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RADIANT REALITY

Published from Srinagar, February 2015, Volume 16, Issue 02.

"You and I
are but a collection of
days;



When a day passes, a part of
us is gone”

(Hassan Al-Basri RA)

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EDITORIAL

All thanks for Almighty, the most Merciful and Exalted

Adopting Foreign Traditions & Culture: Strictly Prohibited

Complete adherence to the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah is the objective and aim of a Muslim. It is essential for a Muslim to look around his life and check out what his beliefs, values and actions encompass. The heart and mind of a believer should be resistant to adopting the traditions and culture of kuffar (disbelievers); there is no provision, by any means, for a believer to conform to the beliefs and doings of the kuffar (disbelievers).

If the basic beliefs and concepts of Islam is not inculcated in a Muslim's life in the way it should have, s/he would exert efforts in the wrong path. Any doing that opposes the Qur'an and Sunnah leads to a wrong practice, may it be in any form. For this reason, acquiring the fundamentals of divine knowledge is compulsory for every Muslim. Divine knowledge not only provides the understanding of Islam, but instills Taqwa (Fear toward Allah), which assists in safeguarding Iman (faith of a Muslim) and capables us to refrain from all evil doings. It is through divine knowledge, a Muslim gets the right direction and guidance. When there is only "a notion" of Islam's understanding, that would never suffice to protect a Muslim's faith and actions. Many Muslims today have misunderstood and regarded "their self-notions" as the divine knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah; such conclusions are extremely erroneous. Acquiring insufficient knowledge, be how confident, obstinate and arrogant a person may seem today in this world, there is absolutely no guarantee of salvation in the afterlife with such understanding, value and beliefs.

The greatest enemy of mankind - shay-

tan is there, the lower self - nafs is there; direct and indirect attacks from them are continual which they had vowed of. Becoming "uncaring and unaware of the right and wrong" would make our enemies snatch away the most valuable assets (faith and good actions) in our possession.

Today the Ummah is under great threats against many evils. No doubt, the evils had always been around, looking for the slightest opportunities and chances to ruin us. In resisting these evils, one key is attaining divine knowledge. However, the Muslims have largely got missing in this field. The consequence is as usual; the shaytan and nafs became highly active; they had successfully engaged us in mischiefs which a Muslim of hundred years ago could hardly have imagined of!

Even today, one who fears Allah would refrain from all mischiefs. The mischief of adopting kuffar (disbeliever) lifestyle is a severe one. Every of us should be highly cautious and vigilant of its consequences. The pain and worries that arise in this worldly-life is temporary. The torment and punishment of disobeying Allah's command would be unbearable, which is to come in the afterlife (We seek Allah's refuge from it)!

An appeal to all Muslim brothers and sisters around the world is that, stop adopting the traditions and cultures of kuffar (disbelievers) lifestyle. The more we incline towards kuffar (disbelievers) lifestyle, the more disgrace and dishonor befall us. Occasions, such as the Valentine's day, Christmas, New Year, etc., should "in no way" enter a

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Question Answer

Question. If a person enters the toilet in the state of Wudhu to fetch or fix something, does it break a person's Wudhu?

Answer. The mere entrance of a toilet does not nullify ones Wudhu. The passing of urine or stool in the toilet will nullify ones Wudhu.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question. Why is it that the Fajr time on the perpetual Salaah timetable is different to the Fajr time of our local Masjid's and radio stations?

Answer. The Difference between the Salaah times on the Salaah timetable and the Salaah times at the Masjid/Radio stations is due to the fact that the purpose of the Salaah timetable is to show the beginning and end time of each Salaah.

The Salaah times at the Masjid are generally the Mustahab (preferred) times for performing Salaah within its timeframe or the time when the largest congregation can be achieved.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question. A mother has passed away. The father is living and is blind. Whose responsibility is it to take care of the father? Is it the responsibility of the brother and sister-in-law or the

sister and brother-in-law (son or daughter)?

Answer. The responsibility of taking care of ones parents is the responsibility of the son and the daughter. It is not the responsibility of the son-in-law and daughter-in-law to take care of their father in law. If the son-in-law and daughter-in-law willingly do so, they will be greatly rewarded for it. Thus, the son and daughter should equally accept the responsibility of taking care of the father and should endeavour to serve him to the best of their ability.

However the primary responsibility to house the father is the responsibility of the son. As far as the daughter is concerned, the daughter's primary responsibility (after marriage) is to take care of her husband and children. She should do whatever she can for her elderly father without compromising the rights of her husband.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question. What is the ruling regarding the reading of novels, books etc.?

Answer. It is permissible to sell and read novels and other literature on condition that its contents are not against Shariah or the values of Shariah.

Novels and literature containing vulgarity, immorality etc. are detrimental to one's

Imaan and are not permissible to sell or read.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question. I am a new Muslim. I live in America. I have three children from my Muslim husband. He wants to follow strict Islamic lifestyle. I want to know if I can celebrate birthday of my children who are minors aged between 2–7? Is it haram to celebrate birthday of my children?

Answer. We are very pleased to hear that you have accepted the beautiful and complete Deen of Islam. May Allah protect your Imaan and keep you and your family steadfast on Deen. Ameen.

We understand that you live in America and that modern societies create various challenges that may require one to do certain things in order to blend with the rest. However, if this may contradict the teachings of Islam, then it will not be permissible to do so.

You should understand that as Muslims our salvation lies in adhering to each and every aspect of Deen and by gaining the pleasure of Allah. It is praise worthy to note that your husband wants you to completely adhere to the teachings of Deen, protect your Imaan and gain the pleasure of Allah in which you may feel restricted, but in doing so lies the safety and protection of your Imaan.

We advise you to practice upon the laws of Shariah with an open and positive mind. You will understand the beauty of Islam and feel content with all aspects of Islam.

M. Ebrahim

Question. Is it prohibited in Islam to sweep/clean the house after Asr?

Answer. There is no prohibition of cleaning or sweeping ones house after Asr. It may be done in accordance to one's convenience.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question. My property was on sale for R 1000

000.00. My brother wanted to buy it. So, I agreed to sell my property to my brother for R 900 000.00 as I owed my brother R100 000.00. My brother agreed. Unfortunately, my brother has not paid me for my property since the past two months and is collecting rentals from renting out the property. Is this correct?

Answer. If you sold the property to your brother, he is the owner of the property. As the owner of the property, he is entitled to the rentals received from renting out the property.

However, his delay in payment, especially if he has the means, is sinful and considered as oppression. The Ahadith have sounded severe warnings for those who do not meet their debts. If your brother has concern for his salvation in the hereafter, then he should turn his urgent attention towards the fulfilment of his debt.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question. Is it possible to perform Salaah with a sanitary pad or a cloth that has been soiled with urine after wiping it three times?

Answer. If a sanitary pad or cloth is soiled with urine, it cannot be worn to perform Salaah by wiping it three times as it has absorbed urine and is impure.

The pad should be removed or replaced with a clean one before Salaah.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question. A husband and wife are now divorced. Prior to the divorce, the husband took a loan from a friend of R100.000. The wife utilised R80.000 of the loan. Is the wife also responsible to repay the loan taken from the friend prior to the divorce?

Answer. If a husband took a loan from a friend, it is the responsibility of the husband to repay the loan to the friend.

If others benefitted from the loan taken by the husband from the friend, it does not make them responsible for also repaying the

loan to the friend.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

An investment that yields guaranteed returns, is it Shariah compliant?

Answer. The returns on an investment scheme are based on profits. The profits in an investment scheme are not known with certainty. At most one may project an expected profit. Therefore, one cannot guarantee a specific return in terms of amount in an investment scheme for example, one says, "I will give you R10,000 every month as profits of your investment".

Furthermore, a return cannot be based on a percentage of the capital amount, as that is tantamount to specifying an amount. For example, one says, "I am giving you 10% of R10,000". This is like saying I am giving you R1000 profit which is incorrect. Returns on an investment must be based on a percentage of the profit.

M. Saleem

Question. Can we have clarity on having a "Medical Aid" "Hospital Plan"? Especially in the light of our poor Health Care facilities-State Hospitals etc. in our country.

Answer. Attached is a transcript of Hazrat Mufti Ebrahim Desai's talk on medical aid.

1) Medical Aid

No conventional medical Aid schemes are permissible because they have three prohibited elements in it: interest, gambling and uncertainty. Let me explain all three in the context of Medical Aid.

There is interest in conventional medical aid cover:

Take for example I take out a medical cover and pay a premium of R100 a month. If something happens to me in the second month, and the bill came to R10 000, the insurance company is obliged to pay the R9 900 excess on my behalf. I paid only R100 and get

a legal right of more than that amount. That is riba and interest. You are getting something in lieu of nothing. It is incorrect to assume that the medical aid company provides medical services. The official client of the hospital is the patient and not the medical aid company. If the medical aid company does not pay the bill, the patient will be responsible for the bill. Interest is clearly Haram. Allah mentions:

"O you, who believe, fear Allah and give up what still remains of riba, if you are believers. However, if you do not (give it up), then listen to the declaration of war from Allah and His Messenger. However, if you repent, yours is your principal. Neither wrong, nor be wronged. If there is one in misery, then (the creditor should allow) deferment till (his) ease, and that you forgo it as alms is much better for you, if you really know. Be fearful of a day when you shall be returned to Allah, then every person shall be paid, in full, what he has earned, and they shall not be wronged." (2:278 – 2:281)

Furthermore, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) mentions, *"If a person consumes a single Dirham of Riba knowingly, it is considered more severe to Allah than 36 acts of fornication."*

Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) is also reported to have mentioned, *"Even if Riba (apparently) increases, it will eventually lead to a decrease."*

There is gambling in a conventional medical aid cover:

For example, I pay R100 premium a month, which is R1 200 per year. I may get sick and benefit for a cover up of R50 000 or may even lose my premiums. That is qimaar (gambling). You stand to lose or gain.

Allah states in the Holy Quran, *"They ask you about wine and gambling. Say, in both there is great sin and some benefits for people. And their sin is greater than their benefit."* (2:219)

There is Garar (uncertainty) in conventional medical aid cover:

Likewise, my premiums are in lieu of an uncertain event of the future. If I get sick, the company will pay and if I do not get sick, then they will not pay. This is gharar (uncertainty). I do not know if I will get sick or not and to what extent.

Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) prohibited from dealing in a future uncertain event. (Muslim, v. 5 pg. 3, Dar al-Jeil & Dar al-Afaq Jadidah)

Dear brothers, Ulamā-e-Haq always have this approach. Whatever was clearly wrong, they proclaimed it. Imagine if Ulamā kept on giving into the demands of people and issuing rulings to suit the desires of people, then everything would be halal, nothing will be haram. What will be left of Shariah?

Allah condemned the Ulamā of the Yahood and Nasara for the same reason.

Why do not the Ulamā and saintly people forbid the people from sin and eating Haram?

(5:63)

Ibrahim bin Abdur Rahman Uzri narrates that Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said, *“Just people, upright people, will carry the knowledge of Shariah. They will refute extremism of the extremists, wrong attributions of Bātil people and wrong interpretations of ignorant people.”* (Baihaqi Sunan Kubra v. 10 pg. 209, Dar al-Baz)

It is mentioned in the Hadith that The Ulamā of the Ahl al-Kitab used to condemn the people from the wrong. When the people did not listen, they stopped condemning people and they joined the people in the wrong. That is when Allah’s punishment came down.

Nevertheless, Ulamā must also be conscience of the needs of the people and create halal alternatives for the people. The king at the time of Yusuf (alayhissalām) saw a dream that seven weak cows are devouring seven

healthy cows and seven green corns and seven dry corns. Yusuf (alayhissalām) did not only give the interpretation that there will be drought he also showed the solution to it. At the time of rain, the surplus grain should be kept and hoarded for the time of drought.

We fully understand the need of medical aid. We did not have the courage to proclaim conventional medical aid as halal as it goes dearly against entrenched principles of Shariah. Interest, Gambling and Garar.

We have been making an effort for a long time to create an alternative. The public may not know the vigorous efforts, travels and meetings we had with various medical aid groups and department of legislature to amend the law to facilitate for the Muslims. Unfortunately, the department of legislature struck this down. We have those letters placed on our notice board, look at them. (End of transcript)

If a person is in a desperate health situation and experiences financial constraints, he may present his situation to a competent Mufti to analyse his situation and issue a ruling accordingly.

M. Asim

Question. Is it permissible to under-invoice or to over-invoice on request of the customer?

Answer. As residents of our individual countries, it is incumbent on us to follow the laws of such countries as long as they do not directly conflict with Sharī'ah. As a person involved in business, it is best for you to refrain from committing an act registered as fraudulent behavior by the law for the sake of your business and your career as an honest businessman. The honesty and loyalty of a Muslim businessman reflects positively on Islam and Muslims.

M. Bilal

Question. A woman in ‘iddah of divorce used pills to stimulate her menstruation. Between

every cycle there were fifteen or more days of tuhr. Has the 'iddah terminated?

Answer. The 'iddah of divorce is three menstrual cycles. The 'iddah has terminated by stimulation if there were fifteen or more days of tuhr (no blood) between the menstrual cycles.

M. Ebrahim

Question. I have a very great illness over which I am disturbed and which I would like to put to an end. I had seen a boy about three to four years ago. I never spoke to him nor met him. I did not see him again ever since that day. But I constantly think about him. On account of this, there is no concentration in my studies, salaah, zikr, etc. I do not want to keep anyone apart from Allah in my heart. I am also greatly disturbed by fantasies and whisperings.

Answer. Do not deliberately think of him

whether in privacy or in public. Think to yourself: Who bestowed him with this beauty and handsomeness? If this heart is affected by this fleeting beauty and false love, then what can be said of Allah, the source of all beauty, Who gave this (person) an iota of beauty? The beauty of this person is fleeting, while the beauty of the Creator of beauty is eternal. Therefore, your heart ought to be attached to that eternal Being. This body that is going to die and decompose is not worthy of attachment. The appearance of this body will get worse with the passage of time (as the person gets older) and then you will not even want to look at him. On the other hand, Allah has a different status at every time, and His beauty is eternal. It is for this reason that when the people will see Allah in Paradise, they will forget about all the damsels of Paradise and all its other bounties. Read my article on false love one time daily.

If you Can't Beat them, Must you Join them???

Our Mother, Sayyidah Khadeejah (RA), grew up in the society of jaabiliyyah, which had sunk into the abyss of immorality and shameless acts, to such an extent that they would even inherit their own mothers. In this society, Sayyidah Khadeejah (RA) was given the title of At-Taahirah - The Pure and Chaste one. This title was afforded to her due to her extreme chastity and because she completely stayed away from the different immoral and wrong types of customs that were prevalent amongst the women of that time. (Sharhuz Zurqaani 'alal Mawaahib) Lesson: This is a great lesson and inspiration for us who are living in a 'sick' community and society, where all around is only shamelessness and immorality, especially in these days of the so called holiday period.

