of Tafsir, Imam Ibn Kathir writes in his famous exegesis (tafsir) of the Qur'an:

"The meaning of "Qawa'id" is: those women who no longer think that they can bear children, and the meaning of "who do not hope for marriage" is that they no longer have any desire for marriage. Other commentators have stated the meaning as: "Those women from whom desire and sexual passion is not (typically)

acquired." (Tafsir Ibn Kathir, 3/406)

The meaning of "discarding their garment" as explained by Imam Ibn Kathir narrating from Ibn Abbas and others is: "The Jilbab or Rida (outer clothing)". Meaning, old women do not have to cover themselves with the outer garment under the condition that they do not adorn themselves.

The great Hanafi scholar and Mu-fassir, Imam Abu Bakr al-Jassas writes in his book Ahkam al-Qur'an:

"There is no difference of opinion amongst the scholars, in that an old woman's hair is part of her nakedness (awra), thus it will not be permissible for a non-Mahram to look at the hair of an old woman. If she performed her Salat with her hair exposed, her Salat will be invalid. The meaning here is that, she has to cover her hair, however it is permissible for her to discard the cloak, and expose her face and hands because desire is not gained by looking at her." (Ahkam al-Qur'an)

From the above, we can conclude that the Hijab is also necessary for the elderly. However, it is permissible for old women to keep their face and hands ex-

posed and not wear the outer cloak, provided they do not adorn themselves and there is no fear of Fitna.

And Allah knows best

(Mufti) Muhammad ibn Adam

Question.

My question is related to my family situation. First of all, my wife is not a Muslim, but perhaps in the future (insha'Allah). I myself am converting to Islam in the coming weeks. The situation is that my wife has a career and we agreed that I would end my job so I could care for the children until grade school begins. I have 2 sons ages 2 and 3. She works in a career that requires her to travel and has an unusual work schedule. We don't have any other family in the city and we feel it is best for children to be cared by the parents. However, I believe in Islam it states that it is required of the man to provide for his family. I wanted your opinion on this matter.

Answer

It is very encouraging to note that you intend to embrace Islam soon. May Allah accept your reversion and keep you steadfast, Ameen. We also make dua that Allah guide your wife to also accept Islam.

According to the Shari'ah (Islamic law), it is the responsibility of the husband to fulfill the basic needs of his dependants, wife and children. However, that is not a pre-requisite for a person to accept Islam or remain as a Muslim. Islam takes into consideration circumstances faced by a person as yours. If you are required to stay at home and that is a mutual agreement between you and your wife, then that is acceptable. And Allah Knows Best.

Question

I want to find out what is the ruling

4. (Vol.15, Issue: 02)

for a practicing Muslim wife whose Muslim husband does not pray except occasionally. He has tried intermittently to establish salat but it was not consistent. Otherwise he is a good husband and a good father; he encourages his kids to pray and is helpful to his wife in gaining knowledge of the deen and never stopped her from her prayers or wearing hijab etc. She believes that he wants to pray but is probably lazy and only Allah knows what's inside a heart. She has tried to make him pray but her efforts have been counter productive.

She wants to know what are her obligations in this situation:

1. Is it halal for her to stay with him (they have kids, and she wants to preserve the relationship)
2. Is she going to be held responsible in any way on the Day of Judgment.

Answer

This is a very frequent occurrence today, but unless a person openly denies the obligation of Salat, he will remain a Muslim. While he is still a Muslim, caring and providing for his wife and family, it is permissible for the wife to remain with him. The wife should encourage him to do righteous deeds and forbid him from evil.

It is advisable that she has Ta'leem of such Kitaabs which will spur herself and the rest of the family to do righteous deeds. She may also obtain reliable literature and keep them within his reach. Also, make du'a to Allah for his guidance. And Allah Knows Best

Mufti Ebrahim Desai

Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: "You have not accepted Imaan as long as you do not love for your brother (Muslim) what you love for yourself."

Lesson From The Qur'an

Commentary: Tafsir Division, Darul Uloom Ilahiya.

Surah Al-Imran - Verse 100-

In the following verses when the Muslims are being cautioned not to fall prey to the deceit of the Jews and neither obey them in any way or else they will never let them follow the path of Islam.

O you who believe don't follow the People of the Book, **if you obey** or allow yourself to be influenced by **a group from those who have been given the Book** i.e., the Christians and the Jews, **they will**, in sheer malice and envy, **turn you into infidels** in practice at any rate, **after you have embraced the faith.** (100)

How could you disbelieve by reverting to such acts as are tantamount to paganism and infidelity, **while you are the ones to whom the verses of Allah are recited, and present amidst you is His Messenger** advising you and removing your doubts and leaving no misunderstanding whatsoever. **Whoever holds on to Allah** by submitting to His commands and guidance and that of Rasulullah, **is surely led to the straight path** wherefrom no doubt can drive him away. (101)

O you who believe, fear Allah, as He should be feared i.e., as much as you have the capability devoid of carelessness **and let not yourself die save as upright Muslims** - full of faith, perfect in conduct, and strict in the observance of the Law. (102)

Hold fast, all of you with one mind and purpose, **to the rope of Allah** i.e., Qur'an and Sunnah, **and be not divided** from each other by letting off this rope. **Remember the blessing of Allah upon you** i.e., the guidance which has, besides conferring other benefits, led you to unity and solidarity: **When you were enemies to each other** before Islam, **and He brought your hearts together** by Islam, **so that, you became brothers** in common faith

(Vol.15, Issue: 02) 5.

suppressing every distinction of race and kindred, and regarding each other as brethren **through His blessing. You were**, only a death step away, **at the brink of a pit of Fire** because of your idolatrous tenets and practices, and **then He saved you from it** in His infinite loving-kindness by directing you to Islam and its worldly blessings. **This is how Allah makes His signs clear to you, so that you may take the right path** and not land into the ditch of ignorance. **(103)**

And, the way you have, by Allah's mercy, escaped from the ditch of ignorance, similarly **there has to be a group of people from among you who call others also towards the good** viz., true beliefs, good morals, righteous deeds etc., **and bid the Fair** – what is obligated or recommended by the Shariah, **and forbid the Unfair** – what is forbidden or disapproved by the Shariah. **And it is these who are successful** because of the reward in the Hereafter. **(104)**

Do not be like those i.e., the Jews and Christians, **who became divided** and split into sects and sub-sects **and fell into disputes** concerning the religion **after the clear signs** of the truth of Allah's religion **had come to them. Those** i.e., the willful rejectors of Allah's truth, **are the ones for whom there is a grave punishment** because there remains no room for disagreement after the manifestation of clear signs and explicit commands **(105)**

...on a day of resurrection **when some faces** – who followed the light of Truth, **shall turn bright** with the radiance of Faith and piety, **and some faces** – who followed the darkness of falsehood, **shall turn dark** with the murkiness of disbelief and hypocrisy. **As for those whose faces turn dark**, they shall be questioned in rebuke: **"Did you disbelieve** the clear signs and explicit commands **after you had accepted the Faith** in the Prophet and the Book of Allah? **Now taste the punishment** of fire, **because you used to disbelieve** either in faith or by deeds." **(106)**

As for those whose faces turn bright owing to their adherence to the rope of Allah and following the way of the Prophet and his companions, **they will rest in Allah's mercy** i.e., Paradise—the first blessing. And **they will live there forever**—the second blessing. **(107)**

BETWEEN FEAR AND HOPE

There are numerous similar episodes in the history of Islam, which provide ibrat (sombre lesson) for us. Many non-Muslims had entered the fold of Islam, and conversely many born Muslims and some saints (walis) had abandoned the Deen and left Islam for eternal damnation. They became murtadds. No one has the guarantee of the safety of his Imaan. What the morrow holds is known to only Allah Ta'ala.

Similarly, no non-Muslim may be despised because the one who despises has no guarantee that the non-Muslim will depart from this world with kufr. Guidance arrives from only Allah Ta'ala, and He also snatches away the wealth of Imaan from any proud and arrogant person He wills. Rasulullab (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: "Imaan is suspended between fear and hope."

When we are subsisting in such a dangerous scenario, there can be neither space in the heart nor time for hating any person, be he/she a non-Muslim. Despise no one. Always supplicate for the safety of Imaan that Allah Ta'ala takes us from this dunya with Imaan intact.

Lesson From Sahih al-Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

The Book of Ablution

Chapter 73 : If a filthy or a polluted thing is put on the back of a person offering Salaah, his Salaah will not be spoiled.

During prayer Ibn Umar (RA) used to take off his clothes whenever he saw blood in them and continue his prayers. Ibn Musaib and Ash-Sha'bi said, "Whenever a person offers his prayers while wearing clothes stained with blood or is in an impure state or prays facing other than Qibla (un-intentionally) or with Tayammum and finds water before the time of that prayer is over, he need not repeat his prayers in any of the above mentioned cases.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Imam Bukhari (RA), as per Ibn Hajr Asqalani, says that the things, if confronted before Salaah, would spoil one's Salaah and if the same things are confronted during the performance of Salaah, there is no harm and the Salaah will be valid.

As per Hanafite and Shafite schools of thought, cleanliness of place, body and clothes is a pre-requisite for the validity of Salaah, both before the Salaah as well during the Salaah.

Hadith No. 236

Narrated 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud (RA)

"Once the Prophet was offering prayers at the Ka'ba. Abu Jahl was sitting with some of his companions. One of them said to the others, "Who amongst you will bring the abdominal contents (intestines, etc.) of a camel of Bani so and so and put it on the back of Muhammad, when he prostrates?" The most unfortunate of them got up and brought it. He waited till the Prophet prostrated and then placed it on his back between his shoulders. I was watching but could not do any thing. I wish I had some people with me to hold out against them. They started laughing and falling on one another. Allah's Apostle was in prostration and he did not lift his head up till Fatima (Prophet's daughter) came and threw that (camel's abdominal contents) away from his back. He raised his head and said thrice, "O Allah! Punish Quraish." So it was hard for Abu Jahl and his companions when the Prophet invoked Allah against them as they had a conviction that the prayers and invocations were accepted in this city (Makkah). The Prophet said, "O Allah! Punish Abu Jahl,

(Vol.15, Issue: 02) 7.

