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# RADIANT REALITY

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Quran 3:200




O you who have believed, persevere and endure and remain stationed and fear Allah that you may be successful

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# RADIANT REALITY

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

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# Question Answer

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## Question.

Is it permissible for a person who is giving Zakat for the marriage of a girl to partake of the wedding food?

## Answer.

Yes. It is permissible. Once Zakaat funds have been given to the recipients of Zakaat, its status changes and it is no longer considered Zakaat. Hence if you partake of the food prepared, you will be eating from their Haalal wealth and not from Zakaat.

Sayyiduna Anas (RA) reports that once meat, given as Sadaqah to Bareerah (RA), was presented to Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) remarked, "It was Sadaqah for her but is now a Hadiyyah (gift) for us." (Bukhari)

*Mufti Suhail*

## Question.

I was told that it was necessary to wear a scarf when I enter the bathroom as it is Shaytaans home. Please can you clarify whether this is true or not

## Answer.

The Hadith indicates that the Shayateen inhabit impure places such as the toilet and it is therefore advisable to wear a scarf or cover the head when entering the toilet.

Sayyidatuna Aa'ishah (RA) narrates that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi

Wasallam) used to cover his head whenever he entered the toilet. (Bayhaqi)

*Mufti Suhail*

## Question.

Kindly inform how a Muslim is buried out at sea.

## Answer.

A Muslim who passes away at sea should be given Ghusal, shrouded in a Kafan and Salaatul Janaazah should be performed for him/her.

If the ship is far out at sea and there is a fear that the body will decompose thereby causing harm to others on the ship, the body should be weighted and buried at sea.

However, if the ship is close to land or there are facilities on board whereby the body can be preserved, the deceased's body should be buried on land. (Tahtaawi vol. 1, page 613)

*Mufti Moosa*

## Question.

A non-Muslim associate has asked me advise on an outstanding debt. The individual is a land surveyor who has surveyed a property for a Muslim businessman. The job was completed and the client was billed for the professional services. The account outstanding is now 3 years old. The Muslim businessman has now responded that he is no longer obliged to pay the account, stating that it is 'prescribed' meaning that it is

longer than 3 years old and the law states that he is not obliged to pay the debt. Note: There was no dispute, the survey was utilized by all professionals and the project was completed.

### Answer.

Islam does not accept or recognize the prescription of debts. A debtor is bound to pay his creditor irrespective of the time period that has lapsed and the legal loopholes that absolve him of the debt.

The Muslim businessman must honour his obligation and pay the debt. The law of the land may remove the legal obligation of paying the debt but he will remain liable in the court of Allah. If the debt is not paid in this world, there will certainly be accountability for it in the hereafter.

*Mufti Moosa*

### Question.

Please advise if someone wants to loan money from me and on agreement the borrower says that he will give me more than the amount loaned. Is the additional money interest?

### Answer.

It is not permissible for a creditor to loan money with the condition of receiving extra on the amount loaned. The extra amount will be interest.

Islam does encourage a debtor to give back extra to the creditor when repaying the loan as was the practice of Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam. (Bukhari)

However, there should no condition, written or unwritten, for the same nor should the creditor expect to receive extra on repayment of the loan.

*Mufti Moosa*

### Question.

At work I am involved in our citizenship drive, which involves raising funds and assisting the needy and thus far all non-Muslim orphanages. I would like to know if it is ok from a Islamic point, as I have been confronted why not helping Muslims.

### Answer.

Islam teaches us to be charitable to Muslims as well as Non-Muslims. There are many Ahadith that give general encouragement in assisting all of Allah's creation. For example, "The best of men are those who bring the greatest benefit to mankind". (Tabrani)

The only distinction is in regards to compulsory charities like zakat, which can only be used for Muslims. In regards to general charity, it may be given to Muslims as well as non-Muslims.

*Mufti Moosa*

### Question.

Kindly provide guidance on Nifaas, what do I do when I stop bleeding after a few weeks. Do I perform a Ghusl when I stop bleeding and perform salaah and when the bleeding starts again after a few days do I stop salaah and wait till it has ended and then perform Ghusl?

### Answer.

The maximum number of days of Nifaas (post-natal bleeding) is forty days according to Islamic Law. If the post-natal bleeding pauses within these forty days and you feel that the bleeding is over, you should take a Ghusl and perform Salaah as normal. If bleeding resumes within forty days, it will be considered that your Nifaas has extended and you will consider yourself to be in the state of Nifaas until the bleeding

stops completely or it exceeds forty days. There is no Qadha for the Salaahs that you had missed during this period. However, if Nifaas occurred during Ramaadaan, Qadha must be made for the missed fasts. (Raddul Muhtar, Vol: 1, Pg: 228-229 & 299)

*Mufti Moosa*

### Question.

Can a man give Ghusl to his wife after she has passed away and can he see her face?

### Answer.

According to the Hanafi school of thought, it is not permissible for the husband to touch his wife's bare skin after she has passed away nor is it permissible for him to give her Ghusl.

However, it is permissible for him to look at her face, carry her shrouded Janaazah and lower her body into the grave. (Ahsanul Fatawa, Vol: 4, Pg: 225, Durrul Mukhtar, Vol: 2, Pg: 198, DF)

*Mufti Suhail*

### Question.

If a person backbits about someone and since it is necessary to request forgiveness from the concerned as well as seek forgiveness from Allah, but what to do if ones doesn't gather courage or foresees a fitnah in asking the concerned to forgive him?

### Answer.

Backbiting (geebah) is from those sins which pertain to Haqooq-ul-'ibad (rights of people). Since these rights are connected with people, fulfilling them and asking for forgiveness will be associated with people as well. In order to repent from such sins, it is not only necessary to plead to Allah for forgiveness, but also to ask the person who's right was

violated for pardon and forgiveness. Until this is not done, the repentance (tawbah) will not be complete.

However, if someone has backbitten about another and that person has no knowledge of the same, it will not be necessary to ask him/her for forgiveness. It will be sufficient for one to repent sincerely to Allah, make a firm intention to abstain from such sins and additionally to make dua for the person who was backbitten.

*Mufti Moosa*

### Question.

I have a sister and a brother. Sometimes I go into my sisters room and steal her sweets, now since that we are a family... are those sweets haraam for me?

### Answer.

Unless, there exists an understanding between family members that they are free to take small items like sweets, etc. from each other, it is not permissible for you to take your sister's sweets without her permission. For the future, you should ask her permission. You should also apologize and ask her forgiveness for the sweets taken without her permission.

*Mufti Moosa*

### Question.

I've heard somewhere that it is Sunnah to recite Surah Kafiroon and Surah Ikhlas in the two Sunnats before Fajr and the two Sunnats after Maghrib. Is this true?

### Answer.

It was the practice of Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam to recite Surah Kafiroon (Qul Ya Ayyuhal Kafiroon) in the first Rak'ah and Surah

Ikhlaas (Qul Huwallahu Ahad) in the second Rak'ah in the Sunnah Salaah before Fajr and after Maghrib.

Sayyiduna Abdullah bin Mas'oud (RA) said: "I cannot recall the number of times I heard Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam reciting Qul Ya Ayyuhal Kafiroon and Qul Huwallahu Ahad in the two Rak'ahs after Maghrib and the two Rak'ahs before Fajr." (Tirmizi)

*Mufti Suhail*

### Question.

I have a habit of backbiting others and I very quickly tend to have ill thoughts about people. This malady is continuously on the ever increase in me.

### Answer.

We will generally speak ill of a person or harbour ill thoughts about him when we consider him to be a bad person or an opponent. Due to engaging in these sins, we have transferred our good deeds to him. Reflect for a moment as to how foolish this is that we backbite about the one we are angry with and hand over our good deeds to him! Are we prepared to give him our worldly wealth and riches? Never! Then how are we prepared to give him our good deeds on the day of judgement while we ourselves will remain as paupers? Ponder over this aspect and bear it in mind.

*(Mufti Mahmood-ul-Hasan (ra))*

### Question.

How must greed be eliminated?

### Answer.

Every person must have the conviction that whatever Allah has destined for him, he shall certainly receive it and nobody can prevent it. And what is not destined for him, he shall never get it.

Sustenance pursues a person just as his death pursues him. If a person hides in a very strong fortress, then his death will find him there as well. In the very same way a person's sustenance will reach him wherever he may be. As long as a person has not received all of his sustenance, death will not come to him. Nabi (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has said, "Behold, verily no soul shall ever die until it has received all its sustenance."

Allah alone knows what is the reality of the wealth in the possession of others - whether it is interest, a bribe, whether it was been usurped, is it charity or was it earned through earnings from an unlawful transaction. Allah knows what punishment is destined for that wealth. Nevertheless when such wealth will come, it will come with its punishment as well. Just as a person who sees a snake or a scorpion somewhere and desires that he should have it and it shouldn't be in his possession, the snake will come together with its poison and the scorpion will come together with its sting. Will any intelligent person desire such a thing?

*(Mufti Mahmood-ul-Hasan (ra))*

### Question.

I have a lot of anger in me. At times if a student does not carry out the work given to him, I become very angry. My nafs (innerself) pacifies me that I am doing this for the reformation of the student. Sometimes when angry, I focus on my own faults and weaknesses, yet my anger does not subside.

### Answer.

At the time of anger when the thought comes to mind that you are angry for the reformation of the student, then ponder over the following:

*Hadhrat Anas (RA) served Nabi*

*(Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) for almost ten years. He says: "At times Nabi (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) instructed me to do some work but I would reply that I will not do it.*

Sometimes Nabi (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) would send me to do some work but I would get involved in some play and amusement. Nabi (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) would wait and then come looking for me. He would find me sleeping in some place. He would wake me up and dust off whatever sand may have settled on me. He never ever said, "Why did you do this?" or "Why did you not do that?" Never did he ever say "Oof" as well."

Thus we should follow the way of Nabi (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). After all Nabi (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) most definitely had in mind the reformation of Hadhrat Anas (radiyallahu anhu).

*(Mufti Mahmood-ul-Hasan (ra))*

### **Question.**

Due to painful experiences with people, the disease of having ill-thoughts and suspicion has become my nature, and I become restless and fearful when mixing with people. Kindly advise as to how this malady may be rectified.

### **Answer.**

Due to one's experiences with some people to harbour ill-thoughts and suspicion against others is detested. The moment some ill-thought comes to mind, immediately ponder thus: "I have so many faults and sins. I am not innocent. Yet, I am hopeful of the forgiveness of Allah. In the same way others may also be forgiven by Him. However, if I am taken to task due to harbouring ill-thoughts, what answer will I give? On

the other hand it is possible that there is some hidden good quality in these people, due to which all their sins will be converted into good deeds on the day of Qiyaamah.

*(Mufti Mahmood-ul-Hasan (ra))*

### **Question.**

What is the remedy against inclination towards strange women?

### **Answer.**

We should sit in solitude and ponder over the origin, end and even the present condition of the strange women whom one is inclined towards. She was created from an impure drop of fluid. When this drop of fluid was transferred from her father to her mother, Shariah declared that both her parents were in a state of impurity due to which they could not perform salaah or recite Quran.

Thereafter this drop went through various changes of being a clot of blood, a piece of flesh, then hands and feet emerged and eventually life came into it. Its nourishment too was impure blood. Furthermore, with what difficulty she was given birth to! Her nourishment continued to be the impure blood - now in the form of breast milk. As a baby and a growing up child, she knew nothing about purity and impurity. At times her body would be full of impurity and she knew nothing about it. Impurity would be on her hand and she used to put it in her mouth thinking nothing about it.

Her present condition is such that daily there is so much of impurity being formed within her and so much is expelled daily. Every month she has her menses discharge. She also emits the odour of perspiration and she passes wind, repulsive matter and liquid comes out of her eyes, ears, nose and mouth

and when she falls ill she suffers from diarrhoea and vomiting.

After she dies the worms and insects will feed on her body.

To have this strange woman is a sin, whereas to safeguard oneself will earn one Jannah, wherein Allah will bless us with favours much better and superior. To the extent we keep the above thoughts in mind, we will insha-Allah derive benefit.

(Mufti Mahmood-ul-Hasan (ra))

### Question.

Even though I meet others with good character, there are those who intentionally treat me and my family unjustly, without any valid reason. I cannot understand why it is happening and this is causing me much grief. Please advise.

### Answer.

If people oppose us for no reason due to which we begin to have ill-feelings towards them, combat these feelings by treating the same people with good conduct.

When we meet them we should greet them with Salaam, shake their hands, enquire about their health, give them dua's and occasionally present them a gift. Make dua that Allah keeps us in good health and protect us from all evil. Insha-Allah, Allah will create love in their hearts and remove all enmity. Allah alone controls and changes hearts.