Sayyidah Khadeejah (RA) was living in a much worse situation. But despite all the odds being against her, she had protected her chastity. She didn't say: "It's too difficult for me to stay away from these things. The attraction is too much. I can't stay away from chatting to strange boys/men and from listening to and viewing haraam." She didn't say: "If you can't beat them, join them." This wasn't the approach of Sayyidah Khadeejah (RA). Rather she had protected her chastity and stayed away from all the vice and shamelessness that was prevalent in her society, thereby earning respect for herself.

Lesson From The Qur'an

O you who believe! Do not consume one another's wealth in wrongful ways (such as theft, extortion, bribery, usury, and gambling), except that it is by mutual agreement; and do not destroy yourselves (individually or collectively by following wrongful ways like extreme asceticism and idleness. Be ever mindful that) God has surely been All-Compassionate towards you (particularly as believers). (An-Nisa, 4:29)

The Qur'an uses a comprehensive expression when it states: "Do not consume one another's wealth in wrongful ways." This verse points out that it is unlawful to use both public properties and those of our relatives without permission. The prohibition encompasses all unlawful ways such as theft, usury, gambling, wastefulness, spending on debauchery, and gaining through speculations. The earnings and trade by mutual agreement—which is the one specifically mentioned here since it is the most significant way of earning—are enough to live on. There is really no real need to get involved in unlawful and dubitable ways.

It is possible to understand the Divine command, "do not destroy your-selves" in three ways:

1. Whoever commits usury, gambling, bribery, or any other kind of illicit acts destroys himself morally and spiritually.
2. Relentless capitalism or any kind of acts or transactions which mean earning or consuming in illegal, wrongful, and unfair ways, and even excessive liberalism and Machiavellian-

ism, cause the appearance of reactive systems such as communism and open the way to social upheaval, murder, anarchy, and disorder. These systems and upheavals cause mass killings and internal conflicts and clashes. Then do not abandon Islam so that you may not kill one another following erroneous ways. The present situation of the world, which these systems dominate, confirms the verse under discussion.

3. The verse may also be warning against suicide. The imbalances in a society and the ensuing troubles such as poverty, the lack of mutual confidence and trust, wrong understanding and practice of asceticism by the ignorant, excessive use of force or punishment for defense of property, and the appearance of mafia-type organizations may lead many to depression and suicide.

Out of His limitless mercy, God Almighty shows us the safest way to earn and consume. This is in fact what is always expected from God, the All-Merciful and All-Compassionate.

Lesson From Sahih al-Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

The Book of Menses

Chapter 10 : The Aetikaaf of a woman with Istihaadha.

(i.e. the wives of the Prophet) did Aetikaaf while she was having bleeding in between her periods.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

A woman with Istihaada can perform Aetikaaf.

Hadith No. 302

Narrated 'Aisha (RA)

Once one of the wives of the Prophet did Itikaf along with him and she was getting bleeding in between her periods. She used to see the blood (from her private parts) and she would perhaps put a dish under her for the blood. (The sub-narrator 'Ikrima added, 'Aisha once saw the liquid of safflower and said, "It looks like what so and so used to have.")

Hadith No. 303

Narrated 'Aisha (RA)

"One of the wives of Allah's Apostle joined him in Aetikaaf and she noticed blood and yellowish discharge (from her private parts) and put a dish under her when she prayed."

Hadith No. 304

Narrated 'Aisha (RA)

One of the mothers of the faithful believers

Comments

Shah Waliullah Muhaddith Delhvi (RA) says that Aetikaaf is permissible for a woman but it is better for her to do so at home than in Musjid.

Hadhrat Gangohi (RA) says that the things which are forbidden to a woman during menses, become permissible for her during Istihaadha.

Hadhrat Ayesha (RA) says that one of the wives of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) performed Aetikaaf with him. The scholars say that it does not mean that she was also in the Musjid with Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), but that she was in Aetikaaf in her room which was just adjacent to the Musjid.

Ikramah says that Hadhrat Ayesha (RA) in a function saw yellow coloured fluid and she said that it resembled the colour of Istihaadha blood of such and such lady. The blood of menstruation is denser and darker than that of Istihaadha.

Chapter 11 : Can a woman offer her Salaah in the same clothes in which she got menstruation?

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Hadhrat Shah Waliullah Muhaddith Delhvi (RA) says that here Imam Bukhari (RA) wants to prove the permissibility to offer Salaah in the same clothes in which a woman gets menses. It is worth to mention here that during the days of Jahiliyah (ignorance), the women believed that it was a must for them to change such clothes.

Hadith No. 305

Narrated 'Aisha (RA)

None of us had more than a single garment and we used to have our menses while wearing it. Whenever it got soiled with blood of menses we used to apply saliva to the blood spot and rub off the blood with our nails.

Comments

In this Hadith, Hadhrat Ayesha (RA) says that she used to have same garments during menses as well as during Salaah. Earlier in a Hadith narrated by Umme Salma she says, that she had separate clothes for the days of menses. It seems that the Hadhrat Ayesha is mentioning the state of earlier days of Islam when Muslims were passing through hard times and Umme Salma is referring to the later days of Islam when Muslims were well-off.

Chapter 12 : Putting perfume by a woman at the time of ritual ablution or Gusul after her menstruation is over.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

A woman can use perfume (on her private part) after the cessation of menses.

Hadith No. 306

10. (Vol.16, Issue: 02)

Narrated Um-'Atiya (RA)

We were forbidden to mourn for a dead person for more than three days except in the case of a husband for whom mourning was allowed for four months and ten days. (During that time) we were not allowed to put ko,hl (Antimony eye power) in our eyes or to use perfumes or to put on colored clothes except a dress made of 'Asb (a kind of Yemen cloth, very coarse and rough). We were allowed very light perfumes at the time of taking a bath after menses and also we were forbidden to go with the funeral procession .

Comments

Some scholars say that due to menstruation the skin of private part of a woman gets contracted and also discoloured. So, there is a need of using some sort of perfume which will make it fresh and normalize its colour. This can be achieved by a perfume called Azfaar-at-Teeb in Arabic. (Eidha-hul Bukhari)

Chapter 13 : The rubbing of her own body by a woman during the ritual ablution (Gusul) after the cessation of menses. And how to take bath? And rub the place soiled with blood with a perfumed piece of cloth.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

The purpose of this chapter is to show whether the ritual purity after the cessation of menses can be obtained by taking usual bath or something more is needed.

Hadith No. 307

Narrated 'Aisha (RA)

A woman asked the Prophet about the bath which is taken after finishing from the menses. The Prophet told her what to do and said, "Purify yourself with a piece of cloth scented with musk." The woman asked, "How shall I purify myself with it" He said, "Subhan Allah!

Purify yourself (with it)." I pulled her to myself and said, "Rub the place soiled with blood with it."

Comments

Hadhrat Ayesha (RA) says that a woman came to Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and asked him how she can achieve the ritual purity after the cessation of menses. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) told her to get a cotton piece and soak it with some perfume like musk and then rub the parts stained with menstrual blood with it. That woman could not understand it and she again asked about it. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) did not tell her quite openly due to modesty. Hadhrat Ayesha (RA) pulled that woman towards her and made her to understand the issue. The learned scholars have described various benefits of rubbing the involved parts and then applying some perfume to them while taking a bath after the cessation of menses, viz.,

1. It freshens the private part of a woman.
2. If the blood stain is not removed by washing, rubbing it with perfume will conceal its ill look.
3. It gives additional purity or fresh look.

Chapter 14 : The bath (of a woman) after cessation of menses.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Shah Waliullah Muhaddith Delhvi (RA) says that here the method to perform Gusul after the cessation of menses is mentioned.

Hadith No. 308

Narrated 'Aisha (RA)

An Ansari woman asked the Prophet how to take a bath after finishing from the menses. He replied, "Take a piece a cloth perfumed with musk and clean the private parts with it

thrice." The Prophet felt shy and turned his face. So pulled her to me and told her what the Prophet meant.

Comments

The scholars of Hadith are of the opinion that the word "Towdhee-توضیح" used in this Hadith does not mean Wudu; it means to cleanse.

Chapter 15 : The combing of hair by a woman at the time of her bath after the cessation of menses.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

It is necessary for a woman to moisten the roots of her hair while taking a bath after the cessation of menses. If she has tied her hair in such a way that the water will not reach the hair roots, then it is mandatory for her to undo her hair before taking a bath.

Hadith No. 309

Narrated 'Aisha (RA)

In the last Hajj of Allah's Apostle I assumed the Ihram for Hajj along with Allah Apostle. I was one of those who intended Tamattu' (to perform Hajj and 'Umra) and did not take the Hadi (animal for sacrifice) with me. I got my menses and was not clean till the night of 'Arafa. I said, "O Allah's Apostle! It is the night of the day of 'Arafat and I intended to perform the Hajj Tamattu' with 'Umra. Allah's Apostle told me to undo my hair and comb it and to postpone the 'Umra. I did the same and completed the Hajj. On the night of Al-Hasba (i.e. place outside Makkah where the pilgrims go after finishing all the ceremonies Hajj at Mina) he (the Prophet ordered 'Abdur Rahman ('Aisha's brother) to take me to At-Tan'im to assume the Ihram for 'Umra in lieu of that of Hajj-at-Tamattu' which I had intended to perform.

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Religion and Violence

Blaming religion for violence, says Karen Armstrong, allows us to dismiss the violence we've exported worldwide

MICHAEL SCHULSON

Karen Armstrong has written histories of Buddhism and Islam. She has written a history of myth. She has written a history of God. Born in Britain, Armstrong studied English at Oxford, spent seven years as a Catholic nun, and then, after leaving the convent, took a brief detour toward hard-line atheism. During that period, she produced writing that, as she later described it, "tended to the Dawkinsesque."

Since then, Armstrong has emerged as one of the most popular — and prolific — writers on religion. Her works are densely researched, broadly imagined and imbued with a sympathetic curiosity. They deal with cosmic topics, but they're accessible enough that you might (just to give a personal example) spend 15 minutes discussing Armstrong books with a dental hygienist in the midst of a routine cleaning.

In her new book, "Fields of Blood," Armstrong lays out a history of religious violence, beginning in ancient Sumer and stretching into the 21st century. Most writers would — wisely — avoid that kind of breadth. Armstrong harnesses it to a larger thesis. She suggests that when people in the West dismiss violence as a backward byproduct of religion, they're being lazy and self-serving. Blaming religion, Armstrong argues, allows Westerners to ignore the essential role that violence has played in the formation of our own societies — and the essential role that our societies have played in seeding violence abroad.

Reached by phone in New York, Armstrong spoke with Salon about nationalism, Sept. 11 and the links between anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

Over the course of your career, you've developed something of a reputation as an apologist for religion. Is that a fair characterization? If so, why do you think faith needs defenders?

I don't like the term "apologist." The word "apologia" in Latin meant giving a rational explanation for something, not saying that you're sorry for something. I'm not apologizing for religion in that derogatory sense.

After I left my convent I thought, "I've had it with religion, completely had it," and I

only fell into this by sheer accident after a series of career disasters. My encounters with other faith traditions showed me first how parochial my original understanding of religion had been, and secondly made me see my own faith in a different way. All the faith traditions have their own particular genius, but they also all have their own particular flaws or failings, because we are humans and we have a fabulous ability to foul things up.

The people who call me an apologist are often those who deride religion as I used

to do, and I've found that former part of my life to have been rather a limited one.

Your new book is a history of religion and violence. You point out, though, that the concept of "religion" didn't even exist before the early modern period. What exactly are we talking about, then, when we talk about religion and violence before modern times?

First of all, there is the whole business about religion before the modern period never having been considered a separate activity but infusing and cohering with all other activities, including state-building, politics and warfare. Religion was part of state-building, and a lot of the violence of our world is the violence of the state. Without this violence we wouldn't have civilization. Agrarian civilization depended upon a massive structural violence. In every single culture or pre-modern state, a small aristocracy expropriated the serfs and peasants and kept them at subsistence level.

This massive, iniquitous system is responsible for our finest achievements, and historians tell us that without this iniquitous system we probably wouldn't have progressed beyond subsistence level. Therefore, we are all implicated in this violence. No state, however peace-loving it claims to be, can afford to disband its army, so when people say religion has been the cause of all the major wars in history this is a massive oversimplification. Violence is at the heart of our lives, in some form or another.

How do ritual and religion become entangled with this violence?

Well, because state-building was imbued with religious ideology. Every state ideology before the modern period was essentially religious. Trying to extract religion from political life would have been like trying to take the gin out of a cocktail. Things like road-building were regarded as a sort of sacred activity.

Politics was imbued with religious feel-

ing. The prophets of Israel, for example, were deeply political people. They castigated their rulers for not looking after the poor; they cried out against the system of agrarian injustice. Jesus did the same, Mohammed and the Quran do the same. Sometimes, religion permeates the violence of the state, but it also offers the consistent critique of that structural and martial violence.

Is it possible to disentangle that critiquing role from the role of supporting state structures?

I think in the West we have peeled them apart. We've separated religion and politics, and this was a great innovation. But so deeply embedded in our consciousness is the desire to give our lives some meaning and significance that no sooner did we do this than we infused the new nation-state with a sort of quasi-religious fervor. If you regard the sacred as something for which we are willing to give our lives, in some senses the nation has replaced God, because it's now not acceptable to die for religion, but it is admirable to die for your country.

Certainly in the United States, your national feeling, whether people believe in God or not, has a great spiritual or transcendent relevance — "God bless America," for example; the hand on the heart, the whole ethos. We do the same in the U.K. with our royal weddings. Even in our royal weddings, the aristocracy are all in military uniform.

Ah, that's a great observation.

In your great parades, you know, when a president dies, there's the army there.

The religiously articulated state would persecute heretics. They were usually protesting against the social order rather than arguing about theology, and they were seen as a danger to the social order that had to be eliminated. That's been replaced. Now we persecute our ethnic minorities or fail to give

them the same rights.

I'd like to go deeper into this comparison between nationalism and religion. Some people would say that the ultimate problem, here, is a strain of irrationality in our society. They would argue that we need to purge this irrationality wherever we see it, whether it appears in the form of religion or nationalism. How would you respond?

I'm glad you brought that up, because nationalism is hardly rational. But you know, we need mythology in our lives, because that's what we are. I agree, we should be as rational as we possibly can, especially when we're dealing with the fates of our own populations and the fates of other peoples. But we don't, ever. There are always the stories, the myths we tell ourselves, that enable us to inject some kind of ultimate significance, however hard we try to be rational.