'Utba bin Rabi'a, Shaiba bin Rabi'a, Al-Walid bin 'Utba, Umaiyah bin Khalaf, and 'Uqba bin Al Mu'it (and he mentioned the seventh whose name I cannot recall). By Allah in Whose Hands my life is, I saw the dead bodies of those persons who were counted by Allah's Apostle in the Qalib (one of the wells) of Badr''.

Comments

This incident took place in Makkah. One day Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was offering his Salaah near Khana Ka'ba and Abu Jahl was sitting with other people at nearby place. Abu Jahl told his friends that a camel has been killed in one of the tribes and asked them who was bold enough to bring the abdominal contents (intestines etc) of that camel and throw that on the back of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). The most unfortunate amongst them, Uqba stood up and said that he would accomplish that job. He went and got the abdominal contents of the camel and threw it on the back of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) when he was in Sajda. On this, Abu Jahl and his friends started laughing and mocking at Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Meanwhile Hadhrat Fatima, the beloved daughter of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) came and lifted the filthy contents away from his back and also cursed these people of what they had done. When Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) finished his Salaah, he prayed to Allah, "O Allah! Punish the Quraish". Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) repeated this Dua three times. Once those infidels heard Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) saying so, the colour of their faces changed and they turned gloomy. They believed that the Dua at that particular place is ac-

cepted by Allah and particularly when it was uttered by the blessed tongue of Rasulullah. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) named seven leaders of the Quraish including Abu Jahl in his Dua. The narrator of this Hadith, Ibn Masood says that he saw all these seven were killed in the battle of Badr and all of them were thrown into the well of Badr. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) usually did not curse any infidel but at this particular instance they had disturbed him while he was offering Salaah, that is why he cursed them.

Chapter 74 : Sputum, nasal secretion and other such things in the clothes.

Marwan said, "The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) went out during Hudai-biya", and narrated the Hadith, "and the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) did not cough out his sputum but it full on the hands of some of his men and they rubbed that on their faces and skin".

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Earlier on Imam Bukhari (RA) mentioned that urine, blood and semen are Najas, now he says that sputum or nasal secretion though impure are not unclean to effect the validity of Salaah, i.e., if any of these soil the garments or body of an individual, his Salaah is still valid.

Hadith No. 237

Narrated Anas (RA)

"The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) once spat in his clothes".

Comments

Urwah has quoted an incident of Hudai-biya from Mishar and Marwan that when the infidels came to meet Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) after the peace

treaty of Hudaibiya was signed, they were surprised to see the respect and reverence of Sahaaba-al-Kiraam for Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). They saw the Sahaaba sat before Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) with absolute humility with their heads down and whenever he spat these people jumped to catch the sputum and didn't let it fall down on the ground. One of the companions took the sputum and rubbed it on his face and body. In the Hadith of this chapter, Hadhrat Anas says that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) spat in his clothes and then rubbed it thus giving the Ummah this teaching that if during Salaah one gets sputum in his mouth he can spit it in his clothes and continue Salaah. Otherwise it will be very cumbersome to keep the sputum in the mouth until one finishes his Salaah. These Ahaadith show that the sputum does not make Salaah invalid.

Chapter 75 : It is neither permissible to perform Wudu with Nabeez (wine) nor with intoxicants.

Hasan and Abul Aaliya disliked it. And Ata said, "I would prefer to do Tayammum instead of doing ablution with wine or milk".

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Imam Bukhari (RA) is of the opinion that it is not permissible to perform Wudu with Nabeez (wine) or any other intoxicant. Other Ulema also agree with him in this issue, but there is difference of opinion amongst the Ulema about the types of Nabeez. Imam Abu Haniefah (RA) and Imam Sufiyan Thouri (RA) are of the opinion that it is not forbidden to perform Wudu with all types of Nabeez.

Hadith No. 238

Narrated Aisha (RA)

The Prophet said, "All drinks that produce intoxication are Haram (forbidden to drink).

Comments

What is Nabeez?

It is a kind of juice derived from different things like dates, grapes, barley and wheat etc. Usually it used to be that of dates.

Kinds of Nabeez

If the dates are placed in water for such a short time that it does not even become sweet, there is consensus amongst the jurists that it is permissible to perform Wudu with such water.

If the dates are placed in water for such a long time that it becomes jelly like, loses its free flowing nature and becomes intoxicant, there is consensus amongst the jurists that it is not permissible to perform Wudu with such water.

If the dates are placed in water for such a long time that it becomes sweet but none of its other characteristics change, here the jurists differ in their opinion whether it is permissible to perform Wudu with such kind of water or not. Majority of the scholars say that it is not permissible to perform Wudu with such water except Hadhrat Imam Abu Haniefah, Sufyan Thouri and Imam Auzaa'ee who believe that it is permissible to perform Wudu with such water.

This difference of opinion is only about Nabeez of dates. There is no difference of opinion about the Nabeez made from other things. (Nasrul Bari)

Sincerity in Deeds

Shaikh Salih Al-Fozan

Ikhlas (sincerity) in our actions and statements is of utmost importance for the acceptance of our deeds. Al-Bukhari and Muslim narrated that 'Umar said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) say: "Verily, the reward of deeds depends upon the Niyah (intentions) and every person will get the reward according to what he has intended."

Therefore, every action that was not performed solely for Allah's Sake, is annulled and fruitless in this life and the Hereafter.

There are two implications for the word Niyah according to the scholars. One of them pertains to distinguishing acts of worship from acts of habit. For instance, there is a difference between taking a bath to remove impurity (to be able to pray and engage in other acts of worship), and taking a bath to cool off. Also, there is a different Niyah for Zhur prayer than Asr prayer and fasting during Ramadan in contrast to fasting in other months.

The second meaning for Niyah

pertains to distinguishing between the intention behind the act – if it is directed to Allah Alone or to Allah and others. This meaning carries with it happiness or misery and reward or punishment. For example, two different persons might perform the same act, paying equal effort to it but one of them earns a reward while the other earns no reward, or even punishment, because the intentions were different in each case.

Some scholars said that this is why people vary in grades (in the sight of Allah); it is in accordance to the intentions behind their actions, not because of merely fasting and praying. Imam Ibn Rajab said: Know that performing deeds for other than Allah is of different types. Sometimes, this action might be to show off in its entirety, and thus, one seeks to be seen by the creation for a worldly gain. For example, this is the state that the hypocrites pray in. Allah describes them as follows:

"...And when they stand up for As-Salat (the prayer), they stand with laziness and to be

seen of men, and they do not remember Allah but little..." (Surah An-Nisa: 142)

Allah also described some as follows:

"...And be not like those who come out of their homes boastfully and to be seen of men..." (Surah Al-Anfal:47)

Thus, let's remind ourselves that showing off can annul our acts of Ibadah and may even lead us to earn Allah's anger and torment. Sometimes, the act might be for Allah and is mixed with showing off. In this case, there are authentic texts asserting that if the intention of showing off was present at the time one intended to perform a righteous act, the act itself will be annulled and fruitless. But when the act was started to gain Allah's reward alone, but changed later on to include an intention to partially show off, then it will not annul the act, provided one strives to repel such thoughts.

As Muslims, therefore, we should worship Allah in sincerity and stay away from Riya' (showing off) and evil intentions. We know from Quran and hadith that Allah does not look at one's shapes and wealth, but rather at one's hearts and actions.

Performing a righteous deed solely for Allah can help us towards achieving states of Ikhlas (sincerity). This way, the act can be easily steered away from Riya' (showing off). The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said in an authentic Hadith, that among the seven whom Allah shades under His Shade, on a day when there will be only His shade: "...A man who gives charitable gifts so secretly that his left hand does not know what his right hand has given (i.e., nobody knows how much he has given in charity)."

In addition, Allah said:

"If you disclose your Sadaqat (almsgiving), it is well: but if you conceal them and give

them to the poor, that is better for you.

(Allah) will expiate you some of your sins." (Surah Al-Baqara:271)

Scholars recommend that when a believer gives away charity for a good cause, he should not agree that his name be announced to the public, such as in newspapers, unless the purpose is to encourage others to pay for this and other charitable causes, or if his name is announced without his knowledge. Again, we should be conscious of the fact that Allah always knows the real intentions behind our actions.

To conclude, let's ensure that we strive to clean our hearts, intentions, and acts from all types of Riya (showing off) and instead should direct our good acts for Allah alone. The real rewards and payback is only with Allah and that's all that we should strive for.

Allah says:

Say (O Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)): "I am only a man like you. It has been revealed to me that your Ilah (God) is One Ilah (God – i.e. Allah). So whoever hopes for the Meeting with his Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord." (Surah Al-Kahf:110)

Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: "I guarantee a special palace in the middle of Jannat (i.e. in the prime site of Jannat) for the one who abandons a dispute despite him being rightful (in claiming his rights)."

Insults against Islam: **A Muslim's Response**

Insults and propaganda against Islam and the Muslims are nothing new. It is rather inevitable. From the very inception of Islam, Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wa Sallam had to deal with the insults of the disbelievers and hypocrites. He was mocked, ridiculed, sworn at, and attacked verbally and physically. This is part and parcel of what it means to be a Muslim.

Allah states:

"They desire to extinguish Allah's Light with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His Light though the disbelievers hate it."

We, however, need to assess how we respond to these situations and analyse whether our responses are contributing positively or not.

Typical scenario

Mr A. publishes an article on the internet lambasting Islam and making a wholesale mockery of the august personality of Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wa Sallam. His article goes mostly unnoticed until it catches the eye of one Muslim reader.

The Muslim reader is naturally incensed and hence forwards the article link to all his contacts encouraging them to

wage a verbal jihad against this villain who dared to write against Islam. Those who receive this message are similarly incensed and hence they forward it to their contacts and onwards. The bombardment then commences in earnest on the comments section. Arguments, counter arguments, insults and threats fly back and forth.