(Mufti Mahmood-ul-Hasan (ra))

### Question.

I am continuously being afflicted by calamities and difficulties. I also have much debts to pay. Is there any cure for

this? What should one recite when one is continuously afflicted with problems and difficulties? I have everything I could want. None of my duas have been accepted and it seems as if none of my actions have also been accepted. I am still faced with problems upon problems.

### Answer.

The remedy for calamities is the following:

- Sincere taubah (repentance) for all sins.
- Making much istighfaar (seeking forgiveness) from Allah.
- Fulfilling all the unfulfilled rights of people upon you or asking them for forgiveness. Together with the above, recite much Durood Shareef. Also give Sadaqah (charity).

As far as dua is concerned, the one who says that his dua has not being answered, then in reality Allah does not accept his duas. Therefore, never make such a statement. Everything has an appointed time by Allah and only occurs at the time decreed for it. Hence, do not be hasty. Instead you should be convinced that whatever apparent delay there may be in the answering of your dua is also beneficial for you in some way that is unknown to you.

Furthermore, you should also take into consideration that the acceptance of duas is subject to the conditions being fulfilled. Among the conditions are that one's earnings, food, drink, clothing, etc. must be halaal and one should make dua with an attentive heart. (Fatawa: vol. 4, pg. 446)

(Mufti Mahmood-ul-Hasan (ra))

He whom Allah saves from the evil of that which is between his jaws and the evil of that which is between his legs will enter Jannah. Tirmidhi



## Lessons from the Holy Qur'an

# Al-Qawl Al-Sadid

*O those who believe, fear Allah, and speak what is straight forward. Allah will correct your deeds for your benefit, and forgive for you your sins.  
(33:70-71)*

The original word used in the text for "what is straight forward" is '*sadid*' which has been explained by some exegetes as what is the truth. Others explain it as straight, while still others, as correct. Quoting all of these, Ibn Kathir calls all these true (the beam hitting the target). The Holy Qur'an has chosen this word, instead of *sadiq* or *mustaqim*, because the present word holds all these attributes of ideal speech within itself. It was for this reason that Kashafi said in *Ruh-ul-Bayan*: *Qawl Sadid* is the saying of what is true having no trace of falsity; correct having no trace of error, right thing being no joke or fun; spoken softly, not harshly.

The basic command given to all Muslims in this verse is: Take to *taqwa*, that is, fear Allah and act accordingly). The reality of *taqwa* lies in one's total obedience to all Divine injunctions whereby one carries out everything enjoined and abstains from everything declared prohibited and repugnant. And it is obvious that doing so is no easy task for human beings. Therefore, immediately after the main guideline of '*ittaquallah*': 'Fear Allah and act accordingly', there appears an instruction to start doing something particular, that is, the correction and reform of one's speech. Though, this too is nothing but a part of *taqwa* itself, yet it is one such part of it that, should this thing come under

control, all other remaining components of the comprehensive requirement of *taqwa* would start becoming achievable automatically, as the verse itself has promised that, as a result of one's making his or her speech truthful and straight, Allah will correct his deeds. In other words it means that, 'should you succeed in holding your tongue and avoiding errors of speech and get used to saying what is correct, straight and right, Allah will correct every other deed you do and make all of them better.' Then, concluding the verse, another promise is made and it is said: 'and He will forgive for you your sins'. It means: 'One who gains control over his tongue, learns to harness his or her power of speech and becomes used to saying what is true and right, then, Allah will take care of the rest of his or her deeds, have them corrected and made better as well as forgive any errors or slips made therein.'

### Saying right leads to doing right

Shah Abdul-Qadir has translated this verse in a way that leads to the conclusion that the promise of correction and betterment of deeds made to those who get used to speaking in straight forward manner is not restricted to religious deeds alone. In fact, everything one does in this material world is also included therein. Anyone who gets used to saying the right

thing - that is, never lies, speaks with deliberation without erring or wavering, does not deceive anyone and does not say what would hurt - shall find his spiritual deeds for his eternal life in the Hereafter, also

come out right for him. As for the things he must do to live in this mortal world, these too will turn for the better.

*Adapted from Ma'ariful Qur'an  
Mufti Muhammad Shafi*

## What Happens When You Embrace Islam

When Muhammadanism (an inaccurate name for Islam) is embraced, paganism, fetishism, infanticide and witchcraft disappear. Filth is replaced by cleanliness, and the new convert acquires personal dignity and self-respect. Immodest dances and promiscuous intercourse of the sexes cease; female chastity is rewarded as a virtue; industry replaces idleness; license gives place to law; order and sobriety prevail; blood feuds, cruelty to animals and slaves are eradicated... Islam swept away corruption and superstitions. Islam was a revolt against empty polemics... It gave hope to the slave, brotherhood to mankind, and recognition to the fundamental facts of human nature. The virtues which Islam inculcates are temperance, cleanliness, chastity, justice, fortitude, courage, benevolence, hospitality, veracity and resignation... Islam preaches a practical brotherhood, the social equality of all Muslims. Slavery is not part of the creed of Islam. Polygamy is a more difficult question. Musa did not prohibit it. It was practiced by David and it is not directly forbidden in the New Testament. Muhammad limited the unbounded license of polygamy. It is the exception rather than the rule... In resignation to God's Will, temperance, chastity, veracity and in brotherhood of believers, they (the Muslims) set us a pattern which we should do well to follow. Islam has abolished drunkenness, gambling and prostitution, the three curses of the Christian lands. Islam has done more for civilization than Christianity. The conquest of one-third of the earth to his (Muhammad's) creed was a miracle.

Issac Taylor

# Lesson From Sahih al-Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

## *The Book of Salaah*

*Chapter 1. Cont'd from previous issue*  
**Narrated Aisha the mother of believers**

*Allah enjoined the prayer when He enjoined it, it was two Rak'ats only (in every prayer) both when in residence or on journey. Then the prayers offered on journey remained the same, but (the rak'ats of) the prayers for non-travellers were increased.*

### **Comments**

Previous hadith mentioned how Salaah was made obligatory, and this hadith states the number of rak'ats that were initially obligated. Imam Bukhari narrates on the authority of Sayyida Aisha that initially only two rak'ats (whether residing or on journey) were made obligatory, later on two rak'ats were permitted only when on journey and the number of rak'ats while residing were increased. For Zuhr, Asr and Isha two rak'ats were added which made it four. No changes were made to Maghrib salaah which, as per Ibn Ishaq, comprised of three rak'ats right from the beginning. (*Umdatul Qaari*)

### **Qasr**

A person travelling beyond 77kms is required to perform Qasr (reduction) of

a compulsory salaah. Such a person has to offer only two rak'ats compulsory (fardh) salaah instead of four at Zuhr, Asr and Isha, however, for Maghrib, there is no relaxation. Every other salaah, except Witr, turns optional for a traveller at its stipulated time. Qasr is to be performed as long as a person does not intend to stay at a particular place for 15 or more number of days. For example, if a person residing in Makkah travels to Madinah, he will start doing Qasr after he leaves the limits of Makkah al-Mukarramah, and once he reaches Madinah he will continue to do so if he does not intend to stay at Madinah for 15 or more days. In case he intends to stay at Madinah for 15 or more days after reaching there, he has to offer full number of rak'ats right from the time he reaches there. For further details refer to the books on Fiqh.

### **Qasr—obligatory or optional?**

As per the Hanafite school of thought, Qasr is obligatory and not optional. They support their argument with the hadith of this chapter in which Sayyida Aisha says that initially there was salaah of two rak'ats only while residing as well as on journey. It was at a later stage that the number of rak'ats at home

was increased while keeping it same during journey.

On the other hand, according to the Shafaite school, Qasr during a journey is optional and not obligatory, i.e., one can offer complete (rak'ats of) salaah if he wishes so or offer only two rak'ats. As per this school, both the ways are permissible. They support their argument with the following verse of Qur'an:

*When you travel on the earth, there is no sin on you in shortening your salaah (4:101)*

They argue with the words *Falaysa Alaikum Junaah* (there is no sin on you in shortening your Salaah), which according to them suggests the permissiveness. On the other hand, the Hanafite scholars contend that these words were revealed only to console the Sahaaba who felt apprehensive of losing the *Thawaab* for performing less number of rak'ats when on a journey. Allah consoled them by saying that they will be committing no sin if they offer Qasr during journeys. (And Allah knows best).

Allaama Ayni quotes Sayyida Aisha in Umdatul Qaari, saying:

*"Indeed, when slaah was enjoined, it was two rak'ats only. Afterwards, when Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) came to Madinah and (Muslims) attained tranquility, two more rak'ats were added except for the Maghrib salaah as it is 'Witr' of the day. She said that when Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) undertook journey he offered salaah as per the initial decree (i.e., two rak'ats).*

### **Increase in non-traveler's salaah**

According to Allaama Ayni some people believe that this increment was a raise in the 'number of times salaah is to be offered', i.e., before Me'raj it was ob-

ligatory to offer Salaah two times only (Fajr and Isha) as per this Qur'anic statement:

*"And proclaim His purity in the evening and the morning" (3:41)*

Abu Ishaaq is of the opinion that it is also permissible to interpret it like this (i.e., as above). (*Umdatul Qaari*)

Muslim has quoted from Ibn Abbas through Mujahid, saying:

*"Through the blessed tongue of your Prophet, Allah has decreed it obligatory to perform 4 rak'ats in residence, 2 on journey and 1 in fear".*

Nasa'ee, Ibn Maajah and Ibn Hibban have quoted from Umar saying:

*"The Qasr salaah is 2 Rak'ats, the salaah of Eid-ul-Azha is 2, the Salaah of Eid-ul-Fitr is 2, and Juma' is also a 2 rak'at Salaah. These all are without Qasr as stated by your prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)". (Umdatul Qaari)*

### **Chapter 2 : The essentiality to pray (Salaah) while wearing clothes.**

And the statement of Allah "Take on your adornment at every Masjid" (7:31); and "The one who offered Salaah while covering himself with a single cloth" and it is quoted from Salam bin al-Akwa'

that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "Button up even if with a thorn" and the Sanad of this statement has been questioned. And the one who offered Salaah while wearing the clothes in which he had performed sexual intercourse when no impurity was seen on those clothes; and the prophet ordered not to perform Tawaaf (circumambulation of Ka'ba) in naked state.

### **Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab**

After mentioning the compulsory (fardh) nature of Salaah, Imam Bukhari

now discusses its pre-requisites/pre-conditions. There is consensus in the Ummah that it is fardh to cover 'Satr-ul-Awrah' (i.e., covering the area from umbilicus to knees for males and whole body except hands, feet and face for females). Majority of scholars like Imam Abu Haneefa, Imam Shaafa'ee and Imam Ahmad bin Hambal are of the view that 'Satr-ul-Awrah' is obligatory in Salaah, the view concurred with by Imam Bukhari also. Imam Maalik considers it is Sunnah.

The Qur'anic verse which decrees Satr-ul-Awrah as fardh in Salaah, is:

*"Take on your adornment at every Masjid" (7:31)*

Ibn Hazm has quoted a consensus of leading scholars regarding this verse which elucidates that one should cover his body during Salaah. (*Fathul Baari*).

It is evident that a properly dressed person looks elegant and disciplined than a naked one. Human nature considers it odd and uncivilised to remain naked or see someone else in such a state. Nowadays some people, while forgetting their human nature and inclined towards animal instincts, call nakedness a part of civilization, but here we are talking about true humans and not those ill-cultured ones.

The verse mentioned above clearly commands a Muslim to wear a proper dress before entering a Masjid, the main purpose being to offer Salaah. Here a question may arise, what should a person do if he has only a single cloth? According to Imam Bukhari, it is permissible for such a person to offer Salaah in a single cloth, the only important thing

being that he should cover his private parts. A hadith has been quoted by Imam Bukhari in which Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) tells Salma bin al-Akwa that if he is wearing a single cloth he should tie it up so that it doesn't get unfastened during Salaah and he ends up looking at his own private parts. He further told him that if he doesn't get anything to tie up his cloth, he should not hesitate to use even a thorn for the purpose. From this hadith the learned scholars have derived the conclusion that since looking at one's own private parts is not liked by the Shariah, hence it not allowed to see private parts of others.

Imam Bukhari has answered another question as well, i.e., can a person offer his Salaah wearing the same clothes that he had while having sexual intercourse with his wife? He says that it is permissible provided they are free from any visible impurity.

Lastly, Imam Bukhari has supported his argument by another hadith in which Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) forbade performing Tawaaf in a naked state. According to this hadith, since it is not permissible to perform Tawaaf naked, how can it be permissible for one to offer salaah in such a state knowing that salaah is more superior a deed than Tawaaf. Arabs used to perform Tawaaf naked during the period of Jahiliyyah (ignorance) with the belief that it was not permissible to do so while donning the clothes in which they had committed many sins. Islamic Shariah altogether rejected this nonsensical belief.