Communism was said to be a more rational way to organize a society, and yet it was based on a complete myth that became psychotic. Similarly, the French revolutionaries were imbued with the spirit of the Enlightenment and erected the goddess of reason on the altar of Notre Dame. But in that same year they started the Reign of Terror, where they publicly beheaded 17,000 men, women and children.

We're haunted by terrible fears and paranoias. We're frightened beings. When people are afraid, fear takes over and brings out all kind of irrationality. So, yes, we're constantly striving to be rational, but we're not wholly rational beings. Purging isn't an answer, I think. When you say "purging," I have visions of some of the catastrophes of the 20th century in which we tried to purge people, and I don't like that kind of language.

Let's try a different analogy: Perhaps our search for narrative and meaning is a bit like a fire. It can go out of control and burn peo-

ple pretty badly. Seeing this destruction, some people say we should just put out the fire whenever we can. There are others who argue that the fire will always be there, that it has benefits, and that we need to work with it to the best of our abilities. And you're sort of in the latter camp, yes?

I would say so ... If we lack meaning, if we fail to find meaning in our lives, we could fall very easily into despair. One of the forensic psychiatrists who have interviewed about 500 people involved in the 9/11 atrocity, and those lone-wolves like the Boston Marathon people, has found that one of the principal causes for their turning to these actions was a sense of lack of meaning; a sense of meaningless and purposelessness and hopelessness in their lives. I think lack of meaning is a dangerous thing in society.

There's been a very strong void in modern culture, despite our magnificent achievements. We've seen the nihilism of the suicide bomber, for example. A sense of going into a void.

In "Fields of Blood," you explore how the material needs of people can give rise to more abstract ideas. So, speaking about nihilism as something particular to the modern era: Are there political or social conditions that underlie this sense of meaninglessness?

Yes. The suicide bomber has been analyzed by Robert Pape of the University of Chicago, who has made a study of every single suicide bombing from 1980 to 2004. He has found that it's always a response to the invasion of the homeland by a militarily superior power. People feel their space is invaded, and they resort to this kind of action because they can't compete with the invaders. [Suicide bombing] was a ploy [first] used by the Tamil Tigers, who had no time for religion. Of the many Lebanese bombings [in the 1980s], only seven of them were committed by Muslims,

three by Christians. The rest, some 17 or so, were committed by secularists and socialists coming in from Syria.

I think a sense of hopelessness is particularly evident in the suicide bombings of Hamas, where these young people live in refugee camps in Gaza, with really very little hope or very little to look forward to. People who talk to survivors of these actions found that the desire to die a heroic death, to go out in a blaze of glory and at least have some meaning in their lives and be venerated and remembered after their death, was the driving factor. ***There's a line in your book that struck me: "Terrorism is fundamentally and inherently political, even when other motives, religious, economic, and social, are involved. Terrorism is always about power."***

I think I'm quoting some terrorist specialist there.

Even when [terrorists] claim to be doing it for Allah, they're also doing it for political motives. It's very clear in bin Laden's discourse. He talks about God and Allah and Islam and the infidels and all that, but he had very clear political aims and attitudes towards Saudi Arabia, towards Western involvement in Middle Eastern affairs. The way he talked always about Zionists and crusaders rather than Jews and Christians — these are political terms. Since the early 20th century the term "crusade" has come to stand for Western imperialism.

In the Hamas martyr videos, the young martyr will segue very easily from mentioning Allah the Lord of the world, and then within a couple of words he's talking about the liberation of Palestine — it's pure nationalism — and then he's into a third-world ideology, saying his death will be a beacon of hope to all the oppressed people who are suffering at the hands of the Western world. These things are mixed up in that cocktail in his mind, but

there's always a strong political element, not just a going towards God.

In fact, all our motivation is always mixed. As a young nun, I spent years trying to do everything purely for God, and it's just not possible. Our self-interest and other motivations constantly flood our most idealistic efforts. So, yes, terrorism is always about power — wanting to get power, or destroy the current power-holders, or pull down the edifices of power which they feel to be oppressive or corruptive in some way.

How direct is the link between colonial policies in the Middle East and a terrorist attack in New York or London?

I think — and I speak as a British person — when I saw the towers fall on September 11, one of the many, many thoughts that went through my head was, "We helped to do this." The way we split up these states, created these nation-states that ISIS is pulling asunder, showed absolutely no regard for the people concerned. Nationalism was completely alien to the region; they had no understanding of it. The borders were cobbled together with astonishing insouciance and self-interest on the part of the British.

Plus, a major cause of unrest and alienation has always been humiliation. Islam was, before the colonial period, the great world power, rather like the United States today. It was reduced overnight to a dependent bloc and treated by the colonialists with frank disdain. That humiliation has rankled, and it would rankle, I think, here in the States. Supposing in a few decades you are demoted by China, it may not be so pretty here.

Every fundamentalist movement that I've studied, in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, is rooted in a profound fear of annihilation. ***So, when we in the West talk about religion as the cause of this violence, how much are we letting ourselves off the hook, and using***

religion as a way to ignore our role in the roots of this violence?

We're in danger of making a scapegoat of things, and not looking at our own part in this. When we look at these states and say, "Why can't they get their act together? Why can't they see that secularism is the better way? Why are they so in thrall to this benighted religion of theirs? What savages they are," and so on, we've forgotten to see our implication in their histories.

We came to modernity under our own steam. It was our creation. It had two characteristics. One of these was independence — your Declaration of Independence is a typical modernizing document. And you have thinkers and scientists demanding free thought and independent thinking. This was essential to our modernity. But in the Middle East, in the colonized countries, modernity was a colonial subjection, not independence.

Without a sense of independence and a driving force for innovation, however many skyscrapers and fighter jets you may possess, and computers and technological gadgets, without these qualities you don't really have the modern spirit. That modern spirit is almost impossible to acquire in countries where modernity has been imposed from outside.

When you hear, for example, Sam Harris and Bill Maher recently arguing that there's something inherently violent about Islam — Sam Harris said something like "Islam is the motherlode of bad ideas" — when you hear something like that, how do you respond?

It fills me with despair, because this is the sort of talk that led to the concentration camps in Europe. This is the kind of thing people were saying about Jews in the 1930s and '40s in Europe.

This is how I got into this, not because I'm dying to apologize, as you say, for religion, or because I'm filled with love and sympathy

and kindness for all beings including Muslims — no. I'm filled with a sense of dread. We pride ourselves so much on our fairness and our toleration, and yet we've been guilty of great wrongs. Germany was one of the most cultivated countries in Europe; it was one of the leading players in the Enlightenment, and yet we discovered that a concentration camp can exist within the same vicinity as a university.

There has always been this hard edge in modernity. John Locke, apostle of toleration, said the liberal state could under no circumstances tolerate the presence of either Catholics or Muslims. Locke also said that a master had absolute and despotical power over a slave, which included the right to kill him at any time.

That was the attitude that we British and French colonists took to the colonies, that these people didn't have the same rights as us. I hear that same disdain in Sam Harris, and it fills me with a sense of dread and despair.

Is Islamophobia today comparable to anti-Semitism?

Let's hope not. It's deeply enshrined in Western culture. It goes right back to the Crusades, and the two victims of the crusaders were the Jews in Europe and the Muslims in the Middle East.

Right, because Jews along the crusaders' routes would be massacred —

They became associated in the European mind. We've recoiled, quite rightly, from our anti-Semitism, but we still have not recoiled from our Islamophobia. That has remained. It's also very easy to hate people we've wronged. If you wrong somebody there's a huge sense of resentment and distress. That is there, and that is part of it, too.

I remember speaking at NATO once, and a German high officer of NATO got up and spoke of the Turks resident in Germany, the

migrant workers who do the work, basically, that Germans don't want to do. He said, "Look, I don't want to see these people. They must eat in their own restaurants. I don't want to see them, they must disappear. I don't want to see them in the streets in their distinctive dress, I don't want to seem their special restaurants, I don't want to see them." I said, "Look, after what happened in Germany in the 1930s, we cannot talk like that, as Europeans, about people disappearing."

Similarly, a Dutch person got up and said, "This is my culture, and these migrants are destroying and undermining our cultural achievements." I said, "Now you, as the Netherlands, a former imperial power, are beginning to get a pinprick of the pain that happened when we went into these countries and changed them forever. They're with us now because we went to them first; this is just the next stage of colonization. We made those countries impossible to live in, so here they are now with us."

How should one respond to something like the treatment of women in Saudi Arabia, or the threat of terrorism that originates in Muslim countries?

Saudi Arabia is a real problem, there's no doubt about it. It has been really responsible, by using its massive petrol dollars, for exporting its extraordinarily maverick and narrow form of Islam all over the world. Saudis are not themselves extremists, but the narrowness of their religious views are antithetical to the traditional pluralism of Islam.

We've turned a blind eye to what the Saudis do because of oil, and because we see them as a loyal ally, and because, during the

Cold War, we approved of their stance against Soviet influence in the Middle East.

Fundamentalism represents a rebellion against modernity, and one of the hallmarks of modernity has been the liberation of women. There's nothing in the Quran to justify either the veiling or the seclusion of women. The Quran gave women rights of inheritance and divorce, legal rights we didn't have in the West until the 19th century.

That's what I feel about the treatment of women in Saudi Arabia. It's iniquitous, and it's certainly not Quranic.

Where do you, as someone outside of a tradition, get the authority to say what is or isn't Quranic?

I talk to imams and Muslims who are in the traditions.

I think it's easy to say, "Well the text isn't binding" when you see something in there that you don't like. But when you see something in the text that you do want to uphold, it's tempting to go, "Oh, look, it's in the text."

Oh, it is. We do it with all our foundation texts — you're always arguing about the Constitution, for example. It's what we do. Previously, before the modern period, the Quran was never read in isolation. It was always read from the viewpoint of a long tradition of complicated, medieval exegesis which actually reined in simplistic interpretation. That doesn't apply to these freelancers who read "Islam for Dummies" ...

— and then do with it what they will.

Yes.

http://www.salon.com/2014/11/23/karen_armstrong_sam_harris_anti_islam_talk_fills_me_with_despair/

The views expressed in this article are the author's and do not necessarily reflect those of "Radiant Reality".

Ibn Umar (RA) reported: The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "Observe part of the [Nawafil (voluntary)] Salat (prayers) in your homes. Do not turn your homes into graves." [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

Gratefulness

A Muslim's Way of Celebrating Everyday

L. S. Mohsen

"No honey" I sighed, "We are Muslims! We DON'T celebrate Thanksgiving."

"But why?" My daughter wondered. "I mean it's a good reminder to be thankful!"

"That's the beauty of Islam, my love. We are taught to thank Allah every day!"

"Wow! You remember to thank Him EVERY SINGLE DAY?"

"I do!"

... Do I?

Well, we thank Allah during prayers when we read the Surat Al-Fatiha, right?

And... ummm you know, when someone asks how we're doing we automatically say, "I'm good thanks to Allah", or "Alhamdulillah".

Hmm...what else? Oh, I got one! In Ramadan, we thank Allah A LOT!

See? We don't need a huge roasted turkey to remind us to be thankful to the Great Lord. It's in our system, it's in our hearts and souls and minds to praise Allah every chance we get.

So why are you writing this article, Missy?

Honestly? Because for the first time I realize that being grateful isn't just about mumbling words of seeming appreciation and then moving on. Thankfulness is a lifestyle, a consuming feeling that Allah wants us to absorb to the fullest because He knows that's the only way we will feel better. Anyone can say "thank you", but it's the emotion that ac-

companies the words that makes all the difference.

So, in this article we will remind ourselves of a few points to make our gratefulness more meaningful and productive.

Remember that Nothing is Really Ours!

I remember my mother telling me a story about a friend who reminded her to thank Allah for saliva. I was like 'huh?' This woman couldn't secrete liquids in her mouth and had to sip on water day and night to be able to talk or eat. Oh my God, how many blessings do we take for granted?! The ability to see, hear, walk and talk effortlessly are all things we need to be thankful for every day.

Renewing the appreciation helps us look at life differently. Imagine being surprised you still have your sight intact every time you wake up! Now apply that concept to everything else like your health, money, family, etc., and you'll realize nothing is really yours. It was all given to you and you alone. **Making a choice to have a grateful attitude interrupts our anxiety and gives us a huge sense of power.** But if you're not thankful for what you already have, what makes you think Allah would be prompted to give you more?

"And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe.'" [Qur'an: Chapter 14, Verse 7]

Most of us are not really big on the words. It would help if there were practical ways of showing gratitude to Allah, and who is better than the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) himself to be our guide?

Abu Dharr reported Allah's Apostle as saying: *"In the morning charity is due from every bone in the body of every one of you. Every utterance of Allah's glorification is an act of charity. Every utterance of praise of Him is an act of charity, every utterance of profession of His Oneness is an act of charity, every utterance of profession of His Greatness is an act of charity, enjoining good is an act of charity, forbidding evil is an act of charity, and two rak'ahs (Duha) which one prays in the forenoon will suffice for all".* [Sahih Muslim]

Who Do You Thank First?

Most of us have had loved ones get extremely sick, and have went through the panic attacks of calling doctors and running to the nearest ERs with no shoes. We've paced the waiting rooms and pleaded with nurses for more information, and put all our faith in legendary surgeons known for their high success rates. And when we held our loved ones again in our arms, we cried tears of joy and said "Thank God you're okay!" But, did we really feel the appreciation in our hearts, or did we somehow attribute the miracles to the doctors and the medication?

Do we idolize the creations that have helped us and forget the Creator? Only you will know the answer to that...

When you put ALL your faith and trust in Allah, He will never let you down. Being grateful to Allah increases the love in your heart, and makes it reflect on everyone around you. That doesn't mean we don't thank people, too. We must remember that Allah uses us as tools to help one another. There's a middle ground between giving peo-

ple all the credit and giving them nothing at all. Appreciation is the feeling people seek most. It creates a beautiful type of love that shrouds our good deeds and makes us want to help more and work harder to ease each other's pain.

Abu Hurairah narrated that the Messenger of Allah said: *"Whoever is not grateful to the people, he is not grateful to Allah."* [Jami` at-Tirmidhi]

You need more clues, don't you? Try showing your thankfulness to others with little gifts. Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) explained on many occasions that exchanging presents brings about genuine love between people.

Realize that Humbleness is the First Step to Wisdom

So you're driving on the highway really fast and then with an expert's swerve, you avoid a horrible accident. (Men will relate to that one!)

"A rookie driver would have been dead by now!" He will boast. "Man I'm GOOD!"

We can't help but give credit to ourselves, and that's okay, as long as we don't forget that it's all Allah's command after all. So the next time you're a bit smug about an achievement, or find yourself condescendingly giving charity to a poor person, remember that it's not your money you're giving away, and it's not your smartness alone that made you ace that test. Modesty and humility lead to pure gratefulness to Allah and that is the essence of wisdom. Perfecting such perception gives you a rare kind of knowledge the world is more than thirsty for today.