The outcome

An article that did not deserve to see the light of the day and was bound to fade into obscurity is thrust into the spotlight. A writer who the world didn't care about achieves celebrity status. The critical question is, whose efforts provided this outcome?

The Finale

Mr A. goes on to write, with his now celebrity status, another article about the intolerance and brutish nature of the Muslims. His stance against Islam and the Muslims is further entrenched and we have achieved nothing but providing free publicity to the said individual.

The Moral

Good intentions do not ensure good results. A good intentioned person throwing water over an oil or electrical fire is more likely to burn the house down and himself in the process, rather than extinguishing the fire. Hence, good intentions do not automatically equal good results.

The Correct Approach

If the article stems from a well-established organisation or appears in your local newspaper, then by all means protest. But if it is the ramblings of some nobody, why give it impetus? The same with anti-Islam websites. It is very easy to setup a page on the Internet. It is very difficult to draw traffic to it. The most anti-Islamic site will die if it receives no hits. That would happen if you just leave it alone. But if you are out there telling everyone about it and asking them to do the same, you are in effect volunteering as their publicity department.

If you feel you really must do something about it, then put pen to paper and write your own article. Promote and propagate the goodness that is Islam, not as a comment on someone else's article, but in your own independent article. Switch on the lanterns of Islam and darkness will automatically recede.

Jamiatul Ulama (KZN)

Two Types of Charity

Other than the charity of giving part of one's wealth to others, charity, in its broadest Islamic concept, can be divided into two main categories. The first category consists of the acts of goodness and kindness that are done toward other human beings. Acts of goodness that are done directly toward oneself constitutes the second category.

The first category includes acts as mentioned by the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam):

"Your smiling at your brother is a charitable act for you. Your ordering good and eradicating evil is a charitable act. Your guiding a man in a land wherein he is lost is a charitable act. Your helping a man with bad eyesight to see is a charitable act. Your removing a stone, thorn or bone from the road is a charitable act. Your emptying your cup into the cup of your brother is a charitable act." [Tirmidhi]

An important act of charity of the second category that is available to everyone, no matter how poor or rich, is the act of refraining from harming others.

Abu Dharr once asked the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) what he should do if he does not have the ability to perform some of the good deeds. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) told him:

"Keep your evil away from the people and that will be a charitable act from yourself upon yourself." [Muslim, Bukhari]

Compiled From: "Commentary on the Forty Hadith of an-Nawawi"

Source of Liberalist Ideologies

Portion of humankind affirms the existence of the Creator, yet believes that this All-Wise, All-Knowing Creator did not send down any guidance to His creation as to how they should live and worship Him. Similar to this group, another portion of mankind affirms the existence of the Creator as well as the existence of books that have been sent down to mankind by way of chosen messengers. However, despite their awareness of these prophets, they have no firm belief that the Creator intended for them to live by one chosen way. Instead, both these groups of people live by the principle that there is no one particular way to God, and that it is up to each individual to choose their own way.

After denying that the Creator has chosen and legislated one way for mankind, these aforementioned groups band together and begin to formulate man-made ideologies. According to pollster David Kinnaman, it is their belief that mankind can invent a religion and way of life that is "just as accurate, just as helpful as any particular faith might provide."¹

Because people believe in something that Kinnaman refers to as "hyper-individualism", they believe that it is correct to "mix secular and various religious

views to create their personal belief systems." Because these people "don't mind embracing contradictions," they are "cutting and pasting religious views from a variety of different sources - television, movies, [and] conversations with their friends."²

And who is more astray than one who follows his own desire without guidance from Allah? Verily Allah guides not a wrong doing people. [28:50]

Once people rely on the opinions of the ever-changing conjecture of human thought, they set about inventing different ideologies they feel will serve them well. This ever-changing conjecture is the source of all man-made ideologies., such as atheism, agnosticism, existentialism, humanism, liberalism, democracy, pluralism, secularism, Marxism, communism, and many others.

All of these materialist ideologies are based upon the belief that God does not exist, or that He exists, but failed to reveal a complete message to His creation. Some people believe that His revelation is only relevant for ancient times, as if the Creator did not know how things would be in this time. Others believe that we have been given the freedom to accept or reject

what we want from His revelation, as if people are more knowledgeable than Him as to what benefits them. One wonders, therefore, if it is truly befitting to place such skepticism upon the One who created everyone that exists.

Is there doubt about Allah, Creator of the heavens and the earth? [14:10]

Regarding these types of doubts, as -Sa'dee stated: "It is not befitting of Allah's Mercy, Wisdom and Praiseworthiness, that He leaves His servants futilely neglected, without a message, and (without) something which acquaints them with that which will order and amend their worldly and religious condition. Therefore, He sent the messengers and sent down the books, out of His Wisdom and Mercy; so that there may not be a proof for the people against Allah after the sending of the messengers, that they may say: "No bringer of good tidings or warner ever came to us."3

Because those who profess these

man-made ideologies possess neither textual or logical evidences to back up what they believe in, they continue to search for new theories that will repeatedly prove that what they were deeming to be correct today will turn out to have been incorrect within a short period of time. Once this is understood, would it seem reasonable to favour these ever-changing theories over the clear proofs and evidences that exist in the Creator's revelation?

Then in which speech after Allah and His verses will they believe? [45:6]

Footnotes

1 K. Connie Kang, *Most believe in heaven and think they'll go there*, Los Angeles Times, October 25, 2003.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Shaykh 'Abdur-Rahman as-Sa'dee, *al-Adillatul-Qawaati' wal-Baraaheen fee Ibtal Usool-il-Mulhideen*, Daarul-Minhaaj, p.10.

Source: *Sacred Freedom - Western Liberalist Ideologies in the Light of Islaam*, Haneef Oliver, WestPoint Publishing, pp.91-93.

Marriage Survival Kit

Do not demand your rights. Discharge your obligations!

Keep smiling. It is act of charity!

Express praise and gratitude. All human beings share the same basic needs: To feel appreciated, respected and loved!

Never compare your spouse with others. The grass always looks greener on the other side!

Never bring up past problems that were resolved. They only cloud the future!

Never insult your spouse in front of other people. It is a confession of your own weakness!

Never insult his relatives. It is demeaning and leads to a lack of self-confidence!

Never adopt a tit for tat mentality. It causes equal pain to you!

Be the better person! Admit your mistakes and say: "I am sorry!"

Never go to bed without settling an argument. You may never see the next day!

Do not blame your spouse for always arguing. It takes two to quarrel!

Heart

Look for it in Three Places

Heina Dadabhoy

The word "heart" is one of the most commonly used motifs, metaphors, and symbols in human history. It is a term whose definition is broad enough to include the fierceness of strength and courage as well as the tenderness and vulnerability of intense emotion. Traditional science, however, has downplayed the heart as merely a monotonously contracting muscle, while the brain is touted as both the center and originator of intelligence and feeling.

In spite of this, the tendency to ascribe psychological sensitivities to that constantly beating organ continues to haunt contemporary human thought. At the language level, the word "heart" remains a strong conveyer of emotion and meaning. If human beings are discouraged, they are disheartened; if stoic, heartless; if in the best state of energy and enthusiasm, hearty.

In the face of traditional science, why does the collective psyche of humanity continue to fixate upon this same intangible concept of the heart? Perhaps it is be-

cause, to this day, the stopping of the heartbeat signifies the coming of death. It might be ascribed to the way that the heart responds so readily to emotional signals, increasing or reducing pace in direct correlation to the human psychological state. Within human consciousness, the heart's meaning extends beyond that of a muscle; within Islam, the role of the heart cannot be understated.

The heart is mentioned repeatedly in the Qur'an. One of the mentioned *du`a'* (supplications) of Prophet Ibrahim, (AS), beseeches to Allah—the Exalted and Glorified: "Do not forsake me on the Day of Resurrection, a day where neither money nor children will benefit except whoever meets Allah with a sound heart" (26:87-89). Allah revealed this powerful supplication about the Day of Resurrection, for the judgment on the eternal fate of each soul is decided by Allah on that day, rendering a pure heart necessary for entering Paradise.

The Arabic term for the heart, *qalb*, has a very specific meaning. It refers to what defines the existence of the individ-

ual: one's personal center of faith. A most illustrious and beautiful chapter of the Qur'an, Surah Yaseen, is referred to as the heart of the Qur'an. According to the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam), the virtues of reciting this qalb, among others, include receiving benefits of the dunya (earthly life) and the removal of the dread of the akhirah (life after death).

Furthermore, worship of Allah is divided into four categories, two of which deal with the heart: its sayings and its actions. A true Mu'min (Believer) is said to possess a pure heart that is well-informed in the total belief of Allah and complete trust in Him—a heart that is true to its Maker (Alah) in both its impulses and the carrying out of those impulses. The qalb was created to hold its Creator as its highest Authority, Love, and Loyalty. If the heart is dead, then spiritual (and, eventually, physical) problems would manifest themselves in the individual.

In purifying the heart, a Believer can rest assured that the best of examples is being followed: that of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), the most virtuous of the creations of Allah and the most beloved to Allah. Indeed, despite his perfection in the sight of Allah, the

Prophet's heart (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was not only cleansed by Angel Jibreel (Gabriel), but was also purified by his own strategies of worship.

One of the greatest interpreters of Shari'ah (Islamic law) of the fourteenth century, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, was greatly concerned with matters of the qalb. According to him, 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ood, (RA), one of the closest companions of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), once presented a diagnostic by which a Believer may determine the state of the qalb. He said: "Look for your heart in three places: when listening to the Qur'an, when seeking knowledge (of Allah) and when in privacy. If you cannot find it in these places, then ask Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) to bless you with a heart, for indeed you have no heart."

A soul with no heart can not even begin to work on increasing its level of submission to its Lord—the very foundation of its purity. A vital conductor of faith must be found and awakened within every loyal slave of Allah. The following exploration of 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ood's (RA) mentioned places transcends the mind and body and deals with a site precious to all human beings.