# Never In, to be Going Out

*Syed Iqbal Zaheer*

With the pathetic inner weaknesses of the Muslims over the world, their orphanhood (in terms of political leadership), and religious leadership in a state of stupefaction, the attacks on Islam and Muslims that had remained confined to drawing rooms, corridors, private meetings and occasional public remarks, are now taken up by the all-powerful and all-penetrating media at a good pace and a good force. Cold blooded murder of 500,000 Iraqi children, shrugged off with the shrug of the shoulders, is not terrorism. Those 500,000 were not civilians. They were not children. Dogs set upon thousands of naked jailed inmates in Iraq and other places, is not terrorism by any definition. Kidnap of men in hundreds and their confinement into secret locations spread over the globe, has no trace of terrorism in it. Threats such as, "If you are not with us, you are with them, and if you are not with us, we will pulverize you," are not statements of the terrorists. Thirteen years of bombing and destruction of the infrastructure (previous to invasion, so that it could be rebuilt by American companies), terrorizing the entire Iraqi population, day and night, (a child started with the kindergarten, finished his school, and they were still bombing his little country), did not evoke

any journalist to call it terrorism of the worst kind ever witnessed by humanity. But an act of desperation and self-destruction, by those who have been given the message that it is either a life of humiliation or death, is such a heinous work, that every journalist is on his feet, fists raised high, shouting vehemently, until his throat cracks up: "Muslims are terrorists, Islam spreads terrorism, the Qur'an is a terrorist's handbook."

Sometimes when the stock of patience runs low and the hatred for Islam runs high, the barrels burst out. In such situations the media cannot wait for a blast. They can blast Islam and Muslims on the smallest of pretext. The Imrana witch-tale is a case in point. The allegation of rape by a father in law was taken to the Islamic Court in Deoband. In response a fatwa was pronounced. What is an Islamic Court? It is a toothless body of jurisconsults. What are its powers? It is not recognized and so, in practice it does not exist. Can it enforce its rulings? It can not. Can it override the Law of the land? No. Then what is it? In a country like India, it is a mere fatwa issuing body. What is a fatwa? It is an opinion. Who understands this better than the well-educated ignorant Muslim elites? The media.

In this particular case, the fatwa

pronounced was deeply disappointing to the media. It was not the kind of fatwa that would have allowed it to show solidarity to the poor, aged, wrongly accused man. They lost the opportunity to condemn Islam on grounds that it handed down uncivilized punishment and chopped heads on small pretext. To their disappointment, the opinion at Deoband was that, if the situation was truly as stated by the alleging party, she was now prohibited to her husband. This was not at all what the media was waiting to hear. Had Deoband said that the man was guilty and should be stoned to death, it would have pleased many. The media world over would have welcomed it to make such a huge protesting noise, that creatures on a distant planet would have decided to visit the earth to find out what was going on.

The Deoband ruling refused to treat human life cheap: guillotine this man because a crime was alleged against him? (Kill 500,000 children because, their dictator given WMD by the Americans had switched over to Euro from the American dollar). The Deoband body implied by its ruling that there were two points to be noted. The man denied, the victim asserted. The man could not be stoned to death because human life is sacrosanct in Islam. (Allegations are not enough to murder 500,000 children). Allegations are not enough to sentence a single man to death. Either the accused must admit, or there must be witnesses against him. So, here is a "on-sale" witness (sometimes a government agent) who is brought into the courts to swear by all that is holy to him that the accused is guilty. But Islam says, no. The witness should not be one available for sale. Those who are above suspicion of

corruptions must testify that the witness is trustworthy. Only such a person can be presented in the court as a witness. If he is proven false, he will stay in prison for a while learning Islam and good behavior. He will come out earlier, if he memorized a part of the Qur'an, prayed five times, fasted, showed all signs of repentance, and the jail authorities, who are less policemen and more reformers in the Islamic system, (jails are called "Correction Facility" in Saudi Arabia), recommend that the man could be freed even though he had not completed his term. This is the Islamic system. The witness should be beyond suspicion, or he must be civilized. The secular courts are 1500 years behind the Islamic system of trial, deliverance of justice, and as an institution for reduction of crimes.

In this case, did the woman produce any witness? No. But she wanted the man to be stoned to death. And the media wanted to hear exactly that kind of pronouncement from Deoband. But, what if the woman had produced a witness? Would the Islamic Court have delivered the judgment of death? No. Islam is a religion in which humans enjoy the greatest of rights ever given to them any time in their history. The woman would have been asked to produce a second witness, of the same class defined above: not a hired man, but a trustworthy, honorable and pious Muslim. Had she produced a second, would the accused face the firing squad? No, the court would have asked the accused: did you commit the crime? If he said no, the court would have required the woman to produce a third witness, and then a fourth witness.

What if the four witnesses, of the class that are specified, testified to the crime? Would the accused electrified on a

steel chair? (Those who have been allowed to see the pain on the face of the electrocuted, have said that this is not a civilized manner of dealing death). The Islamic Court would have asked the four witnesses, in turn, in separate sessions, to testify that they saw the act perpetrated by the accused as clearly as you see a thermometer inserted into its case, a glass needle into a perfume bottle. Supposing they did, would the man be condemned to die? Far from such a foolish judgment.

The Islamic Court would ascertain that the accused was sane. Doctors would have to testify. What if he is found sane? Should he be gassed to death? Not yet. The sanctity of human life in Islam will prevent Muslim judges from taking it away. They will have to find out, is the accused major or minor? If major, is the accused to be hanged? No. No. Do not be impatient to shed blood. More questions would be asked and greater certainty would be established. Is he, e.g., by any chance phallus-less? Or, is he a eunuch? Or, is the organ dysfunctional? Is it paralyzed? It is only after such thoroughgoing investigations, which leave no room for doubt whatsoever, that a man can be condemned to death. Life is a gift from God. It cannot be taken away by the humans.

The American Secretary of State was never considered worthy of a trial for admitting that sometimes, murder of 500,000 children is justified, as the price that has to be paid for achieving the desired objectives. But this exactly is the Jahiliyy system for the destruction of which the Final Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was raised, and a band of followers created who would establish that system all over the world, if neces-

sary by force because, true justice will never be in the agenda of the humanity let loose to use its own puny brain, and its own ghoulish fancies. Now, what would have happen if the accused was a non Muslim and the accuser a Muslim? The answer is, a non Muslim is far more worthier in the Islamic system than he is in his own and in the eyes of his own Law. He will not be condemned to death without the four witnesses, without other assertions.

If it is the rules of those who jump when they should squat quietly and learn lessons, who accuse the Islamic laws as unfit for a civilized world .. if they are allowed to prevail, there would be chop, chop, chop; hang, hang, hang. Or, at the other extreme it would be complete impunity. A woman is in a black man's room two hours past midnight. She accuses of rape and the man is imprisoned for a couple of years. Why was she in his room? They were not even friends: just acquaintances. Yet the man is condemned. Another case: a woman is in the company of a white man, and is raped almost in the open. She sobs when subjected to questioning in the court. The man is declared innocent and walks out triumphantly. He is white. Did skin color play its role? Whether or not, according to Islam, the whole system is wrong. Men will never witness full justice in this system.

Coming back to the case at hand, the accusation lacked strength. (In fact, later it was discovered by the Deoband scholars after a visit that there were no circumstantial evidence either. They discovered other things, such as, there was an inheritance problem too). In any case, the case fell apart on grounds that the accuser could not produce any witness



whatsoever. She should have gone home. But she insisted. So came the question. Are you sure? She said yes. Would you like to think back? She said no. It was one hundred percent true. The jurisconsults had no choice. She had to be told that on her own authority, her own assertions, her own insistence, and her own responsibility, if it was admitted that she was raped by her father in law, she should separate from her husband. She was prohibited to him.

It is a fair Islamic judgment. To tell her to go back to the son of the man who raped her would have been hard upon him. How was the husband to treat his wife? Was she his mother, or his wife? Was she the children's mother, or their grand mother? Sometime back Newsweek magazine had carried a lengthy coverage of crime in the USA. It had cited a case. While a man was in prison, his wife told him during a visit that she had been raped by his father. The man said he would hunt down his father and kill him once out of jail. That is in a society which has lost all its sense of moral values. What about this Muslim man, belonging to a culture where, if the father caressed his wife's hand in his presence, he would either kill him or say, "You can have her for good?" How was this husband to treat his wife, who, if she was raped, then, instead of conceal-

ing the affair, so easy to do since she did not have a witness, chose to make it public and went to a distant court to seek justice? Was his wife seeking justice, or was it mischief? Was she honoring him or was it his humiliation in public eye that she meant? Should he keep her, for fingers to be pointed at him: "This man's wife lay with his father?" No. In a fit of anger, he could kill her. Separation was the best course. And this what Deoband suggested.

But the media immediately picked up the issue. The press and the TV gave it the headlines. Islam was unjust to women, Deoband was outdated. It must be closed. And, since Deoband is a Madrasah, all Madrasahs must be closed. Some Muslims, who think they are Muslims because they visit the mosques, declared that if this is what Islam stands for – injustice to women – then they are ready to abandon it. Those were the actual words of a few educated mosque-going persons. They did not realize that whoever said such things was never "in," to be going "out." The media could be forgiven on presumed ignorance, and prejudice on grounds of enmity. But, how can someone imagine that he will be forgiven, who raises an accusing finger at his Creator's own system of justice?

YMD-Aug-2005

We were the most disgraced of people,  
and Allah honoured us with Islam. If  
we look for honor in anything else, Al-  
lah will disgrace us.  
*Sayyiduna Umar (RA)*

If you eat all that you desire, life will  
bring you much that's undesirable and  
you will suffer.

*Shaykh Saadi (ra)*

To approach one's wife with a cheerful  
disposition is a forgotten Sunnah.  
*Ml. Hakeem Akhtar (ra)*

To be able to thank Allah for a bless-  
ing, is a blessing within itself.

*Imam Shafa'ie (ra)*

# Islam and Traffic Regulations

*Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani*

Several years ago when I visited South Africa, it was my first visit to a developed country. Today it is a liberated peaceful country and the issue of apartheid has become history, but at that time it was ruled by Dutch whites and apartheid was at its climax. Owning a house in a big city was a right reserved to whites only, and people of other races had to live in separate colonies established at considerable distance from big cities. Almost 30 KMs from Johannesburg a similar colony by the name of Azaadville was established which was inhabited mostly by the people of Indian origin. Since my host also resided in that colony so I had to stay there.

In a vast area if houses for a limited population are constructed in a systematic and organized manner, the spaciousness inside the area will be evidently visible, this was quite obvious in Azaadville. It is an extremely beautiful, visibly calm and exceptionally clean city. Though everyone there owned a vehicle still the roads were devoid of any congestion and just a person or two could be seen treading the footpath and that too in a civilized manner. Even on these deserted roads people would stop their cars at the black line drawn across roads even at minor ends and proceed further only after taking a look right and left. The most surprising thing to me was that though these roads were clearly deserted to the farthest of ends but still a driver

even if in hurry or engaged in a conversation would stop at these lines, and automatically his neck would swing right and left as if a remotely controlled machine. Initially I thought that it might be due to some doubt that our driver stops now and then but when it happened again and again I asked for the reason. My companions informed me that as per the traffic rules of South Africa it is mandatory for a driver to stop at such lines and take a look right and left before proceeding further. 'We have become so habitual to it that our foot automatically applies the brake at such junctures and our necks swing right and left' they said. Until the time I stayed in Azaadville I was unable to locate a single person breaking this rule even though there were no policemen on the roads to enforce it nor any speed breakers similar to that in our country.

Since it was the first time that I saw a scene like this which surprised me. Later when I witnessed such an organized system in a number of developed countries across East and West, it seemed to me a normal scenario. But when I see the traffic conditions of my own country, it appears that the situation is worsening day by day rather than improving. I won't go into the details as everybody is well aware of it.

Though the lackadaisical approach of government machinery and lack of proper training and knowledge of

traffic rules is certainly there, but one of the major causes of errant traffic conditions our part of the world is that we have rendered such issues as something alien to religion. We have programmed our minds in such a way that limits Islam only to Masjid and Madrassa. Our worldly affairs, including the correct traffic sense, seem to have, God forbid, no connection with Islam.

The result of this wrong notion is that even the thought of possible commission of a sin by violating traffic rules never occurs to a person. Further, it is an irony that breaking the rules is considered a sort of bravery nowadays. As much as a person is 'master' in breaking the rules that much brave he considers himself. Even good and religious people - who usually remain quite concerned with prohibitions and permissions - least care about the traffic rules, and neither does their conscience feel burdened nor do they consider such kind of an action wrong or sinful. Driving on a wrong track, jumping the red light, overtaking at wrong places, have become a common practice. Not only do these fall under the category of unruliness but are *sins* as per the religious commandments.