"He gives wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever has been given wisdom has certainly been given much good. And none will remember except those of understanding." [2:269]

Thank Him For Thanking Him!

Don't judge me but I'm a bit biased to Muslims. I believe those who have been guided to and properly practice Islam are already blessed with good hearts, and even though I'm preaching about the importance of praising Allah, I know on some level most of us have a deep innate gratitude for their blessings. So what do we do to show it? We thank Allah from the heart. But isn't that genuine feeling of gratitude a gift from Allah? Isn't that another blessing that needs a whole lot of gratefulness? Thank You Allah for letting us remember to thank You, and thank You again for reminding us to thank You for remembering to thank You. (Okay this could take a while. Help!)

Islamic scholars explain that it's when you're totally baffled on how to show your gratitude to the Supreme Lord that you reach true and genuine enlightenment.

A good example of struggling to show appreciation for your blessings is by sharing it! Giving charity makes both the giver and the receiver happy, and leaves us with double the amount of joy when we realize we have the power to change someone's life for the better. It makes sense that Allah gives more to the people who are busy thanking Him: be it more wealth, better health, wisdom or success. The root of joy is gratefulness, and it's a psychologically proven fact that you can rewire your brain to be happy by simply recalling three things you're grateful for every day.

"Yay! Let's do that! I'll go first!" my daughter said. "I'm grateful for hot meals in this freezing winter. I'm grateful my brother didn't act up today, and I'm grateful for my mother's warm hugs! Thank you Allah." My daughter smiled before closing her eyes to sleep.

As I tucked my kids in bed I thought about my three things. Am I more grateful for

everything I have, or for all the horrible things that could have happened but never did?

Before you finish this article and close it, promise yourself this, will you? With every warm embrace from a loved one, with every meal you set on the table, with every time you make your comfy bed and with every night you sleep safely in your own home, remember how much Allah loves you and takes care of you. Remember to be thankful for the little things and grateful for escaping the tragedies others are suffering from. **Promise you'll cherish every single blessing with all your heart.**

And don't forget to smile, for the daily smiles of joy are what makes our whole lives a constant celebration of gratefulness.

About the Author:

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Muslim's life! This is just one malpractice of adopting kuffar (disbelievers) lifestyle; there are thousands such, which we keep ignoring and pollute the beauty and spirit of our heart!

A Muslim's mission of life should be according to his vision, the vision which the Qur'an states lucidly:

Say, "My prayer, my offering, my life and my death are for Allah, the Lord of all the worlds." [Al-An'am-16]

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and innovative thinking of many individuals in our community. These new ideas can help spark new businesses, organizations and projects that will benefit our community for years to come. Developing an entrepreneurial mindset gives individuals the inspiration to dream, to be innovative and to take risks.

With this spirit, we have to encourage the next generation to become the change-makers and entrepreneurs they have the potential to be!

The Man Who Died in Jannah

Yahya Ibrahim

Al-Bayhaqi reported in “Shu’ab Al-Eman” that Abu Sa’eed Al-Khudri narrated: “The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) passed by a funeral procession near a grave and he asked: “Whose grave is this?” They (the companions) replied: “It is the grave of so and so from Abyssinia (Ethiopia).”

Thereupon, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, **“Laa Ilaaha Illa Allah [None has the right to be worshipped but Allah] he was driven from Allah’s earth and heaven to his soil from which he was created.”**

The great Imam of Sunnah ‘Abdur-Razzaq (ra) reported in his “Al-Musnna” that Ibn ‘Abbas (RA) said: **“Every person will be buried in the soil from which he was created.”**

The elements of the Earth from which you were fashioned, are the same elements of the Earth from which you are returned.

Let me tell you about an Algerian man named Bukhari who died in a Garden of Paradise.

To arrive at the Sacred Raudah – Garden of Paradise, that which spreads between the ancient, although still partially erect home of the Prophet Muhammed (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and the location of his minbar (pulpit), requires tenacity, patience and opportunity. Thousands of people line up to get a chance to pray in the hallowed Raudah. All

with good reason.

Abu Hurayrah reports that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: **“The area between my house and my minbar is one of the gardens (riyaad, sing. raudah) of Jannah (Paradise), and my minbar is on my cistern (hawd)”** Narrated by al-Bukhari, 1196; Muslim, 1391.

Most who attend to the Raudah want to pray two units of Prayer, and some intend to do it, according to historical evidence in particular locations and near particular pillars. Yazeed ibn Abi ‘Ubayd said: **“I used to come with Salamah ibn al-Akwa’ (RA) and he would pray by the pillar which was by the mushaf, i.e. in the Raudah. I said, ‘O Abu Muslim, I see that you are keen to pray by this pillar!’ He said, ‘I saw that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was keen to pray here.”** Narrated by al-Bukhari, 502; Muslim, 509.

The task of arriving there on any given Friday is even scarcer, as the best of days, attracts the locals in droves and masses from surrounding cities, not to mention the continuous flow of international visitors answering the invitation extended by the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

He (S) said, **“Do not travel to visit any mosques except three: al-Masjid al-Haraam [in Makkah], this Mosque of mine [in Madina] and al-Masjid al-Aqsa [in Jerusalem].”** Narrated by al-Bukhari, 1189; Muslim, 1397.

Everyone flocks to al-Habib! Everyone, local or foreigner, seeks out the relief of prostration near where al-Mustapha (S) lived his glorious messengership.

He (S) said: **“One prayer in this Mosque of mine is better than one thousand prayers offered anywhere else, except al-Masjid al-Haraam.” Narrated by al-Bukhari, 1190; Muslim, 1394.**

1000 prayers. 1000 Jumah Prayers. 1000!

2 am of every day I am blessed to be in Madina, I arrive to Bab Jibreel (the Gate of the Angel Gabriel) and offer two rakat as soon as I see an opening that does not disturb anyone. Although some forget, the sanctity of Madina is primal.

Abu Hurayrah reported that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: **“Madina is a Harm’ (sanctuary), so whoever commits evil therein or gives protection to an evildoer, the curse of Allah, the angels and all of mankind may be upon him. Allah will not accept any obligatory or naafil deed from him on the Day of Resurrection.” Narrated by al-Bukhari, 1867; Muslim, 1370**

I then make my way towards the Raudah from the back moving forward as best as I can without hopping over the shoulder or cutting in front of anyone praying. Although it is almost four hours before fajr, the Masjid is still quite busy. At this time of night, however, the Raudah is not sectioned off as it is for the majority of the day. So arriving to it, with minimal disturbance of others and securing a spot is relatively assured, if you come this early.

I love to pray at the *Ustuwaanah* of Aisha (RA).

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) used to say his prayers here and Aisha reported that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: **“In this masjid is one such spot that if people knew the true**

blessed nature thereof, they would flock towards it in such in a manner to pray there they would have to cast such lots (i.e. Qu’rah).”

People asked her to point out the exact spot, which she refused to do. Later on, at the persistence of Abdullah bin Zubair (RA) she pointed to this spot.

It takes an hour that seems like much longer for me to finally arrive in the Raudah and at my favourite spot.

I pray and let others pray and move along, but I retain my treasured spot. After Fajr the Raudah is sealed upon those already in it for an hour, until the sunrises.

After Fajr, many in the Raudah discover that you cannot offer prayers until the sun fully rises again (Shooruk). Some elect to leave. The Raudah grows sweeter.

About 10 minutes after the Fajr concluded, a middle aged man, dressed in traditional white Algerian/Moroccan attire collapses in the heavy volume of people seeking to greet the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) at the golden gate. The decision is made that the best place for him to recover is in the now calm Raudah.

As he is carried in, we all assume it will be a few minutes before the paramedics attend to him. His younger brother has a nervous look on his face. I go and sit near him and smile saying, inshaAllah it will all be ok. He informs me his brother’s name is Bukhari.

He is a man who outwardly you would, mistakenly, assume him inconsequential, by the absence of any worldly markings and regalia.

I approach him and ask permission from the officers to provide some care. I massage his chest to see if there is any reaction, as I notice no heartbeat or breathing. I use my phone flashlight function to see if the pupils are dilating. A Moroccan physician also in the

Raudah, and staying at my hotel comes over to help. We provide primary care and seek to revive Bukhari. We work on him for 10 minutes.

It's quiet. Inexplicably, quiet. The sound of the thousands is hushed prayers. We all recognise the virtue, insha Allah, of Bukhari. Those outside the Raudah look on at him in hope of a similar end, as all of us inside exclaim in prayer for one another. Truly, it was like water pouring out of a vessel. His soul was light, easy and fluid.

The hours others stand to arrive in al-Raudah were circumvented.

The squeezing in to find a foothold were by-passed.

The man who travelled from Algeria who could not find room in ar-Raudah and prayed outside on the marble, as his brother told me, was carried in by official guard.

The man that most of us would assume a simple pilgrim, was an honoured guest of Allah, inshaAllah.

The man who lived a lifetime away and was visiting Madina for the first time, was laid down to breathe his last breath no more than 10 meters from the resting place of an Nabi Muhammed (S).

A little before 7 am, on the blessed day of Jumah Bukhari drew his last breath of life, as he lay reclined in the Raudah of Rasul ul-Allah (S).

I closed his eyes and prayed for him, although in my heart I wished that this blessed soul could have prayed for me before his departure.

Bukhari (ra), later that day, after being prayed on after Jumah prayers, was entombed in al-Baqi – the Graveyard near the Prophet's Masjid.

Bukhari was made from Madina and to Madina he was returned.

Ya Allah allow me to meet Bukhari, the Algerian, in Jannatul Firdaus, Allahumma Ameen.

Quotable Quotes

The Prophet (S) said:

- *If a Muslim plants a tree or sows seeds, then a bird, person or animal eats from it, it is charity (sadaqah) for him" (Bukhari)*
- *For every Umma there is a temptation, and the temptation of my Umma is wealth (Tirmidhi)*
- *"God loves kindness when you deal with any matter" (Bukhari)*
- *Believers are like a single person; if his eye is in pain his whole body pains, and if his head is in pain his whole body pains (Muslim)*
- *Modesty and faith are companions; if one of them is removed the other is removed." (Al-Hakim)*

Three actions are greatly rewarding. Generosity despite poverty, piety in seclusion & the utterance of truth at the time of fear. (Imam Shaf'ee)

Imam Shaf'ee was asked, "How did you get such good character?" he replied, "By taking my critics seriously."

Ibn Ata'illah reminds us, "If you want to know where you stand with God, look where God stands with you."

"We use to say that those amongst us with the most sins are those who spend their time talking of the sins of others" Ibn Sirin

"Keys to the life (light) of heart: Reflect on Quran, humble yourself before Allah privately, & start quitting sins" Ibn al Qayyim

"The one who carries the Qur'an (by reciting, understanding & practicing) carries the flag of Islam" Fudhayl bin A'yad

Overcome the "Modern Hijab Syndrome"

Serine Yamout

Sifting through photos of good times with your friends, you notice each one has a signature style of wrapping her hijab, color theme, and fashion. Think about the way you dress. Is it to please others? Or is it to please Allah?

Islam, the name of our beautiful religion, simply means "submission" to Allah alone. He is aware of our intentions, which must be aimed to be done for Him, simply due to the fact that He is our Creator and He has ordered it. As is said in the Qur'an,

"And He is Allah, [the only deity] in the heavens and earth. He knows your secret and what you make public, and He knows that which you earn." [6:3]

This demonstrates how Allah knows what thoughts run through our minds and sees what presentation we put out for others, only emphasizing the importance of purifying our intentions, so that they match the purpose of how we represent ourselves on the outside.

Some might find the points made below straightforward and blunt; but I feel that we have overpowered our fitrah (inner nature) and stopped listening to our own consciousness. What I mean is that when we listen to spiritual lectures and polite speeches, we enjoy them, feel an iman-rush afterwards, then move on with no action. Personally, I can relate and admit that honest, clear speech lingers longer than flowery advice.

I remind my dear Muslim sisters and myself that when we are abiding by some fashion trends, we should not forget that we must abide by Allah's rulings, for we are here as a test; and if I may point out, certain fashion trends are our obstacles. This is because beauty is a desire we want to attain and, at times, fashion gives us such beauty in inappropriate ways. However, Islam has blessed us with our own dress code, based on Allah's commandments in the Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad's (salla Allahu alayhi wasallam) explanation in his Sunnah.

So, how is the hijab supposed to be worn? Allah clearly illustrates how a woman should wear it properly in the Qur'an, *"And say to the believing women to lower their gazes, and to guard their private parts, and not to expose their beauty except what is apparent of it, and to extend their headcovers to cover their chests, and not to display their beauty except to their husbands, or their fathers, or their husband's fathers, or their sons, or their husband's sons, or their brothers, or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their womenfolk, or what their right hands rule (slaves), or from the men who have no physical desire, or the small children who are not aware of the private aspects of women, and not to stomp their feet (on the ground) so as to make known what they hide of their adornments (jewelry). And turn to Allah in repentance to-*

gether, Oh Believers, so that you may succeed.” [24:31]

Therefore, the front of our hijabs should come down low over our chests, not wrapped tight around our necks as is the current style. Imam Abu al-Fida ibn Kathir clarifies how and why:

“Extend their headcovers to cover their bosoms’ means that they should wear the headcover in such a way that they cover their chests so that they will be different from the women of the Jahiliyyah (time before Islam) who did not do that, but would pass in front of men with their chests uncovered and with their necks, forelocks, and earrings uncovered.”

This explanation also denounces three other current styles that have been prominent these days:

1. Naked Neck. Exposing the neck by pinning the scarf to the back was the exact way women before Islam wore their scarves. Some would even wear heavy and glittering jewelry around their necks to emphasize the look. Islam came to wash away the unnecessary customs and prohibit the harmful actions of our forefathers, so why reintroduce what Islam has already ruled against? Islam has ordered that our necks are considered part of what the hijab must cover, so please bring the ends of your scarf to the front of your neck if you do prefer to pin your scarf in the back. Or you could simply pin your scarf to the front under your chin and let the ends fall loosely over your neck.

2. Slippery Bangs. A sister’s hair bangs might fall out from under the scarf to the front over the foreheads and sometimes eyes. It’s grown pretty common to have the bangs styled, cut, and highlighted just so that they have a pleasant appearance when they fall out of the scarf. We see the photos of models for clothing lines everywhere. If the model doesn’t have her hair tied back, then her bangs are falling over

her eyes, giving her a seductive look. With that said, it’s easy to keep bangs from slipping by wearing headbands or hairclips, which can be found at the super market. Undercap-pieces specifically designed to be worn under a scarf can be used to keep the bangs from falling out as well.

3. Protruding Ears. Sometimes, a sister will allow the ears and earrings to peek out from the sides. Earrings are flashy in general, and in this specific case, the earrings are usually huge and sparkly. There is no other reason for displaying earrings outside the scarf besides wanting to add a more attractive look to what is worn. Tuck them in, please.