Most Weighty in the Scales

Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) said: "There is nothing more weighty in the scales than excellent character." (Abi Dawood)

A person's character is constantly tested by different people and in different ways. However one always needs to respond by displaying excellent character. In this way one will continuously be earning rewards which will weigh very heavily in one's favour on the Day of Judgement.

Till Depression is No More

Whether for this reason or that, the core of depression is disconnection from and lack of trust in Almighty Allah. Trust and Faith in the Almighty unburdens your heart and mind, leaving no room for worries, fear, or even regrets.

Maha Yousuf

Possible causes of depression

Normally people are depressed because they are blocked from their perceived sources of happiness, fulfillment, love, materialistic needs, or simply for failing to forgive themselves whether because of sins they committed or people they wronged.

Whether for this reason or that, the core reason for depression is disconnection from and lack of trust in Almighty Allah. Trust and Faith in the Almighty unburdens your heart and mind, leaving no room for worries, fear, or even regrets.

'Umar (RA) said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, say:

"If you were to rely on Allah as He should be relied on, He would provide for you as He provides for the birds. They go out in the morning hungry and return in the evening full." [Tirmidhi]

Even sinners should have good faith in Allah- they should have confidence that repenting and returning to Allah would be accepted- surely if they followed the steps required for that; i.e. giving up the sin, asking Allah for forgiveness, regretting doing it, setting intention strict not to fall back into that sin, and giving back people's rights if there's any.

Abu Dharr (RA) reported that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "Allah the Mighty and Exalted, says, 'Anyone who comes with a good action will have ten like it or more. If anyone comes with a wrong action, the repayment of a wrong action is a wrong action like it or I will forgive him. If anyone approaches Me by a hand-span, I come to him an arm-span. If anyone approaches Me by an arm-span, I come to him two arm spans. If anyone approaches Me walking, I come to him running. If anyone meets Me with mistakes

equivalent in weight to the whole earth, having not associated anything with Me, I will meet him with the same amount of forgiveness." [a]

Also let me remind you of this beautiful verse of the Quran, where Allah Almighty says; "My Mercy extends to all things." -Quran (7:156)

Other causes of depression?

Comparing your worldly status to others!

Another serious harm you cause your heart and psyche is comparing yourself to others who are of higher levels of social prestige, education, or happen to be wealthier, healthier or more beautiful- and it is something that Islam has strictly discouraged, given its danger and inflicted harm.

In one famous Hadith related by Abu Dawood, Abu Hurayrah (RA) reported that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), said: "Beware of envy. Envy devours good actions as fire devours wood." (or he said, "dry grass").

And in another Noble hadith, Anas (RA) reported that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "Do not hate one another nor envy one another nor act in a hostile way towards one another nor cut one another off. Be slaves of Allah, brothers. It is not lawful for a Muslim to cut himself off from his brother for more than three days."-- [Agreed upon Hadith]

One would now stop me to say; "what about the need for love", which I know this world is hugely lacking?!

I'd then ask you brother and sisters, why depend on other needy fellow humans to give you what they themselves probably lack or do not appreciate much.

Seek love from the prime source of

Love, Almighty Allah, and if He loved you, this would be your chance for earning the love of people, thereby attaining happiness in this world and the other- yet the love of people should be your optimum objective- love of Allah should be your main aim and concern.

However, I cannot possibly ask anybody to give up completely worldly love or love of people, for love is cornerstone to brotherhood and genuine Muslim community that's united, strong, and caring. But love among Muslim brothers is bound to completely other standards, that solely seek only the pleasure of Allah and enact the noble ties of brotherhood in Islam- such boundaries are usually sidestepped by people.

Anas (RA) reported that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "Anyone who possesses three attributes will experience the sweetness of belief: that he loves Allah and His Messenger more than anything else; that he loves someone for the sake of Allah alone; and that he hates the idea of reverting to disbelief as much as he would hate being thrown into a fire." [Agreed upon]

Also Abu Hurayrah (RA), may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "There are seven whom Allah will shade with His shade on the day when there is no shade but His shade: a just Imam, a youth who grows up worshipping Allah, the Mighty and Exalted, a man whose heart is attached to the mosque, two men who love each other for the sake of Allah, meeting and parting for that reason alone, a man who refuses the advances of a noble and beautiful woman, saying, 'I fear Allah', a man who gives sadaqa (charity) and conceals it so that his left hand does not know what his

right hand gives, and a man who remembers Allah when he is alone and his eyes overflow with tears." [Agreed upon]

A prime symptom of depression, or may be a diagnose in itself, is lack or absence of hope, which is completely detrimental to sound and pure faith in Allah and his supreme attributes.

Allah says: 'I am as My servant thinks (expects) I am. I am with him when he mentions Me. If he mentions Me to himself, I mention him to Myself; and if he mentions Me in an assembly, I mention him in an assembly greater than it. If he draws near to Me a hand's length, I draw near to him an arm's length. And if he comes to Me walking, I go to him at speed.' [Bukhari]

All of the above and much more provides you with universal tools to fight away depression!

So claim your tools and trust their potential same why you trust and have faith in Almighty Allah- keep asserting your faith in Him and what He has ordained when you're happy and most importantly when you despair, Till Depression Is No More!

THE STORY

Once upon a time a wealthy old man lived alone in a very big house. He was growing weak day by day and was unable to take care of himself and the big house, so he thought of hiring servants who could help with all the work of the house and also take care of him.

The old man appointed two servants Salim and Ahmed. Salim happened to be a handsome young man and Ahmed was an ugly looking chap. The old man asked Salim to go to the kitchen and make tea for him. After Salim had left, the old man turned to Ahmed and said, "Salim has given a very bad account of you. He says you are very bad person and untrustworthy. Is this correct?"

Ahmed thought for a moment and said, "Salim is a very handsome guy. He has a beautiful outward appearance so this must be reflected by his inward beauty too". Ahmed had the belief that such a handsome man could never tell a lie. He therefore told the old man, "If Salim has bad opinion about me, then there must be something wrong with me. I am afraid he must be correct"

The old man was very much impressed by the character of ugly looking Ahmed. Meanwhile, Salim returned with a cup of tea for his master.

The old man sent Ahmed to make breakfast for him and then turned to Salim and said, "Ahmed has given a bad account of you. What do you say about it?" On hearing this Salim became angry and started uttering cusswords. He said that Ahmed was a liar and a scoundrel.

The Old man thus concluded that the man with a beautiful face had no inner beauty while the man looking ugly outward had tremendous inner beauty.

Moral of the Story: Do not jump to conclusions just by looking at the outward beauty. The outward beauty is deceiving most of the times. If you want to judge how worthy and beautiful a person is judge his inner beauty, his heart. You do not have to be handsome / beautiful to be nice, kind and compassionate, and you do not have to be handsome / beautiful to be intelligent, smart and hard-working. Not all handsome and beautiful people are nice! Real beauty does not lie in the physical appearance, but rather in the heart.

Don't Wait

Live Productively While Young

Life often gets very busy for many young Muslims as they try to balance deen with studies, work, community projects and other commitments. But being 'busy' does not always translate into productivity.

Sister Amina

Have you ever heard the story of the people of the cave?

In the narration [Qur'an: Chapter 18, Verses 9-26], some young men were described as having their hearts filled with faith and belief in their Lord Almighty. Hence, they sought refuge in a cave away from their disbelieving folks and loved ones, so as to protect themselves against disbelief.

They simply did not keep the faith in their hearts, but took action as well. This motivated them to remain steadfast. This shows the practical way Muslims can balance belief with their actions.

As a young Muslim, life should be more than just about praying, fasting and engaging in other spiritual acts of worship. From daily thoughts to speech and ultimately action or inaction, your character and activities should always be guided by inner faith.

Your youth is a unique period

marked by zeal, energy and many opportunities, but it is a passing phase. If you think otherwise, visit your grandparents or an elderly neighbour to find out how their lives are different now as compared to when they were still in their teens, 20s or 30s.

Here is a quick list of productive opportunities that you can utilise to set you on the right track towards having a more productive youth.

1. Boost Your Knowledge

Seeking knowledge brings many benefits to the learner. So whether it is Islamic knowledge or personal development programmes, there is no end to the opportunities you have to create change. Change happens when you take steps to act on your knowledge.

Nowadays, knowledge can be accessed through various means, online or offline. Before you begin any programme,

(Vol.15, Issue: 02) 21.

general or personalised self study, understand your goals and map them out so that they will guide your learning journey. Where available, discuss your needs and present knowledge level with a tutor or mentor. This will enable you to carve out a progressive learning path.

With knowledge comes the responsibility of taking action. So strive to put into practice what you learn and spread the knowledge so that others can benefit. You can do this through writing and sharing your study notes, giving talks and lectures, teaching and mentoring others; and also through recordings – audio, video and PowerPoint presentations.

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: “When a person dies, his deeds are cut off except through three: continual flowing charity, knowledge which others benefit, and a pious offspring that supplicates for him.” [Sahih at-Tirmidhi]

And what better time is there to begin traversing the wide sea of knowledge, but at a young age!

2. Nurture Your Faith

From your daily obligatory prayers to the recommended ones, from Ramadan fasting to the nawafil fasts, from compulsory zakat to daily charity, whatever action you do, do it with excellence and for the Pleasure of Allah (glorified and exalted be He) alone. Also do it according to the authentic sunnah of His Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). It is an opportunity to help you build consciousness of Allah (glorified and exalted be He) in your heart.

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, “Ihsan is to worship Allah as though you are seeing Him, and if you cannot see Him, then know for sure that He sees you.” [Sahih Bukhari]

22. (Vol.15, Issue: 02)

In addition to submitting to Allah (glorified and exalted be He), you are able to develop better discipline when you engage in these prescribed acts of worship. While with the congregational ones, the spirit of unity and tolerance is fostered. So guard all of your daily acts of worship with excellence and consistency.

What better investment can be made in this period of life, but of cultivating such rewarding practices.