Firstly, because all kinds of traffic rules are framed for the benefit of general masses, and all the rules which a government frames for the common good are obligatorily required to be followed from the Islamic point of view. The Qur'an says:

*O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. (4:59)*

The meaning of this obedience is to adhere to the rules which the authorities frame keeping in view the public interest, as long as they do not go against the Islamic Shariah. The decree of following

these rules has been mentioned alongside the obedience to Allah and His Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), which means that Islam mandates following of such rules.

Secondly, when a person acquires a license to drive, he is promising the authorities - verbally, written or at least practically - to follow the traffic rules while driving. If at the time of acquiring the license he mentions before the authorities that he will not be able to conform to the traffic rules, will he be issued the license? So, a license is issued on the basis of this agreement. Therefore, if after that he breaks any rule he commits the sin of - breach of trust.

Thirdly, breaking such rules is equal to causing trouble to people and at times the basic cause of death, injury or at least some sort of mental injury to innocent people. I have mentioned in these lines that to cause trouble to a person is such a grave sin which is not forgivable by Tawbah (repentance only) until the victim himself forgives the offender.

Almost in every book on Islamic Jurisprudence, the principle that - a person is allowed to tread or run his means of conveyance on a highway on the condition that he guarantees the security of others i.e., he must refrain from all such activities which may cause trouble or danger to others - is mentioned clearly. Without this cautiousness it is not allowed to make use of a road which is the collective property of people. And if due to carelessness a person suffers any kind of physical or material loss then, as per the Islamic Shariah, whole ransom is to be paid by the person making careless use of road.

Now, if a person jumping a red light overtakes a vehicle at a point where it is not allowed, it may apparently seem

a minor unruliness but in essence four grave sins converge in this 'minor' fault:

1. Violation of law, and disobedience to authorities.
2. Breach of trust.
3. Ensnare a fellow human being.
4. Illegal use of road.

We commit these sins day and night without any qualms and remain complacent of not having done anything wrong.

Sometimes hundreds get stranded due to a single person unruliness, e.g., if due to certain reason traffic gets halted on one side, some hasty people not tolerating a brief interruption, ply their vehicles on that side meant for the traffic in opposite direction thus impeding the route of those approaching in that direction, which results in traffic jam for hours together. This kind of unruliness falls under the definition of *'Fasad fil Arz'*. The sin of putting hundreds of people in distress and trouble falls on the person who drives his vehicle in wrong direction.

Not only has our beautiful religion taught us these things but it has also provided us the detailed guidance

about them. It has clearly laid bare its evergreen and everlasting teachings before us, but it is we who instead of understanding, learning and acting have kept them restricted within the four walls of our Mosques and Madrassas. Other communities have at least corrected their esoteric system by acting on these golden principles, but we, by leaving them, are not only ruining our Aakhirat but also turning our worldly abode into a place of difficulties and uneasiness. We also distort the beautiful face of Islam with our evil doings.

The solution of these problems does not lie in commenting or lecturing about them but can be obtained only when every single person stirs up his conscience and, without paying heed to what people around do, at least save himself from sinning and make a resolve to act on these golden Islamic principles.

Change is always engendered through individual endeavor which gradually take shape of a nationwide temperament.

*This article appeared in 1994.  
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### **Protection against Shaitaan**

*“(The mother of Maryam [‘alaihas salaam] said) I have named her Maryam and I place her and her progeny under Your shelter against Shaitaan, the rejected.” (3:36)*

Hanna, the mother of Maryam (‘alaihas salaam), sought the protection of Allah from Shaitaan for her daughter and her progeny. We too should turn to Allah and make du‘aa for the protection of our children. We should place our trust in Allah and not in the material means that surround us. To lose all hope of our children reforming and changing their lives is a clear indication that we have forgotten our Allah, the Being Who can guide whoever He wishes.

She chose the name “Maryam” which means a worshipper. We too should keep names with good meanings for our children. The object is not to keep a unique or rare name; rather we should keep a name that has a pious effect on the child.

# Creating Stereotypes

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*Carl W. Ernst*

In more recent history, undoubtedly the most important factor in creating stereotypes about Arabs and Muslims has been the Zionist movement and the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is ironic that Zionism, which began as a socialist movement led by secular Jews, has become a defining element in Jewish religious identity. From a historical perspective, Zionism is a classic European nationalist movement with a colonial implementation. The first theorist of Jewish nationalism, Moses Hess (d. 1875), was a socialist and a close associate of Karl Marx. The early Zionist movement, under the leadership of Theodore Herzl (d. 1905), formulated a national identity for Jews focused on the return to the traditional homeland around Jerusalem. Large-scale Jewish immigration from Europe and Russia to Palestine gathered momentum following World War 1, after Britain took control of portions of the former Ottoman Empire. In its scale and pioneer attitude, the establishment of Jewish settlements in British Palestine, with European support, was comparable to the French colonization of Algeria.

The horrors of the Holocaust gave urgency to the Zionist movement after World War II, and British withdrawal from its colonies led to the 1947 independence of Israel, the first of several wars with adjoining Arab countries, and

the creation of an enormous Palestinian refugee population. American attitudes toward the state of Israel have been heavily colored by Protestant evangelical Christianity, assisted by pro-Israel American Jewish groups. Many Americans do not make much distinction between the ancient Israelites of the Bible and the modern nation-state. Israel figures dramatically in recent apocalyptic speculations based on the Book of Daniel and the Book of Revelation, such as Hal Lindsay's best-selling book, *The Late Great Planet Earth*. These contemporary interpretations of biblical prophecy frequently include predictions of the destruction of Muslim monuments in Jerusalem in order to permit the rebuilding of the Solomonic temple, the advent of the Messiah, and the events of the Last Days. Israeli authorities, who likewise draw upon the symbolism of ancient Israel, have found it convenient to encourage this Christian belief, despite the demise of Judaism envisioned in these apocalyptic scenarios. American Christians therefore generally instinctively support the state of Israel against Palestinians, despite the significant minority of Palestinians who are Christians.

Since Israel's 1967 conquest of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, it has controlled these Palestinian territories through colonial mechanisms inher-

ited from the British. The Occupied Territories are practically the only place left where repressive British colonial laws are still being applied, permitting land seizure, mass punishments, destruction of suspects' homes, denial of building permits, and the like. Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation took the form of leftist secular national liberation movements like the Palestine Liberation Organization. It is a serious mistake to call this conflict religious or to regard it as rooted in primordial religious attitudes. The conflict between Jews and Arabs is a contemporary dispute about ownership of the land, and it is a product of the past century. It is only in recent years that religious fundamentalism has taken hold as a force among a portion of the Palestinians, with the rise of the Hamas movement and groups such as Islamic Jihad. Spectacular acts of violence committed by Palestinian commandos in the 1960s and 1970s firmly established the image of the Arab as terrorist. These Palestinians were secular, and Arabs are a minority of Muslims; yet to the average American newspaper reader, "Arab," "Muslim," and "terrorist" have become almost interchangeable terms. In the absence of any contact with real Arabs or Muslims in daily life, many have accepted this kind of violent image as a substitute, as if there could be an entire society composed of terrorists.

Without attempting to trace the further history of these stereotypes, I must say something here about one of

the most powerful images of all: the veiled woman, an image often tinged with erotic fantasies. As we have seen, accusations of lascivious behavior was one of the stock charges that Christians made against the Prophet Muhammad. The possibility of a man marrying as many as four wives under Islamic law, though uncommon in practice, also fed the imagination of Christian clerics. New material for fantasizing about Arab and Muslim women became available with

Muslims are considered to have dysfunctional roles for women, yet that emblem of Western technological superiority, the Internet, is saturated with pornographic images, and the sexualization of women is omnipresent in television, newspapers, and advertising.

Jean Antoine Galland's French translation of the *Thousand and One Nights* (published 1704-17), which created a craze for Oriental tales.' In the nineteenth century, French Orientalist painters created luxuriant depictions of seductive harem life, using European prostitutes as nude models. The conservative clothing worn by many Near Eastern women (including Eastern Christians and Jews through the nineteenth century) and the segregation of unrelated men and women in public spaces also encouraged male European travelers with overactive imaginations.

Although modern Europeans and Americans assume that Muslim women are invariably oppressed, it is by no means clear that Muslim women have always suffered from disadvantages in comparison with Christians or others. This is an instance in which very recent advances in Europe and America are somehow assumed to be an essential part of the West. English women did not have full property rights until the Married Women's Property Acts of 1870 and

1882, yet under Islamic law, Muslim women have been guaranteed inheritance and property rights since the seventh century. English women were still chattels of their husband or father when Lady Mary Wortley Montagu traveled to Constantinople in 1716 with her husband, the British ambassador. She was amazed to meet there Ottoman women of the nobility who owned large estates and managed their own property without male interference. Lady Mary even found the veil to be a liberating device that freed women from the prying eyes of men. Certainly misogyny and unequal rights for women are features that can be found in abundance in the societies of North Africa, the Near East, and much of Asia, but can we honestly say that America and Europe are free of these problems? It is easy and hypocritical to accuse other societies of abuses and inequities when injustices still exist in our own culture. The image of the oppressed Muslim woman can all too often serve as another self-righteous reason for Europeans to congratulate themselves on their superiority.

In all the images of Islam that are commonly circulated in European and American culture, little can be found that is positive. Is it possible for an entire civilization to have such negative features, enduring more than 1000 years across half the world? Although I am not a psychologist, I cannot help but feel that

there is a mechanism of projection operating here, along the lines spoken of by Jungians, in which one's own negative characteristics are projected onto others. There is certainly plenty of evidence of fantasy throughout the history of anti-Islamic stereotypes. Muslims are considered to be violent, yet we do not hear any similar accusations about intrinsic violence in Christianity or European culture; what was it about Christianity that motivated the world conquests of the nineteenth century or more recent atrocities such as the 1996 massacre of more than 5,000 Muslim men and boys carried out in a single day by Eastern Orthodox Serbs in Srebrenica? Muslims are considered to have dysfunctional roles for women, yet that emblem of Western technological superiority, the Internet, is saturated with pornographic images, and the sexualization of women is omnipresent in television, newspapers, and advertising. Is the West so confident of its relations between the sexes? Everyone needs to become educated as a media critic nowadays, because the recycling of sensational images is what the communications media love most, especially when conflict is present. Islam is a subject that most Americans and Europeans have experienced only through these negative images and stereotypes. Clearly the time has come to go beyond those images and encounter real human beings.

*Taken from : Following Muhammad*

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:

“Whoever amongst you wakes up, secure in his home, healthy in his body, having the bare amount of food that he requires for the day, then it is as if the entire world has been given to him, with all that it contains!” (Tirmizi)

# Are We Missing the Point

*Yasmin Mogahed*

To some, a Monet is only a collection of dots. To others, it is a perfect masterpiece. To some, Islam is nothing but a code of rules and regulations. But, to those who understand, it is a perfect vision of life.

As Muslims, we often focus so much on Islam's dos and don'ts that we miss the bigger picture. Islam came to perfect our manners, and yet we are willing to scream and shout to win an argument about zabiha meat. Islam came to build our bond with our Creator, and while we wear our hijabs and kufis, we delay our prayers.

Islam came to establish a community of believers, but while we decorate our masjids with gold and silver, our prayer rows remain empty. Islam came to teach us about God, and despite wearing His words on our necklaces and decorating our houses with them, when those verses are recited to us, our hearts remain unmoved and our lives unchanged.

And Islam came to make us one brotherhood, yet we divide ourselves and alienate one another over issues like moon sighting and voting.

This is not to say, of course, that the dos and don'ts in Islam are not important. They are crucial. The problem is that we have forgotten what they stand for. For example, the wearing of Islamic dress should never be minimized. But we

have forgotten that that hijab and that beard are only symbols of our greater devotion to God. For us to wear that hijab and that beard while it has no bearing on our character means we have missed the point.

If we spend thousands of dollars decorating our masjids but then use that masjid only to display status and win arguments, we have lost its intended purpose. And if we have memorized every haram and halal ingredient of facial soap, but we own businesses that are based on interest and sell alcohol, have we not made a mockery of Allah's deen?

That deen is what transforms humanity from the lowest of the low to the representatives of God on earth. The Qur'an tells us: "Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: 'I will create a vicegerent on earth...'" (2:30)

As a representative of God on earth, we are given a very great responsibility. It is a trust so heavy that even the mountains rejected it. Allah tells us in the Qur'an: "We did indeed offer the trust to the Heavens and the Earth and the mountains; but they refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof: but man undertook it; he was indeed unjust and foolish." (33:72)

As believers, we should never lose sight of this responsibility. It is the fulfillment of that mission that transforms



us from ‘asfala safileen’ – the lowest of the low (Qur’an, 95:5), into ‘khaira ummatin ukhrijat linnaas’ – the best of people arisen for mankind. (3:110)

But how can we be that “best of people”? Allah describes how in His book: “Ye are the best of peoples, risen up for mankind, commanding what is right, forbidding what is evil, and believing in Allah...” (3:110).