I am now going to highlight a few more styles of today that our sisters should be aware of.

4. Piled High. This can be achieved by wearing a cushion above the head or ponytail and wrapping the scarf over it. Other styles include adding a large flower to the top or intricately twisting the scarf into a bun and pinning it to the side. Unfortunately, this creates a sign above the head saying “Check Me Out!” For your own good, don’t do it because the Prophet *salla Allahu alayhi wasallam* has also given us warnings for those who dress in this fashion in the following two ahadith:

Abu Hurairah relates that the Prophet *salla Allahu alayhi wasallam* said,

“There are two categories among the inhabitants of Hell whom I have not encountered. The first are people who carry whips like the tails of cows and beat the people with them. The second are women, clothed yet naked, drawn to licentiousness and enticing others to it, their heads like the swaying humps of camels. They will neither enter Paradise nor even smell its fragrance, though its fragrance can be found to a great distance.” [Sahih Muslim]

The Prophet *salla Allahu alayhi wasallam* also stated:

“There will be in the last of my Ummah, scantily dressed women, the hair on the top of their heads like a camel’s hump. Curse them, for verily they are cursed.” [At-Tabarani and Sahih Muslim]

So, from these ahadith, my sisters in Islam and I should be careful to stay away from this look in whatever way it can be created.

5. Falling Scarf. The scarf simply slips off to the shoulders whenever it gets too tired at the top and exposes luscious locks of hair. Wear a scarf with not-so-silky material that would have more friction and prevent it to come loose or slip. Pinning the scarf at the top or side is usually helpful too.

6. Body-Suit Tightness. This occurs when skinny jeans, tights, or body-shirts are worn. It also takes place whenever other clothes, such as dresses, are skin-tight, as if they’ve been painted on. This image completely contradicts the whole standard of modesty, which is the purpose of hijab. What the woman is doing is putting her figure on display. Even if a long blouse is worn on top of the body-shirt and skinny jeans to cover her chest and thighs, her arms and shins are still emphasized. Looser clothing should be worn instead.

7. Made-up face. Eye-shadow, colored lipstick, blush, and bronzer are all products of the make-up industry. However, we’re all already beautiful products of Allah’s creation, so why use tools of society to demean ourselves in the process of submitting to what society claims should be beautiful? And why try to enhance your beauty when you’re going to be amongst the same people you’re wearing hijab in front of in order to conceal your beauty in the first place? Besides, if people don’t appreciate the way Allah created you, then they don’t deserve your efforts to abide by their judgments.

The reason this advice is being repeat-

ed is for the simple fact that as those who cover, we are not only representing ourselves, but the entire population of Muslim women who wear hijab. Firstly, we owe it to ourselves, and to our relationship with Allah, to seek ihsaan (perfection) in applying His rulings. If we’ve taken the first step in covering, then alhamdulillah; but let’s not stop there. Only by fulfilling the requirements of hijab can hijab then fulfill the purpose it was commanded for. Wearing hijab properly will protect us, make us conscious of our actions, and establish our respectability in society. And only through following Allah’s command as it was sent down can we hope to draw even closer in our love and obedience to Him.

On top of that, if we don’t wear hijab properly as stated in the Qur’an and displayed in the Sunnah, then we would be giving those who are not educated in Islam and hijab the wrong image of how it should be worn. We must always be conscious of our appearances and actions, since we carry the image of our Ummah. This is a call to remind you and I that we are responsible for how others perceive us if we’re at fault for dressing inappropriately. Let’s be positive images of the message of Islam, appropriate representatives of this beautiful call to modesty, and sincere believers of Allah, who readily submit and obey His commandments.

Basically, the easiest way I think of it when getting dressed is: Keep it simple, Serene.

My hope is for us to reexamine how we wear the hijab so as to purify our intentions and thus our appearance will inshaAllah reflect our rectified intentions. Whatever I have said that is correct comes from Allah, and if I have made any mistakes, then I take full accountability and ask Allah to forgive me.

Source:igotitcovered

Fundamentals of Islamic Creed

Mawlana Syed Abul Hassan Ali Nadvi (ra)

This universe has a Creator Who has been yesterday and today and shall remain forever. His existence is an absolute fact and His Being is eternal. He possesses the perfection of attributes and is free from all defects and limitations. He has knowledge of all things and wields power over every eventuality. The universe is a manifestation of His Will. He is the Living, the Hearing and the Seeing; nothing is like Him nor there is anything His coequal or rival; He is peerless and needs no assistance. As an Absolute Being, worthy of being adored by all, Creator and Preserver of the heavens and the earth, and all that exists therein and in between, He has no partner of assistant- Worship is for Him alone. He alone cures the sick and provides sustenance to His creatures. His word of command is all that is needed to bring into existence what is non-existent.

When He wills something to be, His way is to say, "Be" - and it is. (36: 81)

Allah neither unites nor indwells in anything. His is not contingent either in his being or attributes; nor is He essence or substance circumscribed with limits, nor determined by measure or direction. He is above in the heavens on His Throne of Glory and will be seen by the believers on the Day of Judgment. Only that comes to pass which He wills for nothing ever happens against His will. He is independent of everything, lacks nothing, is

not subject to any decree, nor He can be questioned about anything, Nothing attributed to Him can make Him liable to any defect or impotence; wisdom is one of His attributes for He does everything in the most prudent manner. There is no Lord other than Him.

Fate, whether good or evil, proceeds entirely from the Divine will (*the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is related to have said, "Nobody can be a believer unless he gives faith to fate, whether good or bad, and also knows that he cannot escape whatever has reached him and whatever has escaped him will never reach him". Tirmidhi*). His eternal and ancient knowledge comprehends everything that has passed or will come to pass and that alone makes every eventuality an accomplished fact. He has angels high in dignity who keep close to Him while there are others charged to record the actions of human beings, or to protect them in difficulties and disasters, or to summon them (O the path of righteousness. They cause man to attain the good. The devils have also been created by God but they lead man to the evil. Jinn are also creatures of God.

Qur'an is the word of God, both in its letter and content; it is complete; protected against every interpolation, addition or deletion; and whoever believes that any part of it has been changed or lost is not a Muslim.

It is not permitted to misinterpret Di-

vine names and attributes or to ascribe anything to God unbecoming of His exalted majesty. Whatever *shari'ah* tells us in this regard is to be deemed as authoritative and final.

Bodily punishment in the Hereafter as well as accountability of one's actions and the reward and punishment therefore are all gospel truths. *Sirat*, the bridge across the infernal fire, is a fact spoken of in the Qur'an and the *ahadith*. Similarly, the paradise and hell are all real and sure-enough already created.

Muslims who have committed major sins shall not remain in the hell for ever. Intercession will only be with the permission of God. The holy Prophet will intercede for such of his followers who have committed major sins and his intercession shall be accepted by God. There is no doubt about the chastisement of unbelievers and the comfortable existence of believers in their graves. Similarly veritable is the interrogation of every man after his death by the angels.

Prophets' are sent by God to mankind who inform them of the divine commandments, the permissible and the impermissible, which are incumbent for all. The prophets of God are endowed with certain faculties not granted to others, and these constitute the evidence of their prophethood. These include their inherent pre-disposition to take the right path exemplary character and the power to work miracles. The prophets are protected against committing major sins.

Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was the last Prophet of God. No prophet will be sent after him. The message brought by him is for the whole world, mankind and the jinni. In this respect the prophethood of the last Prophet excels that of all the earlier ones and hence nobody can be a believer unless one gives faith to him. Islam is, therefore, the only religion acceptable to God:

no other religion can lead man to the eternal salvation in the hereafter.'

Ascension was a fact. God made the holy Prophet; while he was wide awake, to go from the sacred mosque in Mecca to the Bait-ul-Muqqadas and thence to the place where He wanted to him to visit.

Miraculous powers are granted to the saintly persons (those who are endowed the cognition of God and attain the inward perfection in spirituality), but this distinction is allowed only to those whom God wills. But nobody is absolved from the obligation of *shari'ah*. Whatever may be one's attainment in the perfection of spirit, one shall always be liable to abide by the obligatory commandments. One should desist from the sins and the things declared impermissible so long as one remains sane and is possessed of reason. Propbthood is absolutely superior to sainthood and no saint, howsoever perfect in spiritual attainment, can be equal in dignity even to an ordinary companion of the Prophet. The propinquity of the companions to divine presence is because of their greater merit in the sight of God and not due to abundance of their thanks-giving.'

The best of creations after the prophets, elects among the believers, were the companions of the last Prophet and the ten who were promised paradise will certainly attain it. We hold the members of the Prophet's household and his wives in esteem, love them and acknowledge their sublimity. We also testify the great merit of those who fought in the battle of Badr and those who took the oath of fealty to the Prophet under the acacia tree at Hudaibiyah. As *ahl-i-sunnat* we believe in the candour and rectitude of the companions. As the same time, we do not hold them to be impeccable but instead of finding fault with them for their mutual differences, we pass over at them.

Abu Bakr (RA) was the duly elected leader of the Muslims and deputy of the Prophet after the demise of the latter. Thereafter, Umar (RA), Uthman (RA) and Ali (RA) became Caliphs and with them the right-guided Caliphate came to an end. Abu Bakr (RA) and Umar (RA) were, in order of merit, the most revered among the followers of the Prophet. We have only good words for all the companions of the Prophet who were our path-finders; we consider it a sin to find fault with them.

We do not hold as disbeliever anybody among the *ahl-i- qibla*, but whoever denies that God is the Creator and absolute Ruler of the universe, pays divine honours to something other than God, rejects hereafter, does not accept any prophet or disclaims the essentials of religious creeds is a disbeliever. The

concepts like holding any sin to be admissible or making fun of the *shari'ah* or its commandments amount to disbelief. It is necessary to enjoin the right and forbid the wrong (provided it has no disastrous consequences) and to seek mutual understanding among the believers.' We believe in all the prophets of God and the books vouchsafed to them. We make no distinction between the prophets of God.

Faith is what lies in the heart and is affirmed by the tongue. Human actions emanate from the will of God and endeavour of man. We put our trust in the signs of the Day of Judgement as described in the *ahadith*. Unity among the Muslims is regarded by us as good and meritorious while disunity and discord are surely taken by us as wrong and a means to invite divine wrath.

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'Zaid ibne-Arqam (RA) narrates that Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) used to invoke: "Oh Allah! I seek refuge in You from that knowledge which does not give benefit, and from that heart which does not fear You, and from that inner-self which does not get satisfied, and from that supplication which is not accepted.'

NASIHAH

Loving Allah: "Truly in the heart there is a void that cannot be removed except with the company of Allah. And in it there is a sadness that cannot be removed except with the happiness of knowing Allah and being true to Him. And in it there is an emptiness that cannot be filled except with love for Him and by turning to Him and always remembering Him. And if a person were given the entire world and what is in it, it would not fill this emptiness." (Ibn Qayyim Al Jawziyyah)

Cont'd from page 11

Comments

Hadhrat Ayesha (RA) says that she had put on the 'Ihraam' with the intention to perform Haji-i-Tamattu' (i.e., Haj and Umrah with the same Ihraam). She started to have menses on the way and it got prolonged till the days of Arafa (9th Dhul-Hijja) reached and she thought that she had already missed Umrah and now she would miss the Haj as well. Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) told her to undo her hair and comb it. In another Hadith, it is mentioned that she was told to stop performing Umrah. Then she says that she performed Haj and after that, Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) told Abdul-ar-Rehman—the brother of Hadhrat Ayesha to take her to a place called Tan'im, where Hadhrat Ayesha (RA) again made the intention of Umrah, which she had missed and then completed the Umrah.

Original Pattern of Human Creation

Ali Unal

God created the universe so that He could be known and recognized in all His Names and Attributes, and so His creation includes one creature with free will: humankind. Of all creatures (in addition to the jinn), only human beings can manifest the Divine Name the All-Willing, and more than any other species, His Names of the All-Knowing and the All-Speaking. That is, humanity excels other creatures in having free will, greater knowledge, and a more articulate and sophisticated mode of communication. God, then, endowed us with the knowledge of things ("names"), and made us His vicegerent to rule on the earth according to His laws. As having free will means that one must make choices, each person's life consists of choosing between what is right and wrong.

God endowed humankind with three principal faculties fundamental to our survival and carrying out our function as His vicegerent: desire for such things as the opposite sex, offspring, livelihood, and possessions; anger or resolve in defense and struggle; and reason or intellect. We are tested in this worldly life so that we may be able to develop our potential, and become intellectually and spiritually perfected, in order to deserve eternal happiness. For this reason, and so that we may be able to progress materially, spiritually,

and scientifically, God did not restrict these faculties, but has established standards to use them within proper limits so that we may be able to rise to perfection.

According to Islam, human happiness lies in disciplining our faculties so that we may produce a harmonious and peaceful individual and collective life. If these faculties remain undisciplined, they may drive people to pursue immorality, illicit sexual relationships, unlawful livelihoods, grudge, injustice, deception, falsehood, and other vices. To prevent the ensuing chaos and suffering, we must submit to an authority that guides and regulates our collective affairs. Since one person should not accept the authority of another just like themselves and cannot be forced to do so, and since all human beings are unable to find the exact criteria and rules for human individual and collective happiness in both worlds, humankind need a universal intellect and guidance from beyond human reason and experience, to whose authority all may assent freely. That guidance is the Religion revealed and perfected by God through His Prophets: Islam.

All Prophets came with the same essentials of faith: belief in God's Existence and Unity; the world's final destruction, Resurrection and Final Judgment; Prophethood and all the Prophets, without distinction between

them; all Divine Scriptures; angels; and Divine Destiny and Decree (including human free will).

They called people to worship the One God, preached and promoted moral virtue, and condemned vice. Differences in particular rules and injunctions were connected with the scientific-intellectual development level and the social, economic and political relationships that existed at that time, and it is also because of this that all Prophets prior to the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), upon him be peace and God's blessing, were sent to their own people and for their own time. The Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), however, came at a time when humankind was on the threshold of a new era, when there would no longer be need for a new Prophet; and, therefore, he was sent to the whole of humankind until the Last Day. With the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), Islam, the Religion which God chose for humankind and sent with every Prophet, was perfected and gained a universal form. Thus, to be a Muslim means believing in all the previous Prophets and in the original previous scriptures.

Faith, or belief, the essence of religion, is not just a simple brief affirmation based on imitation. Rather, it has degrees and stages of expansion or development, just as a tree's seed is gradually transformed into a fully-grown, fruit-bearing tree. Faith contains so many truths pertaining to God's Names and the realities contained in the universe that the most perfect human knowledge and virtue are faith with all its degrees and stages of development, and knowledge of God that originates in faith based on argument and investigation. Such faith has as many degrees and grades of manifestation as the number of Divine Names. Those who attain the degree of certainty of faith coming from direct observation of the

truths on which faith is based can study the universe as a kind of Divine scripture.