3. Move Your Body

You can stay active by performing exercises regularly and taking part in sporting activities. Staying fit and healthy will make it easier to perform some rewarding acts of worship as well such as walking to the local masjid and performing the Hajj.

Good health and general wellness will also make it easier for the youth to work hard to earn a halal income, which is another form of worship. When you maintain a physically active life, your brain becomes active and productivity also increases in other areas of life.

Take action today by starting an exercise routine and/or getting a fitness buddy.

Why not walk away your excuses or skip them away. And who says you need a gym, designer gears or a fat wallet to stay fit. You can get started on a new active lifestyle today.

4. Get Social

This period in your life with fewer responsibilities and energy will allow for networking and contributing to the community in many productive ways. You can contribute ideas, knowledge, skills and wealth. It should be about making sincere contributions rather than just hanging

around with friends or passing time or even being a copy cat.

Life only gets busier as responsibilities increase, whether at home or with studies. It is best to commit to beneficial work while life permits. You can turn social interactions into worship and productive actions.

Here are a few ideas to get you started:

Volunteer at the local Islamic centre.

Visit the sick.

Start a charity drive.

Get to know your neighbours - Muslims or non-Muslims – and be an exemplary Muslim.

Collaborate with an Islamic organisation so that you can manage their website or social media accounts from home.

Give it a try today, but remember to start with a sincere intention. Do it for the pleasure of Allah (glorified and exalted be He).

5. Mind Those Feelings

From music and friends to porn and gambling, temptations surround the Muslim youth in all directions. Suppressing negative inclinations of the heart as well as pressures of the society, can bring you eternal success and save you from immense regret.

“But as for him who feared standing before his Lord, and restrained himself from impure evil desires and lusts. Verily, Paradise will be his abode.” [Qur'an: Chapter 79, Verses 40-41]

Use your free time for productive deeds such seeking beneficial knowledge, giving dawah and keeping good company. In whatever situation you find yourself, always reflect and question yourself, “Will Allah (glorified and exalted be He) be

pleased with me in this situation? Am I striving for worldly and eternal success with these thoughts or act?”

It will not always be easy for you as a young Muslim, but taking one step at a time towards change helps. Combine this inner struggle with an understanding of the purpose of your creation. When you understand yourself and your feelings, you can strive to become better and learn to seek help when you need it.

Try to keep your mind busy with pure and positive thoughts in anticipation of a unique reward, an everlasting kind.

The message is that every young Muslim can have a productive life.

First, by realising the opportunities that youth offers and then taking action. And secondly, through striving for balance and excellence in every area of life.

“... And whatever good you send before you for yourselves, (i.e. nawafil non-obligatory acts of worship), you will certainly find it with Allah, better and greater in reward. And seek Forgiveness of Allah. Verily, Allah is Most-Forgiving, Most-Merciful.” [Qur'an: Chapter 73, Verse 20]

Cont'd from page 35

“Competition in [worldly] increase diverts you. Until you visit the graveyards.” [102:1-2] But abundance does not justify wastage. God Almighty prohibits this. He Almighty Says what means: *“Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils, and ever has Satan been to his Lord ungrateful.” [17:27]* Insatiable pursuit of increased materials combined with technological advancement has given some nations unprecedented control over man and his environment. But history tells us that these are signs that civilizations are doomed to perish.

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(Vol.15, Issue: 02) 23.

I Listened to My Inner Voice

Abdul Aziz was born Jermaine Boddy and was raised in Charleston, West Virginia, United States, as a Baptist Christian as were his parents and their forefathers. Here below, he narrates how he was drawn toward Islam and became a Muslim:

As a youth I attended Church and Sunday School regularly until my adolescent years when girls and running around suddenly became more important to me. I consider myself as “sinful” when I was on the street, but I was always conscious of Allah — or, I may say God in those days — and used to ask forgiveness on occasions for my sinful deeds in vain by the way I had been taught, “in the name of Jesus,” may Allah forgive me.

I continued on in my sinful ways despite a number of events in my life that were very life threatening such as drugs, being shot in the head, loss of jobs, and family and friends dying. Only after my incarceration did I begin to seek refuge in Allah and I was “saved” while incarcerated in the county jail. Even then as I faithfully read my Bible and prayed every night be-

fore I went to bed, there were still some doubts in my mind as far as the Christian faith was concerned.

I continued to try to live my life as Christian when I came to prison but eventually went back to my old ways of my lower self.

Again after several years of constantly staying in and out of trouble worrying about worldly matters and confronting frustration I began going to Church again but only half-heartedly. I really enjoyed the singing and also the eloquent speech of the preacher Rev. Hightower but there were always unanswered questions, which I still cannot understand.

The more I think about it the more outrageous it sounds. “Jesus died on the cross for the whole world’s sins.” I seek Allah’s forgiveness.

Even though I was still confused, I held on to Christianity and started to seek knowledge elsewhere. I had been introduced to Al-Islam briefly while on the streets by a friend who was not very knowledgeable or righteous but yet I somehow

was drawn to this religion back then. I can remember telling my mother that I wanted to be a Muslim after hearing the Verses of the Holy Qur'an. She dismissed it by saying I did not know what I was talking about which I did not but somehow I knew that this was the True religion.

I had attended the Jumu'ah prayer on a couple occasions with a brother named Islam and then again with one of my homeboys but never really understood what was going on because I was not paying any attention.

Sometime later, I then asked a friend, Shahid Qazi to place my name on the callout to attend Jumu'ah but for the wrong reasons. My intentions were to just get out of going to work in the afternoons on Fridays. Actually I began to stay and listen to the Khutbah (Friday sermons) and after a short while some of my previous

questions were starting in to be answered.

I would continue to attend Hightower's services on Thursday nights and then go to Jumu'ah on Fridays for at least nine months and over the last part of those nine months I began to ask Allah to show me the straight path because although I still proclaimed to be a Christian I knew that Islam was a true religion. Slowly Islam touched my heart and I stopped attending the Christian services there shortly after I took my Shahadah (Masha-Allah) and my life changed drastically ever since!

(Abdul Aziz is a young of 28 years of age, from West Virginia, and has learned his Salat, Kalima, Du'a Qunut, couple other Du'as, and many Surahs along with all alphabet of Arabic. Abdul Aziz took his Shahadah just seven months back but has learned a lot and also is serving the Muslim community as an Amir of Da'awah and assistant security. May Allah keep him strong. Ameen)

Seeing the Unseen

There is no achievement in speaking of the seen, since we all can see it. Rather it is an achievement to speak of the unseen. Today we speak so much of the visible things we see around us that the conviction of these things has entered our hearts. We may have not seen an atom bomb, but we have heard, read and spoken so much about it that its conviction has entered our hearts, to the extent that it's mere mention strikes fear in us. Thus we need to speak so much of Allah Ta'ala and Nabi (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) that the love of Allah Ta'ala and Nabi (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) fills our hearts. We need to speak so much of the unseen that the unseen becomes like the seen, and its conviction enters our hearts. On the other hand we need to negate all that we see to such an extent that the conviction of the things we see around us leaves our heart.

Speaking Without Knowledge

In his tafseer, Al-Qurtubee brings notice to those people who use conjecture when reading the Quran, and say things such as “my heart tells me,” or “what comes to mind,” and so forth. He cautions that in such cases, people are speaking about Allah without knowledge (‘ilm), which is one of the greatest sins that one could commit.

When one attempts to explain a verse from the Quran without having the proper knowledge or methodology, one might be actually following ones hawaa (desires), might be following an inspiration from the Shaytaan, or might be following dhann (conjecture). Rarely, one might actually be following some kind of inspiration from Allah (SWT) (and only Allah subhanaho wa ta’ala (SWT) knows best.)

So, saying that Allah (SWT) probably means such and such in a specific verse is akin to speaking or saying something on behalf of Allah (SWT), and such opinions based on superficial knowledge (‘ilm) are one of the greatest sins that one could commit.

Ibn Al-Qayyim (ra) mentions in his book “Madaarij As-Saalikeen” (1:372-3) that speaking about Allah (SWT) without `ilm is the greatest sin that one could commit. He

26. (Vol.15, Issue: 02)

bases this on the following verse from the Quran:

“Say: The things that my Lord has indeed forbidden are al-Fawaahish (great evil sins, every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse, etc.), whether committed openly or secretly, sins (of all kinds), unrighteous oppression, joining partners (in worship) with Allah for which He has given no authority and saying things about Allah of which you have no knowledge.” [Surah Al-A’raaf: 33]

In discussing this verse, he reminds the readers of the concepts of haraam li-dhaatihi (forbidden due to their own evil nature), and haraam li-ghairihi (forbidden because they lead to some evil or have some evil in them.)

Regarding the above verse, he notes that the four issues mentioned in the verse are haraam li-dhaatihi (haraam in their own essence), because of the evil in them. For example, he explains that Allah (SWT) first mentions al-fawaahish, which is the least of the four mentioned in the verse. Next, Allah mentions the sins of trespassing against the truth; which is a greater sin than the previous one. Then, Allah mentions the act of shirk, and finally the issue of saying things

about Allah (SWT) without knowledge is mentioned. The last one is worse because it involves acts that are worse than committing shirk. For example, it involves:

- Ascribing something falsely to Allah (SWT).
- Changing or altering the religion of Allah (SWT).
- Denying what He has confirmed or confirming what He has denied,
- Affirming something as false or declaring something false as true, and it also includes supporting something that Allah (SWT) dislikes or opposes,
- Supporting something that Allah (SWT) dislikes or opposes, and liking something that Allah (SWT) dislikes.

In other words, when one speaks without ‘ilm, in matters of the religion, then one is in fact changing the religion of Allah (SWT). Ibn Al-Qayyim (ra) further mentions that speaking without ‘ilm about Allah or the Quran is the real source of all kufr and shirk.

Ibn Al-Qayyim (ra) highlights an example of the polytheists who in the times of the prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) claimed that their acts of worshiping things other than Allah (SWT) were in reality meant to take them closer to Allah (SWT). So, their act of shirk was saying something about Allah (SWT) without ‘ilm, and something they did not know about Allah (SWT).