The essence of that struggle is to believe, to fight for Truth and to strive against evil. And as soon as we give up that noble struggle, we will become among those people who Allah describes in surat Al-Asr as being in an utter state of loss. Allah also describes the ones who will be saved from that state: “Except such as have faith, and do righteous deeds, and (join together) in the mutual teaching of truth, and of patience and constancy.” (103:3)

And, so, if we continue to abandon this greater mission and purpose, we will have transformed the perfect vision of existence into nothing more than a collection of dots.

## **Becoming the Queen**

Every young girl longs and makes du‘aa for the day she’ll receive a good proposal. Imagine a girl who is proposed for by not only the ruler of the time, but a ruler who is also, without a doubt, the second best person to walk the surface of this earth after the Ambiyaa (AS).

During his rule, ‘Umar (RA) requested ‘Ali (RA) to give him the hand of his daughter, Ummu Kult-hoom (RA), in marriage. ‘Ali (RA) initially declined and excused himself saying that he had reserved his daughters for the sons of his brother, Ja’far (RA). ‘Umar (RA), however, pleaded with him and explained that there was no one who would appreciate and value her nobility as much as he would. ‘Ali (RA) therefore agreed and the nikaah was performed.

After the nikaah, ‘Umar (RA) went to a group of Muhaajireen and exclaimed in excitement, “Congratulate me!” They congratulated him and asked, “Who have you married?” He replied, “The daughter of ‘Ali (RA). I had heard Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) saying, ‘Every relationship will be severed (will be of no avail) on the Day of Qiyaamah besides my relationship.’ I had given my daughter (Hafsah [RA]) in marriage to Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) and so I wished to take one of his family in my marriage.” (Al-Isaabah vol. 8, pg. 465)

Lessons:

1. Although the main reason for her receiving this excellent proposal was her being the granddaughter of Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam), which is not something that is within a person’s choice, we definitely have the choice of acquiring praise worthy qualities and habits that will be a reason for us receiving good proposals as well.
2. Very often, a bad picture is painted regarding the relationship between ‘Umar and ‘Ali (RAA) in an attempt to show that they were enemies who hated one another. The logical answer is that if ‘Ali (RA) regarded ‘Umar (RA) to be his arch enemy, would he have ever handed his young daughter to him in marriage?

# How the US Media is Promoting Islamophobia

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*Mohamed Ghilan*

The amount of time mainstream media spends covering isolated events of violence perpetuated by Muslims is insane

How much time the news dedicates to covering radicalisation and terrorism may be the most significant overlooked factor contributing to the rise of Islamophobia in the US today.

The recent senseless shooting at the Inland Regional Centre in San Bernardino, California, is a case in point. Aside from the identities of the assailants and their victims, as well as the types of weapons they used and hid in their place of residence, we simply do not have any other relevant facts to report on.

While this may be an expected part of how a proper police investigation unfolds in its early stages, with facts accumulating over time to construct a clearer picture of motives, plans and the greater context of why and how this attack took place, such logic does not work for mainstream news media outlets that survive on ratings.

While a police investigation waits for facts to construct the narrative, mainstream news media channels construct multiple narratives from speculations based on a dearth of facts. One pundit after another coming off from a conveyor belt of various think tanks and institutions come on screen to share

their conjectured thoughts, mostly devoid of evidence, just to fill airtime and give viewers the illusion of progress in the unfolding of the story.

Islamophobia is often discussed in the context of the discourse of how Muslims and Islam are presented in the media. Its focus is on deconstructing the headlines, the editorials, and the bigoted insinuations being made by broadcasters and pundits.

However, there is the simple matter of how much time the news dedicates to this topic. If the same amount of time spent on terrorism was spent covering how much teachers are underpaid, climate change, healthcare system problems, economic disparities, gun control or literally any of the more pressing issues Americans face, the US would be a different country than it is today, and it would be for the better.

I spent an hour this Saturday afternoon with a stopwatch to keep track of how often terrorism and radicalisation were the main topic on CNN. At the end of the hour I had a total time of 19 minutes and 47 seconds. The remaining time was split evenly between commercials and other news content.

The facts we actually know about the San Bernardino shooting could be summarised in five bullet points and related in a matter of 30-45 seconds. In other words, much of the news coverage

on CNN was largely vacuous speculations about terrorism and radicalisation devoid of any facts.

Given the time CNN dedicates to covering violence committed by Muslims, it is useful to take note of some statistics to see the discrepancies. According to the FBI Database, of all terrorist attacks occurring on US soil during the period from 1985 to 2005, attacks by Islamic extremists represent only six percent of the total. Of the approximately 351 mass shootings so far in the US this year, only two, yes two, were committed by Muslims, which represents a whopping 0.57 percent of all mass shootings in gun-loving America.

When Americans were asked to guess the Muslim population in the US, they thought it formed 15 percent of the total, or over 47 million Muslims. In reality, the Muslim population in the US is an estimated 2.6 million, which is about 0.8 percent of the total population. Interestingly, a national survey of US physicians in 2005 revealed that Muslims represent 2.5 percent of a profession dedicated to saving people's lives.

Finally, Gallup polls show that significantly more than any other group in the US, Muslim Americans are the staunchest in opposition to attacks against civilians, whoever - military or individuals - may carry out such attacks.

Regardless of the statistics and arguments, the fact that a mainstream news outlet such as CNN would dedicate half of its airtime in an hour of news coverage to discussing Muslim violence and radicalisation places Muslims in the position of the husband having to answer the proverbial loaded question of wheth-

er he has stopped beating his wife.

This is not an issue of balancing the platforms and allowing more Muslims to speak for themselves. The very structure of the discourse is perilous. It gives the impression to viewers, irrespective of whether it is balanced or not, that Muslim violence in America is unique, inevitable and a growing threat that requires half of everyone's total attention.

This has taken a more dangerous turn with the San Bernardino shooting, because the assailants were not on any terror watch list and are presented in the media as the most generic unsuspecting Muslim neighbours one can have. One should shutter at the thought of what this type of coverage could lead to for average American Muslims if it is not put in check.

The primary culprit in the rise of Islamophobia in the US is the media, and it starts with the insane amount of time dedicated to covering the unfortunate, yet isolated events of violence perpetuated by Muslims. To produce content, they fill their airtime with speculation devoid from facts. To make it palatable for the viewer, they grant this empty speculation an air of authority by playing musical chairs with pundits having fancy academic and job titles from think tanks and institutions.

In pursuit of their ratings, mainstream media outlets such as CNN are directly contributing to an atmosphere of fear disguised as keeping their viewers informed. In turn, they make the American Muslim community automatically guilty in the eyes of their fellow citizens of a crime they neither committed nor condoned.

A true believer is not involved in taunting, or frequently cursing (others) or in indecency or abusing. (Tirmidhi)

# Stress Management from an Islamic Perspective

Hannah M

We all run from mental health because of the connotations that it has. Typically when we think of mental health, we think of the more extreme symptoms; delusions, hearing voices and a complete lack of contact with reality. But what about the more common 'everyday' symptoms; those that I can almost guarantee that everyone reading this has gone through at some point in their life? We all get stressed at times; it's part of life, part of Allah's test and in fact, it is said that Allah tests those he loves most.

It was narrated by Abu Huraira that God's Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:

*"If God wants to do good to somebody, He afflicts him with trials."*

The more you are tested that more you are loved by Allah, partly because it expiates your sins. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:

*"There is nothing that befalls a believer, not even a thorn that pricks him, but Allah will record one good deed for him and will remove one bad deed from him."*

Let's face it. We've all sinned at some point in our lives, so it would be a mercy from Allah to experience something that will ultimately expiate our bad deeds. Hence, to go through stress and trial is nothing to be frowned upon because this is Allah's Mercy. If only people could view the trials of mental health

in this way, then maybe we would have a much better opinion of those going through mental health problems, because Allah loves them and is erasing their sins for what they are enduring.

The beauty of Islam however, is that the Quran and Sunnah equip us with all that we need to be able to cope with such difficult situations and, in-sha Allah, I will highlight some in this article. I also came to realise that in accepting that we all go through some form of mental health problems at some point in our lives (yes, stress is a mental health problem, and yes, you most likely have experienced it at some point in your life, so yes, you have, at some point have had some experience, however small, of what it's like to have a mental health problem. If you are one to stigmatize about mental health, then you might even feel insulted by this comment, but if you are able to accept the teaching in Islam regarding mental health, e.g. expiation of sins, then you will feel blessed), reflecting on those times will help you to empathize at least a little with people who are going through more extreme stress and this will ultimately help with acceptance of people with mental health problems because you have some insight of what it's like to walk in their shoes.

On a different note, you might also then think about how much worse many others have it. Look at our broth-

ers and sisters in Gaza, or in other war torn parts of the world such as Syria, etc., and the stress they go through; forced into being part of a war but unable to escape. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) advised us to look to those who are worse off and this really helps us to appreciate the blessings in our life.

*‘Contemplate those who have less than you and not those who have more than you, lest you belittle the favors of Allah conferred upon you’.*

So, whilst you might have been stressed, there is more than likely someone else out there who is going through more stress than you are and you can be grateful that Allah spared you from such stress. In fact, what you are going through is relatively minor. That said, this is no excuse to play down the experience of stress, however big or small. We all need to know how to cope with it and Islam has the solutions to this.

The first point is that we need to be active in stress management. Whilst Allah is in control of everything and will be the one to alleviate our stress, this does not mean we should sit back and wait for that to happen. We need to actively seek ways to manage our stress.

*“Verily Allah does not change men’s condition unless they change their inner selves” (Ar-Rad, 13: 11)*

This is all very well saying that we should manage our stress, but how can we do this?

Keeping in mind that Allah is in control, what we can do is to control what we can, that is, our response to the stressful situation. It is well known in psychological literature that lack of control can be a cause of distress, so by controlling what you can gives some sense of empowerment and feelings of positivity.

As Muslims, this should be relatively easy. Keeping on top of our obligatory duties and offering voluntary ones will bring us a sense of peace and relaxation.

*“... without doubt in the remembrance (Zikr) of Allah do hearts find tranquility” (Ar-Rad, 13:28)*

Medical literature supports the benefits of this with findings that praying and listening to the Qur’an have positive physiological effects in terms of reduced heart rate and blood pressure which are typical symptoms of a reduced level of arousal or stress.

“When prayer uplifts or calms, it inhibits cortisol, epinephrine, and norepinephrine – hormones that flow out of the adrenal glands in response to stress. These fight-or-flight chemicals, released over time, can compromise the immune system, upping the odds of developing any number of illnesses, including heart disease, stroke, peptic ulcers, and inflammatory bowel disorder (IBS).” (Koenig)

In fact, these findings have also been reproduced in non-Muslims also (El Kadi).

*“O mankind! There has come to you a direction from you Lord, and a healing for (the disease in your) heart, and for those who believe a guidance, and mercy” (Yunus, 10:57)*

All the Prophets also went through times of great stress and through such times they always remembered Allah and found peace in remembering Him. A practice also followed by our beloved Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

The Prophet once said that in prayer, he would find rest and relief (Nasai). He would also regularly ask for God’s forgiveness and remain in prostration during prayer praising God (Tasbeeh) and asking for His forgiveness.

Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) also advised his followers to make specific du'a during stressful times, such as:

*“Allah is sufficient for us, and He is an excellent guardian, and we repose our trust in Allah.”*

*“Surely we belong to Allah and to Him shall we return. O Allah, I beseech you for the reward of my hardship. Reward me, and compensate me for it with something good.”*

A part of the beauty of Islam in this respect is that we are prescribed prayer 5 times daily. So, for 5 times a day, we are obliged to abandon our worldly affairs and the stresses that accompany it and seek solace and peace with Allah in prayer.

Often, we can get too caught up in our busy lives to really take a step back and wonder at Allah's creation. Taking some time out to really pay attention to

what's around us can have this incredibly relaxing effect. Notice the beauty in Allah's creation, from the leaves on a tree, the beautiful blossoming flower, the tweeting bird, the sky at night or a beautiful sunset. All of this was created by Allah and is under His control. Allahu Akbar! Be grateful that He gave you the opportunity to view such wonderful things. Just 5 minutes a day is enough to marvel at the creation; it can be incredibly relaxing, especially at the end of a hard day!

These are all very simple, and perhaps obvious stress management techniques, but sometimes, we just need to put these things into perspective and see the positives in our daily stressors and remember the benefits of using Islamic techniques to manage them. These are just a handful, but in-sha'Allah, next time I will get the chance to offer some more stress management tips.