Another degree of faith is known as certainty coming from the direct experience of its truths. This depends on God's consciousness, regular worship, strict obedience to God's orders and prohibitions, and reflection, and those who possess it can challenge the world. So, the foremost duty of all Muslims is to attain the greatest degree of faith that they can, and to communicate it to others.

Faith engenders different kinds of worship, the basic ones of which are the Prescribed Prayers, Fasting, the Prescribed Purifying Alms, and the Pilgrimage, and requires obeying prohibitions (e.g., avoiding killing, all kinds of unlawful sexual relations, intoxicants, gambling, usury, and deception). Those seeking to strengthen their faith and attain higher ranks of perfection should be careful of acts of their hearts and intellects (e.g., contemplation, reflection, invocation, the recitation of God's Names, self-criticism, perseverance, patience, thankfulness, self-discipline, and perfect reliance upon God). Moral virtues are the fruits of religious life.

Islam also regulates our collective life. By means of faith and worship, as well as its intellectual, moral, and spiritual principles, Islam educates us in the best possible way. In addition, it uses its socio-economic principles and the virtues it emphasizes, such as solidarity, mutual assistance, and altruism, to establish an ideal society free of dissension, corruption, anarchy, and terror, one that allows everyone to obtain happiness both in this world and in the Hereafter. Its penal law is principally directed toward preserving individual and collective happiness.

The Qur'an, the universe, and humankind are three manifestations of one truth. Therefore, in principle, there can be no contradiction or incompatibility between the truths

of the Qur'an, described as the Revealed Universe and issuing from the Divine Attribute of Speech, and the truths derived from the objective study of its counterpart, described as the Created Qur'an, and issuing from the Divine Attributes of Power and Will. If there sometimes appear to be contradictions, they arise from an incorrect approach to either the Qur'an or the universe and humankind, or to both at the same time. An Islamic civilization true to its authentic, original roots and dynamics contains no contradiction between science (the objective study of the natural world) and the Religion (the guide for the personal and collective effort to seek God's good pleasure). True faith is not a dogmatic commitment based on blind imitation, but rather it should appeal to our reason and heart, and combine reason's affirmation and the heart's inward experience and conviction.

Islam is primarily based on Tawhid, absolute faith in God's oneness without any partners whatsoever in His Divinity, Lordship, and Sovereignty. Given this, the universe is an integral whole of interrelated and cooperative parts in which a splendid coordination, harmony, and order are displayed, both throughout the universe and within each living organism. This harmony and order come from the oneness of the one Who created them and Who is absolute, without partner, peer, or like. The universe operates according to the laws God established for it, and therefore is literally Muslim - absolutely submitted to God. Thus, its operations are stable, orderly, and harmonious.

So, Islam is the Religion of all creation, which every thing and every being follows willingly or unwillingly. In this sense, even unbelievers are Muslims, as far as the functioning of their bodies is considered. In addition, as stated in a hadith, the Messenger declares that every human being is born in the original

nature or pattern of Islam and is prone to accept Islam as Religion in their life. However, under the influence of a person's family, environment, and the education they receive, they may adopt another religion, another way of life. But if they can remain free of prejudices and the misleading influence of their inclinations, bodily desires, worldly ambitions, the delusions or drives of their carnal self, and especially preserve their primordial, moral purity, they can find Islam or be rewarded by God with Islam.

Important Principle in the Upbringing of a Child

*Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanmi (ra)
once said:*

A person once mentioned to me an important principle in the upbringing of a child. I found much wisdom in it and I feel that it is such an important principle that it is worthy of being inscribed in gold. He said that if a child asks for something and you wish to give it to him, then give it to him at the first instance. However, if you refuse him at the first instance, then after refusing, despite how much the child persists in asking for it, do not give it to him. If you do not adopt this method and give in to the demands of the child whenever he persists, then the child will get spoilt and this bad habit will be formed in him that he will feel that whenever he wants something in life, he should go on persisting till he gets it.

(Malfoozaat Hakeemul Ummat)

Muslim's Worth

Syed Iqbal Zaheer

How dear the people are not to Allah? Removal of what discomforts the people was not such a big deed. But it acquired significance considering the fact that those were served who are dear to Allah. A lover loves the loved ones of the beloved. So long as there are the hungry, the naked, the sick around the Muslims, so long they ought not to sleep peacefully, writes SYED IQBAL ZAHEER.

It is time to stop pretending that this not the case, rather, time to accept that Islam and Muslims are under attack from many sides and on many fronts: military (the first choice where possible, or police), economic, political, social, you name it or cannot name it. It should be obvious why. When a lion gets old, wolves, jackals and other predators go after it in the jungle. Secondly, Islam is the only uncorrupted and uncorrupting religion left for mankind now. It is the only religion that values spiritualism, moralism, ethics and so forth, Muslims name it or cannot name it, and which resists compromise.

Add to that the fact that there hasn't been any 'rise and fall' of moral corruption intercontinentally; there has only been a 'rise and rise' of moral corruption, of every kind and every class imaginable or unimaginable. The unquestioned high priests of the world, the highest moral authorities in the cosmos, looking at whom alone (even if it is a silhouette, from a distance of a kilometer) is counted as a blessing, the spokesmen of the infallible holy houses – the very organs of God on earth – are ready to hug the homosexuals as those who could, and should, be welcome in, allowed to win blessings of God and make contributions to the holy house, not as repentant, but as proud man to man, woman to woman,

husbands and wives.

In contrast, the poor followers of Islam, the terrorists, the unrepentant believers in One God and the people over the lands and seas who hold aloft Christian moral values, who believe in gods of the past as exemplary human ideals, who oppose every corruption brought into the lives of the people in the east and west, and, in their own lives and societies, are up against, and opposed (sometimes with 18th century guns) to the choices of the rest of the world made for them. It should be obvious that when this happens, that is, when they decorate themselves with 18th century weapons, then they are declared the undeclared enemies of humanity in general.

With the dawn of the new age, the stupendous scientific progress, the incredible technological developments, the superabundance of wealth, Islam was in its coffin awaiting burial. The invincible, the unchallengeable, socio-economic powers of the West, with the East on the eastern flank of the armies, was irresistible and, it was thought that, as time crawled, immigrant Muslims would leave behind their cultures, and sprint into the glorious Western culture. After all, except for them, hadn't the East succumbed to it? As for the peoples of the countries that they had abandoned, it was assumed that they

would be crushed like ants by the political and military powers of the West, or, would be bombed back into the Middle Ages. Arabs around Israel would be annihilated – socially, politically, and economically. They would be forced to serve Israelis as menials living on crumbs thrown at them.

The West was supreme. It would remain supreme: a land of peace, abundance, freedom, equality, justice, you attempt naming the rest. It was the best place in the world, and would remain so, until the Universe would stop expanding, start recoiling, falling upon itself, to destroy all life. But that would take around 100 billion years, and the Western world, ever advancing in science and technology, would have by then, found a way to get out of this universe, worm-hole into another universe, or tunnel through a Black Hole.

The Western man has the spirit and strength to look into God's face and say, as their mentors say to Yahweh: "You have been wronging us throughout our history. However, we will forgive you, if you will forgive us."

As for Islam and Muslims, they were to the West, only a little disturbance. The West knew how to consign them into annals of forgotten history.

Such was the situation, the ideas, and the well-drawn plans until the 1960s. But a walk on the moon and the common Western man knew that the moon is beautiful from the earth; but the earth is much more beautiful, even from that distance, gravitationally more powerful, and, therefore, perhaps those guys in the control-rooms, talking about tunneling through Worm Holes to convert light year travel into weeks, were right on time to realize that they should rather hang their boots.

It was some disappointment. But it was a disappointment at the deepest level of consciousness. The east was catching up, and with their rise, the Muslim world could also

rise.

In the meanwhile, to those among the Westerners who believed in god, god had done them injustice. He had decided to place in the mainland of the Muslims two-thirds of oil. Should they manufacture oil-run engines of all sorts and slide down into them, those camel riders who contributed nothing? To go down to their countries, not to teach them how to modernize their countries, but rather be employed as expatriates to do it, was again a deeply felt humiliation.

In the meanwhile, the bewitched Muslims within their own communities, the immigrants, were becoming a little more than a little disturbance. Although many had melted in the pot, but recently, a new kind was emerging. They were becoming a nuisance. They were establishing in their midst, Islamic centers, building mosques, setting up schools, and slaughtering their own animals. They were not drinking, gambling, sexing or whoring. On top of that, there came a second wave of reverts within them, call them extremists, radicals, fundamentalists, practicing Muslims, or whatever you like. They were more committed to Islam. There were among them those sporting Aaron's beard, women in Talmudic Burqa, and teen-age girls looking like Mary, the mother of Jesus. They were fasting the month of Ramadan, filling the mosques thrice on Fridays, and setting up Madrasas. As if things were not getting intolerable, they were now winning converts, and those converts were suddenly transformed into such un-American, un-British, un-French, and every country's 'un-' populations, that were difficult to be recognized as proud Westerners.

Think-tanks were appealing, and Huntingtons were suggesting, that something had to be done. So an astonishing plan was worked out, with short-term and long-term goals clearly defined, and began being executed

with astonishing skill and precision. It was to replace Jews with Muslims to be identifiable as the Semites, project Islam as the anti-thesis of progress, Muslims as terrorists hiding behind their outward honest faces, as ruthless murderers with benign manners, children eradicable as future terrorists, and, as a final solution, invade their lands to push them back by centuries – accomplish that, and the spread of Islam would be restricted. A bi-product would be this: the Zionist grand plan of an invincible empire would meet with success. It would deliver justice, freedom, equality, brotherhood and peace and plenty to all, with the true sons and daughters of the Zion deservedly in charge of the affairs.

The plan is in action. So far, things are working well enough. One of the strategies is to provoke them. If they cannot be provoked, organize events, properly spacing them. Send a delivery boy, when on the spot, click the remote control – boom – “see, another suicide bomber.” Infuse hopelessness in them. Identify ‘those who feel the hurt most.’ Train them. Arm them. Send them in. Once they are powerful and popular, go after them, bomb them. Civilians, women and children (the kind described above), are a necessary price. Shout out: the ruthless terrorists they; the enforcers of order we; the barbarians they, the civilized we. Yes, it’s working well enough.

The above should not lead to the belief that the events and happenings of the world are unidirectional, or that the West the only player, or that Islam is the only target, or yet the victims Muslims alone. There are many other conflicts, clashes of ideals, economies, or, political struggles, either global or local, unrelated to Islam and Muslims. Actually, the world is in turmoil. Individuals are unhappy. The main players are not the masses. It is the leaders, the elites, the think-tanks, the specialists. It is they who plan out things – those who

think they can change the world and bend the nations. The masses do not agree to all that they do, the masses are themselves victims. They are misled by the classes mentioned above. Western peoples for instance, are laying the responsibility for the turmoil in the Middle-east, resulting in the loss of millions of lives, and causing immense suffering to the peoples of the region, on the neocons on both sides of the Atlantic, who manipulated public opinion to gain approval for whatever they wished to do. Today, they are identified and not welcome to speak in public places. They are hiding and issuing statements from facades away from public eye. One of them had shoes thrown at his car when he was found inside a car. There are calls to try them for war crimes.

Yet, once triggered, events are unstoppable. The plan about Muslims is working well enough at several levels of operation, in several regions of the world. The job is half-finished. So, the Muslims, with plenty of co-operators in the plans of action within their ranks, plenty of naïvetés, plenty of “let’s mind-our-own-business” kind, and plenty of “Allah-will-take-care-of-them” kind, must simply wait. Wait for what? Wait either for slaughter, or for the victory of ‘those who feel the hurt most?’ Whatever, but it is time for them to stop pretending that this is not the case, rather, time to accept that Islam and Muslims are under attack from many sides and on many fronts.

Ordinary Muslims believe that they are non-combatants, non-participants, and yet the sufferers. That’s not true. It is their collective actions, at the regional and global levels, their attitudes, their inter-play with Islam in the past, repeating itself in the present, that can be largely blamed for what’s happening now. They need to contribute: financially, socially, intellectually, morally and spiritually. They must re-affirm their faith in the religion

they believe in by living it out. They must attempt, in a huge way, to alleviate the sufferings of the peoples of the world, beginning with those around, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, without ever making a distinction, without accepting the division that is being imposed on the masses, of “they” and “us.” Their services to mankind, to those millions and billions who suffer, are worthier in the sight of their Lord, than their spiritless devotional acts. Indeed, this is a class of devotion. How dear the mankind to Allah cannot be when He forgave a man’s sins for giving a drink to a dog, and sent a woman to Hellfire for keeping a cat hungry? The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, “A man was forgiven because he removed thorny bushes from the people’s

path.” How dear the people are not to Allah? Removal of what discomforts the people was not such a big deed. But it acquired significance considering the fact that those were served who are dear to Allah. A lover loves the loved ones of the beloved.

So long as there are the hungry, the naked, the sick around the Muslims, so long they ought not to sleep peacefully. Frustrated by the attacks, they ask, what shall we do? The answer is, this is what they should do.

Muslims are special targets today. But that doesn’t mean they are a special people. They are just one among many communities. Their worth in the sight of their Lord is the worth of mankind in their eyes.

He will Not Let me go Hungry

Shaqeeq Balkhi (ra) was among the leading saints of his era. He was the contemporary of Ebrahim bin Adham (ra), the teacher of Haatim Asam (ra) and the student of Imaam Zufar (ra).

Once, Balkh was struck by severe drought due to which everyone was in a state of great worry and anxiety. Despite these severe conditions, Shaqeeq (ra) had seen a cheerful and happy slave boy strolling through the market place. Shaqeeq (ra) said to him, “O slave! Is this the time to be happy? Have you not seen that the people are dying out of starvation?” The slave boy responded, “What do I have to worry about? My master is so wealthy that he owns an entire village which supplies us all that we require. He will never let me go hungry.”

This statement struck the heart of Shaqeeq (ra) and he said, “O Allah, this slave of a wealthy person is in such high spirits and has no worries at all. You are the king of kings and the Sustainer! With You being our Master, why do we need to be troubled and uneasy about sustenance.” He then immediately bid farewell to worldly activities and sincerely repented to Allah. He treaded the Straight Path and reached the highest levels of tawakkul. Often he would say, “I am the student of a slave.” (Taareekh Ibni ‘Asaakir)

Lesson: Although we may not be able to reach the highest levels of tawakkul like these great individuals, together with adopting the permissible means, we must always keep our gaze on Allah. There is a great level of happiness, peace and satisfaction kept in this. Having one’s hopes in anyone or anything besides Him will result in uneasiness, depression and even suicide.