Ibn Al-Qayyim (ra) also mentioned that every bid‘aah (innovation) has its roots in making statements that have no support from the Quran and Sunnah, or in other words every bid‘aah is based on some statement that is falsely attributed to Allah without evidence or knowledge (‘ilm.)

We observe from the Islamic history that even the companions of the prophet

(Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) who lived their lives alongside the prophet and witnessed the revelation of the Quran and were firsthand familiar with the events, refrained from opining anything about the Quran, Allah, or His prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Instead, one observes that they regarded such careless acts of attributing things to Allah and His Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) as absolutely forbidden. For example, Abu Bakr (RA) one time said, *“What earth would give me place to live and what sky would shade me if I should speak about the Quran with my opinion or by something I do not know.”*

And ‘Umar Ibnul Khattaab (RA), he also said, *“Beware of using your opinion in religious matters.”*

And Ibn ‘Abbaas (RA), the one who the Prophet (SAW) made du‘aa for him to understand the Quran, to get the understanding of the Deen, and to be given by Allah (SWT) the ta‘weel or the understanding of the Quran, he also said,

“All that there is to follow and obey is the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger. Whoever makes any statement after these two according to his opinion, then I do not know if you’ll find among his good deeds or among his sins.”

Ibn ‘Abbaas (RA) made other such statements where he noted that even if what one did seems good and looks good, but one will discover such acts as sins on the Day of Judgment. The companions, therefore, were quite stringent about not attributing anything to Allah and His messenger and about matters of haram and halal.

Let us ensure that we don’t fall into such traps and correct others who may be careless about such issues.

What is the “Right” Religion?

Umm Zakiyyah

O Allah, none has the right to be worshipped except You alone. And, O Allah, I bear witness that Muḥammad is Your servant and messenger!

Perhaps it is difficult to imagine, but there was once a time when these words inspired such a tremendous stir in hearts and minds that lives were forever changed, as was the course of history. Allah says,

“And remember Abraham and Ishmael raised the foundations of the House [with this prayer]: ‘Our Lord! Accept [this service] from us. For You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.

Our Lord! Make of us Muslims, submitting to You, and of our progeny a Muslim people, submitting to You...” (2:127-128)

And Allah answered this prayer and sent to all humankind His last prophet and messenger, Muḥammad ibn Abdullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

Allah says,
“Say [O Muḥammad], ‘O mankind! Verily, I am sent to you all as the Messenger of Allah to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. None has the right

to be worshipped but He...” (7:158)

And thus were the life-altering words that formed the inception of the fastest growing religion in the world—Islam—a faith based on the simple belief in One God and belief in all His prophets and messengers, including Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muḥammad (AS).

Do People Think They'll Be Left Alone Saying “We Believe”?

Undoubtedly, belief in One God and His prophets is such a simple concept that almost anyone who hears this message in its pure, authentic form will recognize the truth—and openly testify to it...

O Allah, none has the right to be worshipped except You alone.

And, O Allah, I bear witness that Muḥammad is Your servant and messenger!

But as with any course of life that we choose, trials and tribulations will accompany it; and it is at these difficult moments, when adversity strikes, that we know what really lies in our hearts—and if it mirrors what we claim with our tongues.

Allah says,
“Do people think that they will be left alone on saying 'We believe' and that they will not be tested? We did test those before them, and Allah will certainly make known those who are true from those who are false.” (29:2-3)

Hijrah—A Test of Faith

It is an image that moves the hearts of many believers: A young woman leaves the safety and comfort of her home and voluntarily exposes herself to likely persecution or death—not once or twice, but day after day—to ensure the safety and well-being of a man to whom she owes no worldly obligation or debt.

Such was the case of Asma (RA), the daughter of Abu Bakr (RA), the close companion of Prophet Muḥammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) who also accompanied the Prophet during the Hijrah (obligatory migration) from Mecca to Madinah. And it was for the success of this Hijrah that Asma bint Abu Bakr (RA) risked her life by carrying food to the cave where the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and her father were hiding in order to protect their own lives.

And what of Umm Salamah (RA), a woman whose open belief in Allah and His Messenger and whose steps taken toward Hijrah resulted in immediate separation from both her husband and young son? Day after day she cried for her beloved spouse and young child, but it was only after some time that she felt relief...

Of a surety, the choice of Asma bint Abu Bakr (RA) and Umm Salamah (RA) was testimony to their firm belief in Allah during a time when even amongst the strongest of men were those too afraid to become Muslim.

In Search of “True Islam”

“You people read your history like someone addicted to drugs,” the non-Muslim said of the Muslims. “You get a high off the stories, so you keep going back for more; but the high you get does nothing to help your life.”

I first heard this story at a lecture, and I couldn't help agreeing, at least to some extent, with the observation of the non-Muslim. For how many of us think of “true Islam” as something that “used to” be real? How many of us relate the stories of Prophet Muḥammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and companions like Asma bint Abu Bakr (RA) and Umm Salamah (RA) as if they have nothing at all to do with “Islam in modern times”?

Or, worse still, how many of us simply take from these accounts praiseworthy labels like “Sunni” or “Salafi” and affix them to ourselves and imagine that by doing so, our Islam is pure and authentic to the exclusion of everyone else?

Is it because our circumstances are so vastly different from the believers of the past that it is difficult for us to draw practical parallels? Is it because gaining a proper understanding of our faith is so complex that it requires years of study in an Islamic university or under renowned scholars?

Or is it simply because we have yet to grasp what “true Islam” means in the first place?

What Is the “Right” Religion?

Allah says,

“And they have been commanded no more than this: to worship Allah, offering Him sincere devotion, being true [in faith]; to establish regular prayer; and to practice regular charity.

And that is the Right Religion.” (98:5)

(Vol. 15, Issue: 02) 29.

Why then is it that when we teach and learn about Islam today that it is so much more confusing and complex than this? Why do we not grasp that, whatever other obligations might exist for the believer, these basic principles form the very definition and foundation of our faith?

Why do we not grasp that as long as we have this firm foundation, we are Muslims and thus have hope of Allah's mercy and forgiveness—which is, after all, the most that even the greatest of believers can hope for?

'Islam Used to Be Real'

No, it isn't that Islam itself used to be real. It is simply that, historically, a much larger percentage of those who testified to believing in Allah and His Messenger actually believed, hence the sacrifices of Asma bint Abu Bakr (RA) and Umm Salamah (RA)

during the Hijrah.

And no, this strong faith and determination was not because they had a more authentic Islam than we do. It was because they had more authentic hearts than we do. And authenticity of heart is timeless. It doesn't necessitate Prophet Muḥammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) or his companions living amongst us.

It simply necessitates that Islam live within us.

And to establish this necessary foundation of faith, we need to begin as Ibrahim (AS) and Isma'el (AS) did when establishing the necessary foundation of Allah's House—by turning to Allah in sincere supplication and asking Him to make us true Muslims.

Only then can we live our lives such that Allah will write us down amongst those who are true in faith.

In-laws or Out-Laws

Unfortunately the issue of in-laws often becomes one of the major contributing factors that strain the relationship between husband and wife. This sometimes even leads to divorce. In most instances it is only petty issues which are blown out of proportion.

Hereunder are a few basic guidelines which would assist in maintaining a happy relationship with your in-laws:

- 1. From day one, maintain etiquette and good character when meeting them.*
- 2. Always present yourself in a happy and pleasant manner.*
- 3. Serve them, as this will create love.*
- 4. If two people are speaking, do not ever jump to the conclusion that they are talking about you.*
- 5. Do not be so talkative that you begin to hurt people's feelings, nor remain so silent that they consider you to be "stuck up".*
- 6. Do not carry tales and relate stories to your mother and other family members regarding your in-laws. This becomes the fuel and cause of all ill-feelings and fights.*
- 7. Do not distance your husband from his family members.*
- 8. Respect his parents as much as you would like him to respect yours.*

Medina Charter and Pluralism

The Medina Charter serves as an example of finding resolve in a dispute where peace and pluralism were achieved not through military successes or ulterior motives but rather through respect, acceptance, and denunciation of war ..

Sean William White

The clash of civilizations, cultures, tribes, and religions seems to be prevalent throughout all of history. At the same time, history reveals simultaneous conflict and efforts to resolve tensions and division feeding animosity through mediation, diplomacy, and dialogue. Many conflicts seem too complicated for an agreement to be established on just one point, whether or not the conflict revolves around territory, religion, or ethnic discrimination. So what approach is best to mediate issues in a contemporary world that seems to be driven by economics, natural resources, and ethnic or religious ideologies? The Medina Charter serves as an example of finding resolve in a dispute where peace and pluralism were achieved not through military successes or ulterior motives but rather through respect, acceptance, and denunciation of war - aspects that reflect some of the basic tenets of the religion Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him,

was guiding and promoting. Through an examination of the Medina Charter, I will show how pluralism was advanced and instated in Medina and the reasons reflecting on such a document could help avoid the divide and misunderstanding plaguing much thought, rhetoric, and media today between Muslims, Christians, and Jews all over the world.

When the Prophet was forced to immigrate to Medina, the population was "a mixture" (akhlāt) of many different tribes (predominantly Arabic and Jewish), who had been fighting for nearly a century, causing "civil strife," and it was for this reason that the Prophet was summoned there (Peters 1994, 4). Tribal fighting and a lack of governance in Medina (known as Yathrib) meant disputes were dealt with "by the blade" on many occasions, which deepened the divides and fueled conflicts. Karen Armstrong explains aptly the mentality and workings of the tribal system dis-

(Vol. 15, Issue: 02) 31.

persed through war-torn Arabia, where the Prophet was striving for peace (Armstrong 2006, 19). "The tribe, not a deity, was of supreme value, and each member had to subordinate his or her personal needs and desires to the well-being of the group and to fight to the death, if necessary, to ensure its survival" (Armstrong 2006, 24). Such a system was, in a political sense, representative of the little cooperation between the tribes in the Yathrib. In this region reigned power hungry strategies, an emphasis on arms and strength in military, and a belief that clearly mediation was unachievable except by a trustworthy outsider who had no connections to the issues or the tribes. Not only did the Prophet fit these prerequisites, but his personal ambition as given to him by God was also one of spreading peace and unity, creating a community, or ummah, made up of diverse groups, through the teachings of the Quran and in the name of Islam.