## Costly Wish

Imam Ahmad recorded that Jubayr bin Nufayr said: “We sat with Al-Miqdad bin Al-Aswad one day, and a man passed by and said, “How blessed are these two eyes which saw the Messenger of Allah ! Would that we had seen what you saw and witnessed what you witnessed.” Al-Miqdad got angry, and I was surprised, because the man had not said anything but good. Then he turned to him and said, “What makes a man wish to be present when Allah had caused him to be absent, and he does not know how he would have behaved if he had been there. By Allah, there are people who saw the Messenger of Allah, and Allah will throw them on their faces in Hell because they did not accept him or believe in him. Are you not grateful that Allah brought you forth from your mothers' wombs believing in your Lord and in what your Prophet brought, and that the test went to others and not to you. Allah sent His Prophet during the most difficult time than any Prophet was ever sent, after a long period of ignorance, when the people could see no better religion than the worship of idols, and he brought the Criterion which distinguishes truth from falsehood and which would separate a father from his son. A man would realize that his father, son or brother was a disbeliever, and since Allah had opened his heart to Faith, he knew that if his relative died he would go to Hell, so he could not rest knowing that his loved one was in the Fire. This is what Allah referred to in the Ayah,

(And those who say: “Our Lord! Bestow on us from our wives and our offspring the comfort of our eyes...” Furqan:74).

*(Musnad Ahmad quoted in Tarjuman\_us\_Sunnah)*

# Muslims Can Lead Men

*Dr. Rumana Makhdoomi*

In an increasingly intolerant world, where Islamophobia is the new trend, Ben Carson the 2016 Republican Presidential candidate for US chose not to be different. “A Muslim cannot be trusted to be the in-charge of US, US should not elect a Muslim President” he said. A Muslim who inhabits 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of this globe has a right to ask Ben Carson, what is wrong in being a Muslim? Else, what is so great about Ben Carson that no Muslim can match him? Well! Ben Carson is a doctor, a neurosurgeon who has retired as a Professor of Neurosurgery at John’s Hopkins and yes, done a few difficult cases of Siamese twins too. Are these qualifications enough for him to be the US President? He has fought poverty and racism to become a renowned neurosurgeon. Fine – let us know about some of the famous neurosurgeons of the world and America (incidentally all of them are Muslims) who are ages ahead of Ben Carson - saving people irrespective of their creed, nationality and religion.

I hope Ben Carson has known Dr. Mahmoud Gazi Yasargil – known to the world as the father of microneurosurgery. **Dr. Yasargil is to Neurosurgery what Einstein is to Physics.** For his contributions in the field of Neurosurgery, he was designated as the ‘ Neurosurgey’s Man of century” by the Neuro-

logical Society of America. With his commitment, dedication and innovative thinking, he revolutionized Neurosurgery – laid foundations of microneurosurgery combining science and art - making a human brain dance to his tunes and saving millions of lives in the world. I and lakhs of his admirers throughout the world are waiting for a recognition which is yet to come to him in the form of a Nobel Prize in Medicine. Dr. Carson must have read many of the books by this genius and attended many of his talks as he went up the ladder in the field of Neurosurgery. Incidentally Yasargil is a Turk, a Muslim, an immigrant. Though Americans would trust Yasargil with the most precious organ of their body – they should still not trust him if he at some stage chooses to lead America – Is that what Mr. Carson means?

Not only Yasargil, Dr. Carson must have known Osama Al-Mefty and learnt about his expertise in exploring the inaccessible and secret caves of skull base to chase a tumor there. He is the best known and the most trusted skull base surgeon in the world . Al-Mefty – a Muslim, an immigrant and most hatefully a Syrian should not be allowed to lead America if he aspires to do so. This Muslim too cannot be trusted.

Besides America where there are

thousands of renowned Muslim neurosurgeons, Muslims have dominated the art and science of neurosurgery elsewhere too. Dr. Madjid Samii heads the neuroinstitute INNI at Hannover, Germany. He is known for his expertise in acoustic neuromas. Patients from all over the world throng his clinic in Germany. According to former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, "Madjid Samii has brought internationality to Hannover". Samii is an immigrant, an Irani by birth and a Muslim too. There are Neurosurgeons like Amin Kassam, Saleem Abdul Rouf, and Ali Krist, who are masters in their field and are performing most complex procedures in the world. Ayub Khan Omayya the British Muslim neurosurgeon who gave centripetal theory has done significant work in neurotrauma. With such brilliant Muslim minds in just his profession, how would Ben Carson label Muslims as untrustworthy and incapable of leading America?

We are not talking about Medieval world when Muslims dominated science and art while Europe was still in darkness, we are talking about the so called modern world—here too Muslims especially the immigrants are contributing greatly to science, art and architecture. **A handful of mad men operating from a land made turbulent by Western interference and indulgence are seen as the ambassadors of Islam and not these brilliant minds who are dedicating each minute of their precious lives to the cause of humanity.** Why so?

Another presidential nominee in US Mr. Donald Trump is of the opinion that Muslims in America should be compulsorily registered. America is sounding more like Nazi Germany where Jews too

were compulsorily registered. I wish a directory about Muslims in America is created and a note is made about the contributions of present day Muslims in America. American Muslims are performers; they are affluent, dedicated professionals who are in perfect harmony with the ideals of democracy and independence for which America originally came into being. They are doing a remarkable charity work, promoting inter-faith dialogues and working for the betterment of America and the world.

But, unfortunately they are being harassed, threatened and instead of promoting harmony the candidates in fray for presidency are igniting islamophobia. Hate campaign launched by probable American presidential candidates sounds alarming not only for Muslims in America but Muslims throughout the world. Muslims pronounce their faith by saying *La Ila ha Illallah Muhammad u Rasoolullah* ((*Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam*)), they announce it by their attire and dress, they denounce terrorism of all shades—but they won't renounce their faith under pressure. Donald Trump blamed Muslims for celebrating 9/11, without producing an evidence. The world knows post 9/11 Muslims especially in America had to go through hell. Why would Muslims make their own lives difficult? Muslims cannot celebrate murder of an innocent whether in Paris, Syria or New York—they condemn every atrocity let lose by the key players in a mad battle where death, destruction and devastation has affected millions of innocents. They condemn it loud—it is just that your ears are plugged. Islam is not a medieval concept of life. It is away of life that has enriched billions of people in the world. Quran has survived harsher onslaughts but maintained its status



as a guide for mankind for more than 1400 years. Muhammad ((Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)) and his teachings have inspired East and West. He is the benefactor of humanity who has been rated by the Western authors as "the most influential man in the history". Medieval Sufi poet Rumi is the most read poet in present day America. For Gods sake - do not give prescriptions to Muslims as to what part of Quran they should follow and what not. Don't behave like civilized Daish, forcing your opinion on Muslims-religion is their private affair-judge them by their abilities and not their religion.

While I was closing this article I read about a horrifying mass shooting incident in San Bernadino California-unfortunately this is the 355<sup>th</sup> mass shooting incident in US this year but what is sad and unusual about it is that an American Muslim couple is involved in this shooting-this incident may give Islamophobics a boost and promote hatred against American Muslims who number 2.8 million. Terrorism is a threat but the threat to the US from Muslim terrorists is exaggerated. Islamic terrorism does not even account for 1% of 180,000 murders in US since 9/11. There must be sane voices in America, there must be those who promote brotherhood-why are those voices silent while American Muslims and Muslims in other European countries are victimized in the name of religion?

### Condoning the Wrong in a Wedding

Once, Hazrat Moulana Khaleel Ahmad Saharanpuri (ra) was invited to a wedding in Meerut. The boy's side requested Hazrat to pass on the clothing to the groom for tabarruk. Hazrat went into the room where the boy was waiting after having had a bath. I (Mufti 'Aashiq Ilahi) was present with Hazrat. He picked up the kurtah and pants and handed these over to the boy. When he was about to pass the achkan (long coat), Hazrat asked me to check if it was made of silk. I checked carefully and said: "Yes Hazrat, it appears to be of silk." He kept it aside and said: "It is haraam to wear silk and haraam to make others wear it." When he looked at the topi, he saw it embedded with gold threads. And so he said in a sharp tone: "This is also haraam." The boy's family was not cautious and did not bother about Hazrat's reprimand. They picked up the items themselves and made the boy wear them. Hazrat's face turned red with anger but he controlled himself and said to me: "Let's go." And we departed from there. He did not even go to the place where he was staying over. He was filled with sorrow and grief, and went to the house of Haji Wajeehud Deen Saheb. He said: "What type of bond do they have with me that they invite me to take part in sinful acts? All those who attend this wedding will be sinning, for it is a place where the bridegroom is seated wearing haraam clothing, as one person (the bridegroom) will be committing the haraam and there will be others (the attendees) who will condone it."

When the family heard of this, they felt ashamed because it was an issue of family pride. Many people were attached to Hazrat - they could neither leave him nor leave the family. They tried to get the boy to change his clothes. But many of the people had neither any attachment to Hazrat nor any concern for following the sharee'ah. They considered the changing of clothes to be an ill-omen and said: "It is essential for the bridegroom to wear the clothes which have been sent to him from the bride's family." However, the others were sharper than them. Haji Wajeehud Deen Saheb took out his expensive Egyptian achkan (long coat) and gave it to the boy saying he will not get a better suit than this in the whole of India. He made him wear it, and instead of the topi, he tied a turban on his head. He presented the boy before Hazrat and requested him to attend the wedding. Hazrat got up and joined in the wedding.

# Truthfulness

*Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jeelani*

O servants of Allah, be truthful and then you will succeed! The truthful person never backslides. The person who is truthful in his belief in the oneness of Allah (high is He) never backslides on the advice of his lower self, passion, or devil. The truthful person never listens to blame and never allows it to enter his ears. The person who is truthful in his love of Allah, His Messenger (Allah's prayer and peace be on him), and His righteous servants never turns back as a result of listening to the words of someone who is hypocritical, hated, and disappointed. The truthful person does not know other than the truthful person and the liar does not know other than the liar. The aspiration of the truthful person is high in the sky. He cannot be harmed by anyone's words. Allah (mighty and glorified is He) has full power over His affairs. If He wants you for a certain purpose, He prepares you for it.

If the truthful person meets all creatures he would not like to look at anyone other than his Beloved. This world does not seem significant to the eyes of his head, the hereafter does not seem significant to the eyes of his heart, and nothing seems significant to the eyes of his innermost being other than the Master. The shouting of the hypocrite comes from his tongue and head, whereas the shouting of the truthful person springs from his heart and innermost being. His heart is at the door of his Lord (mighty and glorified is He) and his innermost being has entered into His presence. It keeps on shouting at the door until it enters the house.

O liars, the truthful person never tells lies. The truthful person never turns back! The truthful person has no back. He is a front with no back, truthfulness with no telling of lies. He is words and action, claim and evidence. He

## **Whose Janaazah is this?**

Hazrat Shaikh Moulana Muhammad Zakariyya (ra) once mentioned:

We should, at all times, remember that our life is coming to an end. We have also heard our elders say that a person should take stock of his life when going to sleep. He should ponder and reflect over the number of things he will be able to take with him when he passes away and the number of things he will be forced to leave behind. Constantly remember death! Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is reported to have said in the mubaarak Hadith, "Remember the thing which severs all pleasures of life, death." Once a janaazah was passing by when somebody asked a pious person present, "Whose janaazah is this?" The pious person replied, "It is your janaazah." When the person expressed surprise at this answer, the pious person said, "If it is not yours, then regard it to be mine." (Merely being concerned about whose janaazah it is, is insufficient. What matters is whether one is prepared for that moment to be the moment of one's own janaazah.)

*(Suhbate Ba Awliyaa' page.152)*

never turns back from his Beloved because of arrows that come to him from Him, but he rather receives them with his breast. Your love for something blinds and deafens you. When one knows what he is seeking, he sees whatever he has to do to be as insignificant. The lover who is truthful in his love always plunges into dangers in the quest for his Beloved. If he faces an inferno, he throws himself right into it. He swoops at what

others would not even dare approaching. It is his truthfulness that urges him to do this. It is his love and impatience with being distant from his Beloved that make behave like this. Afflictions reveal the truthful person and the liar and distinguish between them. How excellent this piece of poetry by one of them is:

*It is at times of dissatisfaction not at time of satisfaction the lover becomes identifiable from the hater.*

### Remaining within the limits and boundaries of Shari'ah

Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (ra) once mentioned:

As long as one does not acquire sound understanding in Deen and become firmly established upon it, there will always be the fear that such a person will transgress the limits and boundaries in his actions. Since such a person does not know the limits, if he befriends someone he will transgress the limits in friendship and if he has enmity for someone, he will transgress the limits in his enmity. Both situations are extremely detrimental. In essence, the outcome of dealing with such a person who is not firmly established in Deen and does not know the limits can prove disastrous. There was once an 'Aalim who was of the opinion that Muslims should go into partnerships with Hindus. When he expressed his opinion to me, I told him, "We cannot, with certainty, say what will be the outcome of such a Muslim's dunya. However, the harm that will come to his Deen is quite clear and evident. This is due to the fact that Hindus, in reality, don't have any Deen and hence do not adhere to the limits of Shari'ah. If the Muslim tries to uphold Deen in the partnership, then how will the partnership continue? On the contrary, if the partnership continues in the way the Hindu wishes, then how will the Muslim uphold his Deen? The reason is that every decision the Hindus will make will be centred around dunya and material progress even if it opposes the laws of Deen. They will do whatever they deem necessary in order to boost their business in the pursuit of worldly progress. How then can a Mu'min's Deen be secure and safe if he has to adopt their ways?"