Removing Confusion

Understanding Sayyiduna 'Ali's Absence from the Campaigns of the First Three Khalifahs.

S. Taha

The assumption underlying the question is that since Sayyidunah Ali (RA) did not participate in the campaigns of the first 3 khulafa, it can only mean that he was averse to their rule, perhaps even to the point of not recognising the legitimacy of their rule.

However, this assumption can only be accepted if one is prepared to ignore the existence of several historical facts which glare at the objective observer from the pages of history. Some of these are given here:

1. While Sayyiduna 'Ali (RA) might not physically have joined the campaigns, he was at the side of the khalifah in Madinah as a valued and trusted advisor – a position that is by no means less important than being at the battlefield. This is a fact documented in both Sunni and Shi'i sources. "Nahj al-Balaghah", for example, records the advice given by Sayyiduna 'Ali to Sayyiduna 'Umar on two occasions. The first one appears as Sermon no. 133 and carries the heading "In reply to 'Umar ibn al-Khattab who consulted him about taking part in the battle against Byzantine". The second is numbered Sermond 145 and appears under the caption "Spoken when 'Umar ibn al-Khattab consulted Amir al-Mu'minin about taking part in the battle of Persia". In both instances the advice given can clearly be seen to

be aimed at the success of the campaigns.

2. It is also significant to note that although Sayyiduna 'Ali did not personally join the armies on their expeditions, he duly received his share of the spoils of war. Abu Ubayd has recorded that Sayyiduna 'Umar fixed Sayyiduna 'Ali's share at 5000 dirhams, and gave both his sons Hasan and Husayn a similar share of 5000. ("al-Amwal" p. 237) Another son of Sayyiduna 'Ali, namely Muhammad, was born to him from a woman from Banu Hanifah who was brought to Madinah as a war captive by Khalid ibn al-Walid after his expedition against her tribe that had turned apostate with Musaylamah. This woman was given to Sayyiduna 'Ali by Sayyiduna Abu Bakr. ("Tabaqat Ibn Sa'd" vol. 5 p. 67) and this Muhammad is known in history as Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyah.

3. If Sayyiduna 'Ali's not joining the campaigns of the three khulafa means that he was averse to their rule, how is one to interpret the fact that Sayyiduna Hasan and Sayyiduna Husayn both took part in the conquest of Tabaristan during the rule of Sayyiduna 'Uthman under Sa'id ibn al-'As in 30 AH? (See "Tarikh at-Tabari" vol. 5 p. 103, "al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah" vol. 5 p. 237)

4. Furthermore, what is one to make

of the fact that those of the Sahabah upon whom the Shi'ah took favourably as devotees of Sayyiduna 'Ali and the Ahl al-Bayt unreservedly took part in the campaigns of Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman? Here one may speak of the following by way of example:

SALMAN AL-FARISI took part in Sayyiduna 'Umar's Persian campaign and played a crucial role in the conquest of Mada'in ("al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah" vol. 5 pp. 135-140). He had also acted as governor of Mada'in for Sayyiduna 'Umar ("al-Isabah" vol. 3 p. 113) and used to actively encourage the military campaigns in Syria by narrating ahadith on the virtues of jihad ("Ansab al-Ashraf vol. 1 p. 488)

HUDHAYFAH IBN AL-YAMAN had played a leading role in the conquest of Iraq. Like Salman, he too had acted as governor for Sayyiduna 'Umar ("al-Isabah" vol. 1 p. 332), and later joined military expeditions during the reign of Sayyiduna 'Uthman. He is described by the Shi'i scholar, al-'Allamah Ibn Mutahhar al-Hilli, as "one of the four pillars amongst the companions of Amir al-Mu'minin." ("Jami' ar-Ruwat" vol. 1 p. 182)

BILAL AL-HABASHI joined the campaign in Syria, either during the time of Sayyiduna Abu Bakr or Sayyiduna 'Umar. He died in Syria during the reign of the latter Umar. ("al-Isabah" vol. 1 p. 171)*

'AMMAR IBN YASIR took part in the campaign against Musaylamah in the time of Sayyiduna Abu Bakr. He fought valiantly, spurred on the Muslim forces, and lost his ear in this battle. Later, during the reign of Sayyiduna 'Umar, he accepted an appointment as the governor of Kufah under him. ("Tarikh al-Islam" vol. 2 p. 581}

ABU AYYUB AL-ANSARI is well known for his participation in several battles, not least amongst which was the expedition against Constantinople led by Yazid in the time of his father Mu'awiyah. Abu Ayyub was martyred

during this expedition, and was buried under the walls of the city. ("al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah" vol. 5 p. 518)

5. Apart from the above considerations, one also needs to keep in mind the sort of relationship that existed between Sayyiduna 'Ali and the khulafa before him. This relationship is best expressed in the fact that he named 3 of his sons Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman. This is confirmed even by an avowedly Shi'i source such as Shaykh Mufid's "Kitab al-Irshad" (pp. 268-269); and the fact that he married Umm Kulthum, his daughter from Sayyidah Fatimah, to Sayyiduna 'Umar. (For a more detailed discussion of the marriage of Umm Kulthum, see <http://www.ansar.org/english/marriage.htm>)

All things considered, the assumption that Sayyiduna 'Ali did not take part in the campaigns of the three khulafa on account of his differences with them, diminishes into an incongruous aberration of ridiculous proportions.

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Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). However, for this love to be authentic, it must manifest in the form of mercy to the world. Anyone who claims to be upholding the honour of the Beloved (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) through acts of violent nihilism and senseless violence is in fact dishonouring the very teachings of the Beloved (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). What we Muslims have recently failed to do is to relay this message of love to non-Muslims. It is something that should be done in action and not simply in words. But I hope that at least at the theoretical level it can be comprehended why when it comes to our Beloved (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), Muslims are in too deep of love to accept anything viewed as disrespect towards our most dearly Beloved of all Creation.

Why Are Muslims So Serious About Their Prophet?

Muhammad Ghilan

One of the most bewildering things for non-Muslims, especially in the West, is the utter less than zero tolerance of Muslims for anything that could be deemed as disrespectful towards the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). What makes it more puzzling is the generally somber reaction a non-Muslim would receive if they made fun of a Muslim's background or heritage when it is taken in relation to the reaction received when it is about the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). In a culture where nothing is sacred, and everything is open game to be ridiculed, the permissibility of all of which falls under the banner of freedom of expression, the "extreme" Muslim reaction to any derogatory remarks about the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is difficult to comprehend.

This Muslim reaction is typically attributed to either their supposed intolerant religious teachings towards the other, towards freedom, or towards the West. Their seriousness is considered to be unwarranted, and furthermore they are told they just have to accept that what they hold sacred will be ridiculed just like anything else. After all, if Jesus Christ can be made fun of in a Saturday Night Live skit, and if Moses can be shown foolishly in Family Guy, then Muslims should not be given any special treatment and the Prophet

Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) should be made fun of on South Park without having the Muslims get up in arms over it.

Rather than adopting the idiotic Bill Maher attitude of "let's just not hold back and do it till these Muslims get used to it", it would serve non-Muslims better to understand what is the big deal about the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) for Muslims. Moreover, for the non-Muslims to understand this, it is the duty of the Muslims to explain it to them. I am appealing to people's good sense here and hoping that a respectful dialogue and a peaceful co-existence, not just tolerance, will come out of it.

Much has been written about rights, and freedom of expression, and defamation, etc. This short article is not about addressing any of these issues. You can easily find hundreds and may be thousands of articles dealing with these matters. What I want to share with you here is why many of us Muslims can handle just about anything, except talking about our Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

It is all about love! As strange as this may sound to a non-Muslim, the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), also referred to as the Beloved, is loved, not in the sense that love is viewed in the West, but in a much deeper way than you can imagine. In

fact, every time I speak or write about the Beloved (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), I get goose bumps all over my body and my heart races and my eyes fill up with tears out of yearning to see him.

For most non-Muslims, and Muslims who are new converts, as well as those who are not devout or not practicing at all, this is very difficult to comprehend. This is not surprising. How can I expect anyone to comprehend a love towards someone they know nothing about? Worse yet, whatever they heard about him was inaccurate and defamatory. And to add insult to injury, many Muslims do not reflect his teachings and the Message he (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was entrusted to bring to mankind. So I cannot place blame on those who do not get it.

The sad reality about us in the West is that we think we know what love is. Many of us have confused chemicals firing in our brains for a virtuous feeling of strong affection and attachment. If we just reflect upon everything around our culture, it quickly becomes obvious how everything is telling each one of us to be as narcissistic as possible. We are bombarded with messages everywhere that ourselves are the most important thing. Everything is about customizing what we want to get, so we can have it how we want it, exactly in the color we want it, the size we want it to be, in the amount we want, and at the time we want. The simplest example is just in ordering coffee. It used to be a Starbucks thing, but now it is everywhere: "can I get a large double foam part skim part regular 65 degrees Celsius single shot espresso cappuccino with a bit of cinnamon on top?". If that is how we have become about something is insignificant as coffee, what does that say about our attitude towards things that really matter?

Love in our culture has gone from virtuous selfless and devoted love for the other

into a perverse love of the self. We now live in what sociologists call a "Me culture".

Even when we "fall in love" with a significant other, it turns out to not have been the type of love where each one completes the other. This is evidenced by the amazingly high divorce rates, which historically were never this way. As Erich Fromm puts it in his book "The Art of Loving", getting married and divorced has become no different than getting a car and selling it to upgrade to a new model. I realize that not everyone is like that. But I am speaking about our society as a whole, while keeping in mind that there are exceptions.

Interestingly, there are cases where people fall head over heels in love with someone due to some effect they had on their lives, which is when taken into consideration many find ridiculous. A quick example is someone like Michael Jackson (pop singer). It is not that hard to pull up YouTube videos of fans collapsing, crying, and going crazy over Michael. The sole influence he had on these fans was through his music. Those who were down, found that he brought their moods up. Some talk about how one of his songs "spoke to them". This is obviously combined with an obsession that drove these fans to know everything there is to know about Michael, and without having any direct interactions with him they feel like he is in their lives. They bought the jacket and the gloves and they would try and dance like he did and attempt the moonwalk everywhere they had slippery floors. They loved Michael.

I am not using Michael Jackson as a basis for comparison, because there is nothing in the Creation that compares to the Beloved (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) as far as a Muslim is concerned. There are really no words to properly describe the influence I as a Muslim feel on a daily basis as a result of the Beloved (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). And I am not

alone in this feeling. This was a man whose companions would jump up in battle exposing their chests to take arrows that were being shot at him. They did that without any of the training modern day Secret Service personnel receive to subvert their instincts for self-preservation. Their instinct was to sacrifice themselves in order to keep the Beloved (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) safe.

When it is used in reference to the Beloved (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), the name Muhammad alone is enough to send a quiver through a devout Muslim's soul. The lines of poetry written to praise him are countless. There were people that are known in history to have literally died from their yearning for the Beloved (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). One of his companions received the news of his passing just outside of Medina, and this was after he had just seen him, and he immediately made a prayer to go blind so that the last person he would have ever seen would have been the Beloved (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). His prayer was answered! The most powerful of the companions around him was Omar Ibn Al Khattab (RA). To give you an idea of his size, think of someone like Shaquille O'Neal. Omar used to get on a horse and his feet would drag on the ground because he was so tall. Upon hearing the news of the passing of the Beloved (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), this giant powerful man collapsed onto his knees and cried with heavy tears.

To most people, their parents and children are the dearest and most beloved to them. If anyone was to try and harm any of them, it is expected, and justifiably so, that they would get extremely upset and immediately jump to the defense of their honor. For us Muslims, the Beloved (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is more dear than our parents, our spouses, our children, and even ourselves. In fact, there are people nowadays that would

trade everything just to see him visit them in their dreams. He is the one who we believe was sent as a Mercy. He is the one who we are indebted to for the Message of love and peace that he came with. He is the one who brought the teaching that resulted in the whole Muslim civilization of the past, which the current Western civilization is indebted to for all their scientific discoveries and preservation and dissemination of the Greek literary works.

More is known about the Beloved (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) than anyone else in history. We know his genealogy. We know all the events that took place right before his birth. We know how he was born and even the manner of how he landed onto the ground as a newborn during his delivery. We know about his younger days. We know about his travels. We know about his mannerisms. We know about his growing up. We know about his marriage. We know about his children. We know about his family. We know about what people used to say about him. We know about his interactions. We know his exact Arabic accent. We know about his companions. We can describe his way of speech and how he sat, stood, and walked. We know his skin tone and we know his physique to the most intricate of details. We even know how many gray hairs he had and how his eyebrows were and even his eyes to the details of his eyelashes. We know his favorite food and how he ate it. Many of us try to emulate him in our daily actions, to the point of how to enter the bathroom and how to exit it. We all conduct our acts of worship in exactly the same manner that he did. We can sit down for hours, days, and even months talking about the Beloved (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and we would not be done.

This level of love is quite uncommon in modern times and comes across as odd. But it is real, and it is what Muslims feel towards the

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Success in This World And the Next

Allah with His infinite Mercy has endowed us with numerous bounties. Out of all these bounties the biggest and the most significant is that of Iman. It is imperative that we value this bounty and protect it by bringing complete Deen in our life.

Given below are some points by which we can bring the true Islamic spirit in our life so that our Iman is protected and thus we can attain success in this world and in the Akhirat. However, this is simply the written sphere. Making it alive is a separate matter altogether. Without effort and sacrifice these qualities cannot be achieved.

1. Reciting the Kalimah Tayyibah with correct Tajweed (Arabic pronunciation).
2. Learning the translation of the Kalimah Tayyibah: "None is worthy of worship but Allah, Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is the Rasul (Messenger) of Allah."
3. Understanding the meaning of the Kalimah Tayyibah:

Allah alone is the Doer of everything. Allah alone is the Creator, the Owner, the Controller and the Sustainer of the entire creation, AND, Our success in this life and in the hereafter lies only in following the path of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and NO other path, for our 24 hours life including our Akhlaq (behaviour), our personal life, our social life, all our dealings and interactions with all the other creations.

4. Bringing changes in our beliefs and in our life: To divert our reliance from the creation to the Creator, AND, To divert our lifestyle from any other lifestyle to the Mubarak Lifestyle of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

5. Inviting others to the Kalimahh Tayyibah, to its meaning and its beliefs and to the practice of implementing the lifestyle of the Rasool (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) into our lives.

6. Ensuring that we pray the daily five-time Salah in the Masjid with the first Takbeer or Takbeer-e-Tahreemah (for gents) and try to pray all the prescribed Sunnah before and after the Fardh Salah. For a Muslim woman the best Salah is the one offered in the corner of her home as soon as the time sets in.