The Quran states that the Lord "teaches by the pen" (96:1-5). This is indicative of the Medina Charter in that it is a reflection of these verses, which show that God is educating people and changing thought patterns through discussion. In this case, the discussion resulted in peace achieved through contemplation and through seeking agreements in which tribes felt they had benefited from the charter and had not been robbed of status or unresolved antagonism from the past. "Many Islamic rituals, philosophies, doctrines, [different interpretations of] sacred texts, and shrines are the result of frequently anguished and self-critical contemplation of the political events in Islamic society" (Armstrong 2006, 14). Islam places great emphasis on reason - the reasoning of the universe, of life, and indeed, of relig-

ion too. Al-Ghazzali (1058-1111) said, "Doubt is to find truth. Those who do not have doubt cannot think. Those who cannot think, cannot find truth." Although this quote is more in reference to the philosophical side of Islam, it reverberates from the heart of reason - something that is central to Islam. Yetkin Yildirim writes about the use of one's own knowledge and the absolute approach of reason. If the answer is neither in the Quran, Sunnah, or Hadith, then one's own reasoning or ijtihad is required (Yildirim 2006, 109-117). So the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), through the Medina Charter, was practicing Islam through action. For with reason, discussion, and contemplation, a peace treaty was created.

The mere formation of the Charter and peace were tremendous feats, and the content of the Charter itself reflects this magnitude. The formation of an ummah through respect and acceptance resulting in pluralism shows us one of the ways in which the Prophet combated jahiliyyah, or ignorance - the state of mind causing violence and terror (Armstrong 2006, 19). Examining some of the clauses in the Charter also shows how the Prophet managed to take leadership and create a lasting peace. The first clause, "They are a single community (ummah)," (Sajoo 2009, 94) depicts the ultimate message and goal of the rest of the charter. It marked the creation of a community, and the Charter served as a unifying document in a city of diverse groups, cultures, religions, and languages. The Prophet came to Medina with tolerance - an aspect of Islam which is fundamental to the manner in which the religion operates in foreign lands. "It is for this tolerance in the Islamic view that Muslims have looked at the religion of the people in

the lands they conquered with respect; they did not intervene with their beliefs nor touch their churches" (Can 2005, 172). Clause 25 epitomizes the level of tolerance in the charter and also serves as an example of Islam in practice. "The Jews ... are a community (ummah) along with the believers. To the Jews their religion (din) and to the Muslims their religion" (Sajoo 2009, 96) This statement ties in with the verse from the Quran (2:256) which says, "There is no compulsion in religion." For in the eyes of God, as it says in the Quran "... those who believe ... Jews, Christians, and Sabaeans ... and does right - surely their reward is with their Lord" (2:62).

The Medina Charter reflects pluralism both in the content and in the history of the document. F. E. Peters explains that "the contracting parties, although they did not embrace Islam, did recognize the Prophet's authority, accepting him as the community leader and abiding by his political judgments" (Peters 1994, 199). As there is no account of an uprising in history books and because the Prophet was there at the suggestion of the tribes, we know that he was never rejected. Because of the laws he introduced, the existing groups clearly did not feel threatened by his new presence or his new governance. The society was pluralistic, and it was not repressive. The Prophet - as clause 25 shows - never imposed Islam upon the people of Medina, which meant that they could still practice without disruption their religions and customs, aspects of life that were important to them. He did not create an ummah through denouncing all ways of life except for Islam or by recognizing Islam as the singular religion; instead he united all inhabitants of the city under one banner of ethical living and moral principles - commonalities between

all humans and all religions.

The Prophet drew upon the essence of unity, respect, tolerance, and love to combine and create a pluralistic community. Clause 40 exemplifies this: "The 'protected neighbor' (jar) is as the man himself so long as he does no harm and does not act treacherously" (Sajoo 2009, 97). People were safe and respected and free to exert their beliefs and would be protected in doing so. This protection, however, could not shield them from treachery or wrong doing.

(To be concluded)

Cont'd from page 40

-son for dissatisfaction and sorrow.

Whatever state Allah chooses for a servant, that is best for him. Man seeing another in a more prosperous condition than himself yearns for such prosperity and is not contented with his own lot. But, reflection will convince one that the condition chosen for one by Allah is best.

It should be observed that making dua is not contrary to ridhaa. Ahlullaah (Saints of Allah) resort to dua merely because of the Divine Command. In this way they profess their abdiyat (state of total submission and slavery to Allah). They therefore do not insist on the attainment of what is being supplicated for. In all states and circumstances they are fully pleased with the Choice of Allah whether their dua is accepted or not. Non-acceptance never induces in them dissatisfaction. This then is the sign of Ridhaa.

ACQUISITION OF RIDHAA

Ridhaa is the effect of muhabbat (Love for Allah). There is therefore no separate means of acquiring this quality. Ridhaa is a necessary corollary of muhabbat.

(Vol.15, Issue: 02) 33.

What Islam offers the Earth

One of the amazing things that strike the reader of the Quran is its significant and multifaceted emphasis on the relationship of man to the environment. This is not merely about self, family and surroundings. It's about the whole universe—heavens and earth—and all of Allah's magnificent creation in them. I'm talking about all the constituents of what some call "nature," and down to the details: It's geological foundations, waters, steady and violent shifts and movements, and its countless, varied forms of life and existence, and how it cycles and sustains them.

I know many scientists whom the Quran simply over-awed once they realized what it says about life, nature, and the universe. They were seized by the literally hundreds of Quranic verses that discuss and give guidance about the issues of the environment—all the ones we are suddenly talking about today, and plenty more that haven't even come into view yet. What grabbed them was the realization that Allah Almighty clearly knew how abusive unguided man would be to his planetary home.

Just look at what we have brought

upon ourselves and our innocent fellows in creation in but the last handful of decades. Perhaps this is why I too now find reading the Quran's beautiful, moving, and harrowing "environmental" verses so spiritually and intellectually uplifting. Allah Almighty Says what means: *"The creation of the heavens and earth is greater than the creation of mankind, but most of the people do not know."* [40:57] Or: *"And there is no creature on [or within] the earth or bird that flies with its wings except [that they are] communities like you. We have not neglected in the Register a thing. Then unto their Lord they will be gathered."* [6:38]

In light of the unprecedented environmental crises we are facing today, I thought to speak to a bit of what Islam has to offer man to help him get the balance back in his life and restore his intimate and timeless relationship with creation. I call them Islam's Five Environmental Commandments:

One: Man is part of the environment

Man, literally in sum and substance, is of the environment. Thus he must feel and live in harmony with it. Both

man and his environment are the creation of the God—and both are worshippers of Him—with the technical exception that man has the will to refuse to worship and obey God willingly, though he does it unwillingly from moment to moment. Allah Says what means *“The seven heavens and the earth and whatever is in them exalt Him. And there is not a thing except that it exalts [Allah] by His praise, but you do not understand their [way of] exalting. Indeed, He is ever Forbearing and Forgiving.”* [17:44] And even though the earth and surroundings were created long before man, the end of both is virtually synchronous—the end of time—hence, the implicit benefit to man for leading an environmentally friendly lifestyle. A corollary of this determinant is that the environmental crisis is a human matter and cooperation on meeting its challenges should, therefore, not be hampered by religious or other differences.

Two: Man is trustee of the environment

Man has accepted God's decree of Khilaafah (vicegerency, read verse 2:30), which makes him responsible to use the environment to achieve his God-given purpose in this life, with the condition that he maintains it for future generations, which have as much right to it as their predecessors. The Prophet said: *“People (past and future generations included) share alike in water, air, and herbage.”* [Abu Daawood]

Three: Man shall be fair to the environment

Man cannot, and will not, fulfill or be true to his custodianship of the earth without creation-wide fairness. The Quran could not be more unequivocal when it comes to this principle. Man shall be fair in

leading his life in this world because God created it in a balanced state. Should he fail, unwarranted injustice will lead to creation's disruption and its inability to continue supporting man's needs for a hospitable habitation. Read and ponder the import of verses which mean: *“The sun and the moon [move] by precise calculation, and the stars and trees prostrate. And the heaven He raised and imposed the balance. That you not transgress within the balance. And establish weight in justice and do not make deficient the balance.”* [55:5-9]

Four: Man shall not spread mischief in the Land

Man must realize that God forbids harm, big and small, to one's self and all others. The Prophet said: *“There is no reason to) harm or reciprocate harm.”* [Ibn Maajah] And Allah Says (what means): *“And cause not corruption upon the earth after its reformation. And invoke Him in fear and aspiration. Indeed, the mercy of Allah is near to the doers of good.”* [7:56] Many scientists and activists believe that efforts to restore a healthy balance to the environment will never be achieved to any viable degree in the face of the unfathomable destruction of our wars of greed.

Five: Man shall follow a model of moderation and conservation

Most people do not grasp that much of the pollution comes from a culture of consumerism, whose primary effect is waste. It is unfortunate that people in the underdeveloped world, including Muslims, have embraced being consumers and wasters. The Quran is true in depicting this tendency of man, especially when resources become abundant. Allah says (what means)

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Sunnah of Love

Yahya Ibrahim

Sayyiduna Ali (RA) came home one day from a journey that he had been dispatched on by the Prophet Muhammed (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), to find his wife, Fatima - the daughter of the Prophet, (RA) brushing her teeth with a siwak – twig of an Arak (Salvadora persica) tree used for brushing teeth. Spontaneously, he, (RA), spouted out poetic endearment:

*Fortunate are you O twig of the Arak tree,
Have you no fear of me observing you in
this embrace
If it were other than you...O Siwak! I would
have killed you!
None found this fortune of embrace before
me, but you.*

I get emailed & facebooked often from couples trying to salvage and mend broken trust and exponentially inhospitable relationships. I usually respond within a couple of weeks, detailing my unwillingness to “counsel” from a virtual distance that begets unilateralism. Horror stories of infidelity, violence, and arrogance abound.