(Malfoozaat Hakeemul Ummat 8/239)

# Lowering Your Gaze

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*Habib Quadri and Sa'ad Quadri*

There is no doubt that lowering the gaze is tough. When we are walking and we see someone we think is attractive, somehow the phrase “who dat?” comes flying into our minds. As one of the five senses, sight is a killer, especially in a society obsessed with looking good and attracting others. When society makes short skirts, halter tops, muscle shirts, and other similar clothing fashionable, it is not so people can feel comfortable in these clothes. This is purely about parading beauty and sexuality. Aside from clothing, people are increasingly having cosmetic surgery to enhance their figures and become more attractive. Even perfumes are being made with pheromones that have been found by scientists to attract the opposite gender. Just look at the names of some of these perfumes: “Allure,” “Passion,” “Obsession” etc.: they are designed exclusively to attract other people.

What is funny is when we think, “Man, that girl is *hot!*” or “He is *fine!*”, we take that feeling of attraction and justify to ourselves why we had to look at that person - it was impossible not to feel that way. Or, we think we will just take one look and after that not look again. In reality, this is how Shaytan works. Human nature dictates that we will never be satisfied. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was very clear when he said: “Nothing will satiate the son of Adam except the dirt of his grave.” (Hadith)

Although this refers specifically to wealth, it is relevant to other areas of our life. It is just like a car: when we look at it for the first time we think that is the one we want, but, one year later, a better car comes out and we want that instead. The same holds true of looking at someone attractive for the first time, for example, in a college lecture hall - we say to ourselves, “Wow, who is that?” But by the end of the semester we might think someone else is better looking. We simply do not know when to stop. This is when Shaytan whispers, “Hey, I am only looking. What else can a person do? Am I supposed to just look at the floor or the sidewalk all the time?” What we fail to realize is that Shaytan wants us to take that first step - he knows that once we have that first taste we may not be able to control ourselves.

There is a famous story mentioned in Hadith about a righteous and pious worshipper from the Bani Isra'il by the name of Barsisa. Barsisa lived alone, spending his days and nights in the worship of Allah. One day, three brothers who wanted to go out on *jihad* (meaning “struggle”, and in this context it refers to fighting in the cause of Allah) needed to find someone to watch over their sister whom they could not leave behind alone. They asked Barsisa if he would be willing to care for her. Being a righteous servant, Barsisa naturally said no deeming it wrong to watch over a woman not related

to him and without a close male relative present. However, when the brothers left, Shaytan began to whisper to him that he should in fact care for their sister because the brothers would likely find someone else to do so, and that other individual would not be as righteous as he and would take advantage of her. Barsisa approached the brothers and agreed to care for their sister provided that he could do so without interacting with

Initially, Barsisa would make food for the sister and leave it outside his door, not venturing close to her home. A short time thereafter, Shaytan whispered to him that it is unbecoming for a woman to walk in public, compromising her modesty, just to be able to eat. Barsisa, thinking this his own idea, decided to take the food and leave it outside her door. A short period of time passed before Shaytan then suggested it was very demeaning to have her fetch her food like an animal: it would be better for Barsisa to greet her from outside and ask how she was doing, and then leave the food for her. This lasted for some time before Shaytan whispered it to him that it was very strange that he yelled from one side of the door while she yelled from the other.

Shaytan prompted Barsisa think that as he was the most righteous person in his community - he could enter her home and sit on the other side of the room to give her company. It would not be anything inappropriate, and she must be lonely without her brothers. Barsisa began to do this and slowly Shaytan enticed him closer to sin. Eventually, Barsisa and the sister had pre-marital relations, and she became pregnant. Barsisa knew her brothers would return and began to worry. Shaytan whispered to him that he should murder her and the child and bury them inside her home. After all, Barsisa needed

to keep his reputation for being a righteous man and would repent for his sins. Thus, Barsisa carried out this plan and killed the sister and her child, burying them in her home and covering up the grave.

Eventually, the brothers returned from jihad and approached Barsisa regarding their sister. Barsisa, blatantly lying, told them their sister had become ill and had eventually passed away due to her illness. He had created a fake grave in the city and directed the brothers there. The brothers went to the grave and mourned their sister, carrying out the rites for the deceased. One night, while the brothers slept, Shaytan came to each of them in their dreams explaining what had transpired between Barsisa and their sister. Upon waking, one brother told the other two that he had a strange dream and described it to them. Both brothers were astonished as they too had the exact same dream. They went to the grave of their sister and dug it up, finding it was indeed a fake grave. Then, as the dream indicated, they went to their sister's home and unearthed the bodies of their sister and her child.

The brothers immediately rushed to Barsisa and took him forcibly to the king to be executed for his crimes. Being extremely worried, Barsisa became desperate to be saved from his dilemma. Shaytan then appeared to Barsisa and told him that if he could help him with one condition; Barsisa had to make *sajdah* (prostration) to Shaytan. Barsisa agreed, and when he bowed down to Shaytan, Shaytan left him. Thus Barsisa, once the most righteous worshippers of his time, died bowing down to Shaytan.

This story is a great example of how one small sin, when justified and accepted as being harmless, can lead a per-

son astray. Temptation overpowered even the most righteous worshipper of the time. In reflecting on this story we should not feel hopelessness, but rather we should realize Allah has given us the knowledge to escape this end by heeding the various warnings He has given us.

Allah tells believing men and women how to protect themselves from the effects of a misdirected glance and how to navigate the safest route with respect to being modest with one another:

*Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty. (24:30)*  
*Say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty, and they should not display their ornaments except what appears of them. (24:31)*

A beautiful aspect that was expounded upon by scholars regarded the end of this particular verse.

*And Allah is aware of what you do. (24:30)*

In the verses of the Qur'an that address the transgressions people commit, Allah ends these verses by proclaiming His mercy and His forgiveness. Yet, at the end of the verse on lowering the gaze and guarding one's chastity, Allah affirms that indeed He knows what we do. Imagine, every time we misdirect our glance, Allah sees what we do and witnesses our accompanying thoughts. Sadly our hearts have blackened to the extent that knowing Allah's displeasure of this act neither affects nor deters us from it.

If we find this is the case, we should try to think of the following, "Would I misdirect my gaze if my parents were watching me?" Now, imagine if one of our teachers were watching us. Next, imagine if a righteous person or a *sahabi* (a companion of the Prophet) were watching us. Lastly, think how we would feel if the Prophet were watching us as we committed this transgression. If any of these situ-

ations would cause us to want to lower our gaze, then the larger question to ponder is, "Why am I embarrassed to commit sins in front of other human beings but not Allah when He is watching me at all times?"

While the greatest tragedy lies in having gained Allah's displeasure, we are also unable to realize how each stolen glance or seemingly innocent interaction we allow ourselves causes serious damage to our life in this world. Whenever we find a person attractive or good looking, and then interact with that person - though it may be completely innocent - what ultimately happens is that those interactions become ingrained in our subconscious. That is why at night, before we go to sleep, thoughts of that individual and our interactions with that individual will go through our minds.

Eventually we may no longer think that person, be he or she an actor, celebrity or just a person in our lives. However, when we are finally blessed with the opportunity to marry, after the honeymoon phase we may begin to notice our spouse's imperfections. Shaytan will remind us of the thoughts ingrained in our subconscious from all the pre-marital interactions we had to run wild in our minds and we may then begin to dwell on our spouses' deficiencies. It is just as bad that we will compare our spouses with the models, actors, and actresses we were infatuated with in the past. As we have allowed our eyes to wander and store images just as a digital camera stores images when it takes a picture, we will be faced with the huge challenge of comparing our spouses with those who are made "perfect" through airbrushing, starvation, plastic surgery, and all the other man-made ways humans try to present themselves as other than they truly are.

The reality is that we will find our-

selves in situations working with the opposite gender. Many of us are involved with our local masjid or other Muslim or charitable organizations. Furthermore, our schools and workplace will also require us to interact with the opposite gender. During this time, we should try to keep a few principles in mind. First off, we should make sure that we are honest with ourselves about our intentions. In the cases of work, school, and Islamic work, our hearts should always know what the reason and purpose of our conversations are. If the thought arises in our minds of impressing whom we're speaking with or trying to do more than the necessary task at hand, then maybe our interaction may go down the wrong road.

Also, we have to be very clear about where we are speaking to one another. If our conversations are taking place in the classroom in the presence of the teacher, there is more of a chance it will stick to business. However, if we decide to meet for coffee at a local cafe to discuss the assignment in English class or the plans for the next masjid dinner, then Shaytan may easily change our intention. Furthermore, we have to be very mindful of what we talk about. Small talk has its place, time, and recipients. Do not indulge in small talk when unnecessary. This is not to say that we should be rude. It is understood that we should greet one another and be cordial. However, we should be conscious not to speak about unnecessary items. This is where Shaytan will make us think that since we were having that important conversation about the relief dinner that everything is OK: this is where many of us make our mistakes.

Finally, we have to abstain from speaking at night-time. There is no reason why a brother should have to call or see a sister, classmate, or co-worker at midnight

in an informal setting. Many times we think to ourselves that this is for the sake of Allah but is it really? Would Allah really like us to speak like this at this time of night, when our hearts and minds incline towards romance? We have to be smart and honest with ourselves.

When speaking to one another, we should maintain a necessary degree of modesty. While the Qur'an has ordered us to lower our gaze, but sometimes it becomes unclear as to how we can do this at school, work, or the various other daily situations we encounter. If we need practical guidance on this issue, it is best to consult with our local scholars for further advice.

Many of us are afraid that we will upset the person whom we are speaking with. But would we rather please that person and upset Allah instead? Allah has advised the Sahabah about their interactions in the Qur'an. All of us can agree that the Sahabah were greater than us. Allah repeatedly says in the Qur'an that He is pleased with them. Some of them were given the glad tidings of entering Jannah before they passed away. Furthermore, the Prophet's wives - the *Ummahat al-Mu'minin* (the mothers of the believers) - were told,

*O wives of the Prophet! You are not like other women. (Qur'an 33:32)*

Their status has been raised in this life and in the hereafter. Yet, when Allah addressed them He was very clear that if they had to speak to an unrelated male out of necessity they should do so in a certain way.

*Do not be soft in speech. (Qur'an 33:32)*

Many times we find ourselves changing our tone of voice in order to attract, even if unconsciously, the opposite gender. Brothers and sisters in faith may both, consciously or unconsciously, speak

in softer tones to each other. And these softer voices may eventually become flirtatious. Allah was referring to the best of women in conversation with the best of men. There is no follower of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) that is greater than his Sahabah. So when the Umamahat al-Mumineen are speaking to them, Allah ordered them not to be soft in their speech because,

*Lest he in whose heart there is a disease may be moved by desire. (Qur'an 33:32)*

If Allah is warning the best group of men and women about the potential harm in their interaction, then who are we to say that our intentions are always clean and our hearts may not have a disease in it. This is why we have to be very straightforward with ourselves and others. The command may have been directly at that time for the Sahabah, but it is even more so directed towards all the believers today.

Furthermore, Allah also has commanded the Sahabah if they needed to ask the Prophet's wives for anything.

*And when you ask them for anything you want, ask from behind a barrier. (Qur'an 33:53)*

Again, this command is directed towards the best followers of the Prophet (s). It is because they implemented the commands of Allah that He was pleased with them. Thus, if we are unsegregated, then we should at the very least act modestly and avert our gaze. Generally speaking, when out in public space, we should always seek to keep the company of a mature and God-fearing friend, for it will encourage us to act with modesty and decorum. Although taking these measures may sound harsh in today's climate, Allah gives us the reason as to why we should do this:

*That is purer for your hearts and for their hearts. (Qur'an 33:53)*

If the war that we are fighting is in

our hearts, and success belongs to the one with a pure and sound heart on the Day of Judgment, then we should try to follow these steps in order that our hearts remain pure.