7. Bringing into our life the practice of praying the Nafil Salah like Tahajjud, Ishraq, Dhuha, Awabeen, Tahiyatul Wudhu, Tahiyatul Masjid.

8. Turning to Salah as our first priority/option/solution for all our problems, challenges and issues.

9. 'Ilm of Deen is like a vast ocean. No one can ever claim that he has the full 'Ilm of Deen. Therefore it is very important we must consistently endeavor to acquire as much 'Ilm of Deen as possible. As a minimum we should have all the pertinent knowledge on how to perform all our 'ibadat correctly – Salah, Saum or Fasting, Zakat, Hajj and all other Arkans of Islam so as to be able to pass our 24-hour daily

life in accordance with the tenets of Islam.

10. Recognizing what is halal and what is haram; what is Jaiz (allowed) and what not Jaiz; what is Tahir (ritually clean and pure) and what Najis (ritually unclean and impure) and keeping away from all the restricted acts.

11. Learning how to recite Qur'an correctly with proper

12. Reading minimum of one Juz' of the Qur'an daily. We can read a portion after every Salah, so that we complete one Juz' every day.

13. Bringing the consciousness of Allah in our life – that Allah can see me, can hear me and is with me all the time. In order to bring this status we need to constantly make the Zikr of Allah. In the least we should adopt the practice of reciting the three tasbeehat – 100 times third Kalimah, 100 times Durood (Salutations or Salawat) on Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and 100 times Istighfar – every morning and evening.

14. Learning and bringing into practice the Masnoon Du'as – the Du'as before and after all our daily activities like eating, sleeping, visiting wash room, traveling etc.

15. Bringing the quality of humility into our daily lives, in other words, to break our ego so as to consider ourselves as very insignificant. We need to respect our elders, have mercy on our youngsters and value our Ulama (the scholars of Deen). Learning and trying to fulfill the rights of the family members, neighbours, relatives, friends and Muslim brothers and sisters and even the non-Muslims despite them failing to fulfill our rights.

16. Maintaining the kinship (Sila Rahmi). Quite often for small reasons we tend to drift apart not only from our uncles, aunts, cousins, second cousins, distant relatives, friends and colleagues but at times even from our immediate family members. In view of the following hadith (and many more similar ahadith) we should immediately try to make amends even if we

have to go out of our way or even if we have to humiliate ourselves. 'Narrated Abdullah bin 'Amr (RA): The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "Al-Wasil (one who maintains good relations with his kin) is not the one who recompenses the good done to him by his relatives, but Al-Wasil is the one who keeps good relations with those relatives who have severed the bond of kinship with him." Bukhari

17. Ensuring that all our Muslim Brothers and Sisters are safe from our tongue, in other words, to avoid backbiting, slandering, lying etc. Backbiting, according to a hadith, is tantamount to eating the flesh of our Muslim Brothers and Sisters.

18. Refraining in every way from things which do not concern us or are not of any benefit to our dunya or our akhirat. Nabi (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said (mafum), "Part of a person's being a good Muslim is his leaving alone that which does not concern him."

19. Doing all a'amals (Good Deeds) for the pleasure of Allah alone so that they may be accepted by Him. We have to be very careful with our intentions when doing all our good deeds – any deed done for name, fame or worldly gains is not accepted by Allah.

20. Utilizing our wealth, time and efforts for the propagation of the Deen of Allah. Firstly, to target oneself, our home, the extended family and our locality, and then to aim for the rest of the humanity.

Once we will bring the above qualities into our life and be consistent with them, then InshaAllah, Allah will enlighten our souls with an Inner Light – a light that will herald the death of the false Yaqeen of this life and a new birth to the true Spiritual Reality. We will also gain a close proximity to Allah as well as acquire His Ma'rifat (true recognition).

In conclusion here is very soul-searching Hadith and a beautiful Nasihah:

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Show Compassion Against Abuse

Majd Arbil

Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) started the message of Islam in Arabia at a time when human rights had no meaning, might was right and the society was entrenched in paganism. In this environment Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) taught a message of justice, peace, human rights, animal rights and even environmental rights as ordained by God, the One True Creator of all that is in the universe.

God has shown us in the character of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) the model of a companionate person. He treated every one, friends and foe, man and woman, young and old, with kindness and respect.

Even when the pagan Arabs reacted to the message of the Prophet with extreme hatred he showed love and kindness.

The following examples from the life of the Prophet show us how we should react when faced with hatred.

We can see one of the most patient and tolerant aspects of the Prophet's character in the incident of an old woman who made a habit of throwing trash in the way of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) whenever he passed by her house.

The story related about this incident,

mentions a neighbor of the Prophet that tried her best to irritate him by throwing garbage in his way every day. One day, when he walked out of his home there was no garbage. This made the Prophet inquire about the old woman and he came to know that she was sick. The Prophet went to visit her and offer any assistance she might need. The old woman was extremely humbled and at the same time ashamed of her actions in light of the concern that the Prophet showed her.

By seeing the example of compassion of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), she became convinced that Islam must be a true religion that the Prophet was preaching.

Another incident that is reported from the life of the Prophet is when the Prophet traveled to a neighboring town of Taif.

In Taif he thought he might find people who might be respectable to the message of Almighty God. The people of Taif turned out to be as hateful as the people of Makkah. The elders of the town planned an organized campaign to ridicule the Prophet. To escalate their disapproval of the Prophet and prevent him from preaching Islam, they set a group of children and vagabonds behind him. They pestered him and threw stones at him. Tired, for-

saken and wounded, he sought refuge in a nearby garden. It belonged to Atabah and Shaibah, two wealthy chiefs of Quraish.

They were both there when Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) entered and sat under a distant tree. The Prophet raised his face towards heaven and prayed: "O Almighty! I raise unto you my complaint for my weakness, my helplessness, and for the ridicule to which I have been subjected. O Merciful! You are the Master of all oppressed people, You are my God! So to whom would You consign me? To the strangers who would ill-treat me, or to the enemies who have an upper hand over me? If whatever has befallen me is not because of Your wrath, then I fear not. No doubt, the field of Your security and care is wide enough for me. I seek refuge in Your light which illuminates darkness and straightens the affairs of this world and hereafter, that Your displeasure and wrath may not descend upon me. For the sake of Your pleasure, I remain pleased and resigned to my fate. No change in this world occurs without Your Will."

Atabah and Shaibah were watching. They sent for their servant named Adaas and gave him a plate full of grapes. "Take this to that man under the tree," they ordered. So he brought the grapes to Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

As the Prophet picked the grapes he said: "Bismillahir Rahmaanir Rahim" (In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate). Adaas had never heard this before. He was impressed by it, because the Prophet was invoking mercy and compassion of Almighty in spite of all the hardship he was subjected to.

"Who are you?" Adaas asked. Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) replied, "I am the Prophet of God. Where do you come

from?"

The servant said: "I am Adaas, a Christian. I come from Nainava."

"Nainava? You come from a place where my brother Yunus bin Mati (Jonah son of Mati) lived," the Prophet said.

Adaas was surprised to hear the name.

"What do you know of Yunus? Here no one seems to know him. Even in Nainava there were hardly ten people who knew his father's name."

The Prophet said: "Yes, I know him because just like me, he was a Prophet of Almighty God."

Adaas fell on his knees before the Prophet, kissed his hand and embraced him.

It is further reported that after the Prophet took refuge from the stone throwing mob, Angel Jibrael came to the Prophet and asked him if he so wished Jibrael would give the command to bury the city between two mountains. Although the prophet had suffered a great deal at the hands of these people, he replied that he did not wish destruction for the people of Taif because maybe their offspring would proclaim the religion of truth.

The Islamic scholar Imam Ghazali (1058 - 1111 C.E.) summarizes the information he collected in the hadith regarding our Prophet's compassionate attitude to all those around him as follows: "He was far from knowing anger and quickly showed compassion for things. He was the most loving of men toward other people. He was the most auspicious of men and did the most good to others, and the most useful and beneficial to others."

The Quran says that Prophet was sent as mercy to humankind. If we are to honor the Prophet, it will be by adopting the sublime character of our Prophet and not through the emotions of anger and hate.

How to Develop an Entrepreneurial Mindset

Obaid Ahmad

Many of the early followers of our faith, including our Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), were merchants and traders. In fact, much of how Islam spread from West Africa to China was through traders. As the country with the highest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia is said to have embraced Islam by witnessing the the strong ethics and beautiful character of Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs they came across, which speaks to the immense power of business that is driven by faith-based values.

Entrepreneurship is one of the most powerful methods to create long-lasting change in our communities that is currently being neglected. This is due to the lack of proper entrepreneurial education to help develop the next generation of entrepreneurs within our community. There simply is not enough awareness about what entrepreneurship is, how we can develop more entrepreneurs, and how we can start and run successful companies that can create a long-lasting impact.

Who is an Entrepreneur?

There are many definitions for the word 'entrepreneur', but the most common definition is that an entrepreneur is someone who identifies problems and then turns them

into opportunities.

"Entrepreneurship," says Bob Reiss, the author of 'Low- Risk, High-Reward: Starting and Growing your Business With Minimal Risk', "is the recognition and pursuit of opportunity without regard to the resources you currently control, with confidence that you can succeed, with the flexibility to change course as necessary, and with the will to rebound from setbacks."

Being an entrepreneur is not necessarily just about launching and running a business, it is about developing the entrepreneurial mindset, which is useful to anyone who is part of an organization. It is the mindset of looking at problems as opportunities and creating more with less. This mindset encourages risk-taking, creativity, innovation, and unconventional thinking.

This is the mindset that we Muslims need to develop in order to properly create healthy communities that can deal with the myriad of socio-economic issues we face.

Revive Your Entrepreneurial Spirit

The industrial revolution forced a mass migration of people from rural areas to urban cities. Prior to that, most people in North America were entrepreneurs who owned small businesses and bartered to get

what they needed. Now, as technology and global competition changes the employment landscape, traditional employment that was reminiscent of the industrial revolution is being challenged. Individuals are now being forced to become knowledge workers, who essentially rely on selling their skills to make a living. We were all entrepreneurs long before the industrial revolution changed that. We need to return back to our entrepreneurial roots, not just socially but religiously as well. Interestingly enough, history has come full circle and we will all need to become entrepreneurs to survive in the future.

What makes entrepreneurs unique is their resourcefulness. In other words, they are able to do more with less. Whatever the problem, they will find a way to make it happen even if they do not have all the tools.

The key to developing an entrepreneurial mindset is recognizing the qualities you have, then building and improving upon those you do not yet have. To get started, we have mapped out key ways to develop your mindset as a Muslim entrepreneur.:

1. Have Tawakkul and Be Grateful

Part of being a Muslim is understanding that Allah (glorified and exalted be He) is the ultimate disposer of our affairs. He is Al-Awwal (the Beginning) wal-Akhir (The End). Everything begins with Him and everything ends with Him. Consequently, He is the source of everything and the Provider of all.

Contemporary business practices today cite scientific studies showing that an attitude of gratitude brings more into your life. It means the more you are grateful, the more you will receive. Believing that there is a limited amount of resources for everyone to access is a flawed mindset for any entrepreneur. You must operate from a place of abundance and believe resources are unlimited.

As Muslims, we do not need modern scientific studies to show us that being grateful and having faith in a higher being who is the Source of all is enough reason to never worry.

In the Qur'an, Allah (glorified and exalted be He) says:

"And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe.' " [Chapter 14, Verse 7]

Know that Allah (glorified and exalted be He) has given you all the resources that you need in your life to create a successful business and create some impact in the world. Once you realize that you were given quite a lot, Allah (glorified and exalted be He) has guaranteed to give you more.

2. Work Hard and Think Long-Term

"That no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another. And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives. And that his effort is going to be seen – Then he will be recompensed for it with the fullest recompense." [Chapter 53, Verses 38-41]

A crucial step to developing an entrepreneurial mindset is having the ability to think long-term. Long-term thinking allows a person to develop discipline to work at a problem while having a future vision in mind. This helps prevent the need to fulfill short-term gratification.

In Surat al-Israa, Allah (glorified and exalted be He) says:

"Whoever should desire the immediate – We hasten for him from it what We will to whom We intend. Then We have made for him Hell, which he will [enter to] burn, censured and banished. But whoever desires the Hereafter and exerts the effort due to it while he is a believer – it is those whose effort is ever appreciated [by Allah]. To each [category] We extend

– to these and to those – from the gift of your Lord. And never has the gift of your Lord been restricted.” [Qur’an: Chapter 17, Verses 18-20]

Allah (glorified and exalted be He) also says:

“Whoever desires the reward of this world – then with Allah is the reward of this world and the Hereafter. And ever is Allah Hearing and Seeing.” [Chapter 4, Verses 134]

A key part of having a long-term vision is having the understanding of what guides your decision-making. What vision do you have for yourself, your life and your business? What impact do you ultimately want to make? This will be your reason, the one that will get you through the main obstacles you will inevitably face. As Allah subhānahu wa ta’ala (glorified and exalted be He) has said, if you work, you will receive the fruits of your striving.

3. Have Grit

University of Pennsylvania Psychology Professor Angela Duckworth’s research has shown that people with “grit”, the trait of exceptional persistence and devotion, consistently perform better than those with higher IQ.

If there is one guarantee in entrepreneurship, it is that it is a roller coaster ride. There is no linear path to becoming a successful entrepreneur. It essentially consists of making numerous tiny decisions everyday on multiple things: teams, administration strategy, marketing, etc. It takes a certain type of mindset to withstand this kind of pressure. The key here is persistence.

Persistence is the ability to look past obstacles and keep moving. When speaking to many successful entrepreneurs, they will cite the ability to not give up as being a crucial reason for success. Sadly, many people do not succeed because they gave up right before

they were about to find success. The key to persistence is to keep trying until you get to your end goal.

“Keep focused on the problem you are trying to solve but be flexible on how you solve it”, says Jason Nazar, co-founder and CEO of Docstoc

4. Focus on Creating Value

Another key to becoming a successful entrepreneur is by creating value. The amount of success you have is proportional to how much value you bring to others. Entrepreneurs focus on creating sustainable solutions by solving problems faced by people.

Before starting your business, it is essential to ask yourself: “Who am I helping and how can I make that solution better than what exists currently in the marketplace?” This is the primary mentality to have when looking to become an entrepreneur and the basis of great business models. Contemporary entrepreneurship encourages one to find a solution for a problem within the marketplace that customers are not happy with, then create a product to help them, while constantly revising and improving that product based on their feedback.

Entrepreneurial Education: The Way Forward

Growing and developing the next generation of entrepreneurs is crucial for our long-term communal prosperity. In order to solve the myriad of social problems that we face, we need to support those who are solving these problems. That is why entrepreneurial education can become a crucial asset for our community.

The first step in doing so is to develop the mindset of an entrepreneur.

On a community level, helping more people develop an entrepreneurial mindset means we help unleash the creative potential

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