Naturally, there is no greater issue facing the Muslim communities of the West that is more pressing and multidimensional than that of family relations.

The statistics are frightening, imams are untrained in effective counseling methods, mosques are under pressure, Islamically-oriented marital counselors are unheard of and professionalism in terms of confidentiality seem non-existent.

An important dimension of domestic marital problems, as I see, is that the Sunnah of Love and Gallantry seems to be overlooked or dismissed as a long-gone era. The Sunnah, that is taught at times, seems to overlook amazing instances of passion, valor, fidelity and sacrifice in the name of true love. Instances from the life of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and his companions builds a comprehensive system of devotion – a Sunnah of Love.

Love. The real kind – the genuine love between a man and his wife that stems from

a seed of love that is planted by Allah in the hearts of those who are true in submission to the Dispenser of Love and Comfort.

A seed, literally and figuratively, in Arabic symbolizes love.

Houb in Arabic is derived from the same root for the word Haab – seed. The nature of the two words is functionally similar.

Love begins as a tiny speck – a seed that is buried deep in the folds of a receptive heart, carrying the potential of stunning beauty, nourishing sustenance, exotic delicacy, wealth of commodity, shading shelter, and resurgent growth that is stabilized through deep roots that withstand trauma.

Amr ibn al-'As (RA) was appointed by the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) to command an important mission. He was handpicked from many capable individuals who were in fact better than him. Feeling a sense of pride in being selected, he (RA) asks the Prophet, in front of a congregation of Sahabah about who he (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), loves? The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) responds in the way that all of our wives would hope we would respond, by naming his wife, Aisha (RA).

Consider that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), would teach, that if we love a friend, we need to let them know it. It might have been was with this hope that 'Amr (RA) would have asked that question after the favorable appointment was given to him.

Probably, that his question might have been misunderstood he clarifies, saying that he meant from amongst the companions who did the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) love? The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) responds, “Her Father.”

He does not respond, “Abu Bakr (RA).” His response alludes to 'Aisha (RA) which indicates that she might still have been on his mind and in his heart.

Love.

'Aisha (RA), al-Humayra – The Rosy Cheeked one, as the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) affectionately called her; Umm al-Mu'mineen – the Mother of the Faithful was loved and loved in return.

The Sunnah of Love is not whimsical or outrageously simplistic as you find depicted often in multibillion-dollar literary/theatrical sagas. No vampires competing with werewolves here. It is not ambivalent and shifty. It is built on mutual acceptance of the decree of the Divine in search of comfort, repose and peace of mind. It flourishes, paradoxically, in the mundanity of life. Finding fleeting moments of intimacy between stacks of dishes, soiled diapers, mounds of work emails, grocery lists and infinite commitments are its hallmark. A look that you receive as you rush out the door, a quick phone call itemizing how the day is going or an SMS that contains a list of groceries to buy on the way home punctuated with an I love You, are all indicators.

'Aisha (RA) and the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) would use code language with each other denoting their love. She asked the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) how he would describe his love for her. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) answered, saying: “Like a strong binding knot.” The more you tug, the stronger it gets, in other words.

Every so often 'Aisha (RA) would playfully ask, “How is the knot?” The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) would answer, “As strong as the first day (you asked).”

So I begin to wonder, as should you, about what has happened to our community?

Why is it so hard to speak frankly of one's love for his wife? Why is it "soft" for a brother to praise his spouse?

How is it the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) can kiss his wife, as he exits to leave his home to lead the faithful in prayer and some in our community find it difficult to just smile?

How is it that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) can stop a whole army, in times of hostility in a region of the desert that had no water to camp near, to look for his wife's misplaced bead necklace and some find it difficult to give a deserved compliment every now and again?

Since when is sternness considered leadership and harshness associated with married life?

How is it that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) can mend his clothes and look after the domestic affairs of his household, and a brother can't put away a plate, let alone wash it unless the wife is sick?

How is it that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) can forbid upon himself milk infused with honey so as to please his wives, who complained of its scent, culminating in Allah revealing a chapter in the Qur'an forbidding the Prophet from forbidding the lawful upon himself, "Because you seek to please your wives (66:1)." Yet, some in our community will not even give the rightfully due to their wife?

How is it that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) teaches not to boycott a person for more than three days, and a brother can be out all day at work

and feel apprehensive at the thought of returning home to a disgruntled partner who will give them the silent treatment over a petty squabble that has extended into weeks of dreary, isolating depression?

How is it that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) forbids a person to lead another man in prayer in his home without permission, yet some brothers due to constant bickering and negative criticism feel more like the help than the king of the castle?

Misreading the Sunnah, and not linking it to all matters of our life, including the mundane aspects is a justified criticism.

All of us learn through the course of our elementary studies of Islam that if you have no water, or if it is scarce, that you can perform Tayamum – ritual purification for prayer using sand or dust.

What you probably were not taught, and what was glossed over, was the fact that the permissibility and the legislation of that enormously important function were revealed because of the lost bead necklace.

You were not told that the love of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) for 'Aisha resulted in him ordering a marching army to stop at a location without water and camp out at night with a dwindling supply of water for their consumption. Her father, Abu Bakr (RA), was furious with her for mentioning what, to him, seemed to be a trivial matter.

You were not told how the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) ordered the troops to look for a necklace in the sands of the Arabian Desert, all for the comfort of 'Aisha (RA). You were, probably, not informed how verses in the Qur'an descended upon the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) at such an occasion resulting in

the joyous celebration of the Sahabah for the ease that Allah has provided for our Ummah as a result of this occurrence.

That is the Sunnah of Love. You look after the near, even if it may inconvenience the far.

You would have heard that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) mended his own shoes at times. What you may not have heard was how once as he was sitting in a room with 'Aisha (RA) fixing his shoes, 'Aisha (RA) happened to look to his blessed forehead and noticed that there were beads of sweat on it. Mesmerized by the majesty of that sight she remained transfixed staring at him long enough for him to notice.

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "What's the matter?" She replied, "If Abu Bukair Al-Huthali, the poet, saw you, he would know that his poem was written for you." The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) asked, "What did he say?" She replied,

"Abu Bukair said that if you looked to the majesty of the moon, it twinkles and lights up the world for everybody to see."

So the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) got up, walked to Aisha, kissed her between the eyes, and said,

"Wallahi ya Aisha, you are like that to me and more."

That is the Sunnah of Love.

From the earliest days of Islam, 'Ali (RA) was a continuous witness of the life habits of Rasool-ul-Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). He was a witness to Love.

'Ali (RA), arrived home to find the love of his life relaxing at home. No foreshadowing asserts anything special about the occasion or day. No fancy marketing to fleece customers of hard earned money. No gimmicks or convoluted infatuations

promising a happily ever after proportional to carat size. It is just a man coming home after a long day at work. What he finds there is the greatest attainment any man could dream to possess, and hopefully retain – a wife whose presence fills him with joy.

The Prophet Muhammad, (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), said: "The world and all things in the world are precious but the most precious thing in the world is a virtuous woman."

Virtuous, not, exclusively, in terms of the length of prostration or in devotion to religious obligations but rather as he, (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), once informed 'Umar:

"Shall I not inform you about the best treasure a man can hoard? It is a virtuous wife who fills him with joy whenever he looks towards her."

It is not love at first sight, rather exponential love with every glance.

Ya Allah, put love between our spouse and us and allow us comfort and mercy in our home.

Ya Allah, spread love and peace throughout the Ummah of Muhammed (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)

O Allah grant us Your Divine Love

O Allah grant us the love of those who Love You

O Allah grant us the love of doing the things that earn Your Divine Love.

"O You who believe, save yourself and your families from Hell-fire, whose fuel are humans and stones."

[Qur'an: Chapter 66, Verse 6]

Praiseworthy Morals

Ridhaa

Maulana Maseeh-Ullah Khan (RA)

Allah says:

"Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him."

Rasulullah (saws) said: "Of the good fortune of man is his pleasure with that which Allah has ordained for him."

THE NATURE OF RIDHAA

This consists of total submission and pleasure with qadhaa (fate). One should neither by word or deed object against fate.

Ridhaa develops to such a lofty degree that its domination permeates one's being. In this high state of Ridhaa hardship recedes and is not considered as such. The state of ridhaa in which even pain is not felt is called ridhaa-e-tab'i (natural ridhaa). The state in which ridhaa prevails along with the sensation of pain is called ridhaa-e-aqli (intellectual ridhaa).

The first state (ridhaa-e-rab'i) is a physical condition, the acquisition of which is not incumbent. The second state (ridhaa-e-aqli) is an intellectual condition, the acquisition of which is incumbent.

Ridhaa with fate is commanded and exhorted so as to inculcate in one the qualities of perseverance and contentment

when afflicted by adversity and hardship. When ridhaa has been inculcated adversity will be taken in its stride with Contentment and without feeling any undue hardship. This is so because the intelligence alerts one to the superior results of such ridhaa in the face of adversity. The result of such ridhaa is future thawaab (reward). This will be better understood by means of an illustration. A physician prescribes a bitter remedy to a patient or may even insist on an operation. The patient bears in mind his future recovery and health, and willingly submits to the treatment. He is not only pleased with the physician but feels indebted to him.

Similarly he who firmly believes that Allah will grant thawaab for every difficulty and sorrow experienced here, will most certainly be imbued with pleasure and happiness. The thawaab for such ridhaa is of such a nature that all difficulty wanes into nothingness. It is improper to desire anything contrary to that which Allah has willed and ordained for the servant. When Allah considers adversity and difficulty appropriate and advantageous for us, then we as His servants have no valid rea-

Cont'd on page 33