Furthermore, there are many ways that we can interact with the opposite gender while still looking normal. We don't have to turn our backs to the person when we're speaking or send social signals that are rude and impolite. Guard your gaze with confidence and good manners, and not with an attitude of disgust or a judgmental frame of mind. Do not make the person feel like an alien, but be confident in the virtue of modest conduct you are trying to live by. In the end, we cast our gaze aside out of respect for the other person: we value him or her as a person, and we do not seek to reduce that other person to a mere object of sexual desire. As we mentioned in the chapter on TV, when a society is captivated by one ideal, then it will naturally come to think that this is the only way. In the early 1900s in America, men would not generally gaze at women on the street. It was natural for them to lower their gaze. Books like *The Beauty Myth* and *A Return to Modesty* highlight that this way of life was once common and natural. However, once various media became dominant in our culture, we have changed without realizing it.

In the end, we are accountable for everything that we do. On the Day of Judgment, even our very own body parts will bear witness for or against us, bearing witness to the way we used them. We need to ask ourselves, 'how will we want our eyes to testify?'

**"Whoever meets his fellow Muslim in a manner they like to make them happy, Allah will make this person happy on the Day of Judgement." (Tabarani)**



# Travelling For Sacred Knowledge

*Ibn Rajab Hambali (ra)*

A man came to Abu Darda while he was in Damascus. Abu Darda asked him, "What has brought you here, my brother?" He replied, "A hadith which you relate from the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)." Abu Darda asked, "Have you come for some worldly need?" He replied, "No." "Have you come for business?" He replied, "No." "You have come only to seek this hadith?" He said, "Yes." Abu Darda then said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) say: 'Whoever travels a path seeking sacred knowledge, Allah will place him on a path leading to Paradise. The angels lower their wings for the student of sacred knowledge, pleased with what he is doing. The creatures in the heavens and earth seek forgiveness for the student of sacred knowledge, even the fish in the water. The superiority of the religious scholar over the devout worshipper is like the superiority of the full moon over the other heavenly bodies. The religious scholars are the heirs of the prophets. The prophets leave no money as a bequest, rather they leave knowledge. Whoever seizes it has taken a bountiful share.'" (Imam Ahmad, Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi, and Ibn Majah relate this hadith in their compilations)

The early generations of Muslims, owing to the strength of their desire for sacred knowledge, would journey to distant lands seeking a single prophetic hadith. Abu Ayyub Zayd ibn Khalid al-

Ansari traveled from Madinah to Egypt for the purpose of meeting a Companion because he heard that this Companion related a particular hadith from the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Similarly, Jabir ibn Abdallah, despite hearing much from the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) himself, traveled a month to Syria to hear a single hadith. Without hesitation, such men would travel to someone of lesser virtue and learning in order to seek out knowledge that they lacked themselves. A striking example of this sort of journey is what Allah relates in the Quran about Musa (AS) journey with his young companion. If there ever existed a person who had no need to travel to seek knowledge, it was Musa (AS), for Allah had spoken to him and given him the Torah in which all divine principles had been revealed. Still, when Allah informed him of a man (named Khidr (AS)) who had been favored with knowledge, Musa (AS) inquired about meeting him, and then set out with his young companion to find this Khidr, as Allah the Exalted says, And behold, Musa (AS) said to his young companion, "I will not cease until I reach where the two seas meet, or I shall spend an exceptionally long time traveling" (Quran, 18:60). Allah then informs us that upon meeting Khidr, Musa (AS) asked of him, "May I follow you in order that you may teach me of the knowledge you have been given?" (Quran, 18:66).

Details of their venture are related in the Book of Allah and in the well-known hadith of Ubayy ibn Ka'b, which is related by Bukhari and Muslim. Ibn Mas'ud used to say: I swear by Allah, besides whom there is no other deity, no chapter of the Quran has been revealed except that I know where it was revealed. No verse from the Book of Allah has been revealed except that I know why it was revealed. Yet if I knew of anyone more learned than me in the Book of Allah, I would make every effort to reach him," Abu Darda said, "If I were unable to explain a verse in the Book of Allah and could not find anyone to explain it to me except a man in Bark al-Ghimad, I would journey to him." Bark al-Ghimad is the farthest comer of Yemen. Masruq went from Kufa to Basra to ask a man about a Quranic verse. He failed, however, to find in him knowledge [about the verse], but while there, he was informed of a knowledgeable man in Syria. He then returned to Kufa, from which point he set out for Syria seeking knowledge of the verse. A man traveled from Kufa to Syria to ask Abu Darda about the validity of an oath he had taken. Also, Said ibn Jubayr traveled from Kufa to Makkah to ask Ibn Abbas about the explanation of a single verse of the Quran. Hasan al-Basri traveled to Kufa to ask Ka'b ibn Ujra about the atonement for al-adha [during the Pilgrimage]. A thorough exposition of this issue — traveling to seek knowledge — would be exceedingly lengthy indeed. But to further illustrate this practice, a man took an oath, the validity of which the jurists were unsure. When he was directed to a man in a distant land, it was said to him, "That land is near for anyone concerned about his religion." This saying holds profound

advice for one who concerns himself with his religion as much as he concerns himself with his worldly affairs. If something happens involving his religion and he finds no one to ask about it except a person in a far-off land, he would not hesitate to travel to him in order to save his religion. Similarly, if an opportunity were presented to him for some worldly gain in a distant land, he would hasten to it. In the hadith under discussion, Abu Darda gave glad tidings to the person who traveled to him seeking a hadith he heard from the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) regarding the virtue of knowledge. This is consistent with a statement of Allah, When those believing in Our signs come to you, say, "Peace be unto you. Your Lord has made mercy incumbent upon Himself!" (Quran, 6:54). Similarly, once a group of students crowded around Hasan al-Basri, and his son then spoke harshly to them. Hasan said, "Go easy, my son." He then related this aforementioned verse. Both Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah quote Abu Sa'id as saying, "Indeed, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) advised the scholars with good treatment of the students of knowledge." Zirr ibn Hubaysh came to Safwan ibn Assal seeking knowledge. Zirr said to him, "News has reached me that the angels lower their wings to the students of sacred knowledge." Abu Safwan also relates this directly from the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). One day people were crowded at the door of Abdallah ibn al-Mubarak, who said, "The students of sacred knowledge deserve the friendship of Allah and eternal bliss." He envied their gathering for this purpose because it leads to eternal bliss. For this reason, Mu'adh ibn Jabal cried as his death drew near and said, "I weep at how I will miss feeling thirst from the

midday heat [from Fasting), standing in Prayer during the long winter nights, and the crowds of students kneeling around the scholars in the circles of knowledge." It is appropriate that the scholars welcome students and urge them to act on what they learn. Hasan al-Basri greeted his students: Welcome, may Allah extend your life in peace, and may He enter us all into Paradise. Your seeking knowledge is a good act, if you persevere, are truthful, and are absolutely certain of the reward Allah has prepared for you. May Allah have mercy on you! Do not let your share of this good be such that it enters one ear and passes out the other. One who hasn't seen Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) should know that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has seen him moving to and fro. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) did not erect tall buildings, rather, knowledge was given to him, and he dedicated himself to it. Do not procrastinate, salvation is at stake. What will make you heed? Are you hesitant? I swear by the Lord of the Ka'ba, it is as if Judgment Day will come upon you this very moment.

## Imam Abu Haneefa and Veil

When a people find it difficult to come to terms with the demands of their religion, they look for variant opinions. That leads to the discovery of several opinions. Those who wish to cross over, pick the view that suits them. This explains the confusion that other, straightforward folks, run into.

The entire *Ummah* has been of the opinion, until men decided to unburden themselves of the responsibility to run the family, that a Muslim woman should cover herself head to foot. She could go out into the markets, cross the deserts, ride the seas, but must cover herself vertically and horizontally.

Imam Abu Haneefa's opinion — which was tacitly approved by others — was that she could uncover her face, in the absence of *fitnah*. The place was of no concern. She could cover or uncover her face within the living quarters or without, according to the *fitnah*.

How was *fitnah* defined? It was defined as lustful lustful look. Women, being capable of differentiating between lustful look and an innocent look, would decide when to pull down the veil.

Women should remember that, except for lustful looks, the males can give her nothing. As office workers, they must show sexual favors to keep their jobs. As refugees, they must suffer rape at the hand of whoever is in charge of them, even if those in charge are the UN workers. As a beggar in the street, she doesn't get a coin more than a male beggar. So, why should they unveil herself? Is it possible that the males who want her to uncover her face, have ideas and intentions other than what they avow as 'women's liberation'?

Why should women not force the message upon the males, that a woman behind the face-covering must be valued for what she is, and can be, if given equal opportunity, rather than for her facial and physical features?

By enforcing veil on women, is Islam demeaning her, or honoring her?

# The Extraordinary Goal

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*M. Yawar Baig*

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

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

The man replied, 'Don't be sad my daughter. A day will come when this message will reach every temporary or permanent dwelling on the face of the earth.' If there were no other proof of the Divine Mission of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), this story would be enough proof in itself. Who but a Messenger of Allah could have the courage, fortitude and perseverance to continue on a mission when there was no material proof to show that it would ever succeed? Who but someone with total certainty in the worth of his mission and faith that in the end it would be successful could find the energy to continue onwards in the face of disappointment after disappointment? Who but a Nabi could have a heart big enough to take rejection after rejection, yet not falter in the least about taking his message to people who showed no sign of appreciating or wanting it?

It may be surprising for some to reflect on the nature of this goal as expressed by the statement of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) to his daughter when he said, 'Don't be sad my daughter. A day will come when this message will reach every temporary or permanent dwelling on the face of the earth.' Here was a man talking about his message reaching every temporary and permanent dwelling on earth when he

couldn't even get it to reach the dwellings which he could personally call at. Here was a man speaking about freeing the world when he couldn't even guarantee his own freedom. Here was a man who was concerned about the eternal wellbeing of uncaring strangers.

But then, it is in the very nature of the extraordinary goal to inspire extraordinary effort. People don't rise to low expectations. They rise to high expectations. A climber standing at the base camp of Mount Everest doesn't need a motivational lecture. The mountain motivates him. The thought of the joy that he will feel when he finally breasts the last ridge and stands on the peak motivates him while he is still standing at the base and continues to motivate him as he goes through hour after hour of grueling effort. It is the difficulty of the climb itself that is the motivation. After

all, ask yourself, how motivated would you be to walk 11 km down the road from your home? To climb Everest is, no doubt, to walk on the earth but it is the incline which adds value. The satisfaction at the achievement of a goal is directly proportional to its difficulty.

What could be more difficult than to talk about revolutionary change, not simply incremental change but much more seminal and intrinsic - a change of belief. It is very important to understand the huge challenge that this poses because all action is a result of belief. People act in accordance with their beliefs, consciously or unconsciously. For example, people may act in accordance with religious beliefs, consciously and practice certain things and they act according to their belief that a particular course of action is profitable and invest in it. On the other hand, a person gets up and

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# The Perfume of Piety

There was once a person whose body would always exude the fragrance of the most exotic musk and perfume. A friend one day asked him, "What is this wonderful fragrance I always smell on you? You must be spending a lot of money on musk if you apply it so often!" The person replied, "By Allah! Never have I purchased musk nor have I ever applied it!" His friend was astonished and asked, "Then where does your fragrance come from?" Not keen to answer the question, he said to his friend, "Why are you asking me?" His friend explained, "I hope that Allah will let me benefit in some way by what you will tell me." On his friend's coaxing and urging, he eventually narrated the following:

In my youth I was a very handsome lad. My father was a merchant and I would generally spend my time with him. One day, an old woman came to him and purchased some cloth. As she did not have the money with her to pay for

it, she asked my father if he would send me along to her home where I would collect the money. My father agreed. Hence, I proceeded with her until we finally stood before a grand, palatial home. The old woman ushered me into a stunning courtyard and as I entered, my gaze fell on a beautiful young girl who was seated atop a raised seat on a silken cushion. The instant she saw me, she was dazzled by my beauty and immediately demanded that I join her on her seat. I staunchly refused. Instead of bringing her to her senses, my rejection only incited her to get down and come to me. Then, in a fit of infatuation, she began pulling and tugging me towards herself. I was in a genuine predicament. Thus in order to escape from her embrace, I asked her if I could use the toilet. Although impatient, she acceded and shouted for her slaves who guided me to the toilet. I entered the toilet where I relieved myself into my hands. Not wasting a moment, I

goes to work because of his unconscious belief that he will live that day and beyond it and that the world is not coming to an end. So beliefs form the very foundation of all our thought and action. To have that system challenged and to be told that it is completely false and that it would lead to eternal punishment was not easy. Yet Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) own belief in the truth of his message was such that nothing deterred him from taking it to the people. It is reported that he went to the house of Abu Jahl, one of his worst enemies, more than 100 times in the hope that he would accept the message of Islam. Who but a Nabi would work to save the one who did his best to cause him as much harm as possible?

Another thing about working towards an extraordinary goal is that the work itself is training. As the Arabs say,

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

smear the filth over my body, clothing, and face. When I exited the toilet, the eagerly awaiting girl was greeted by the sight and smell of not a handsome youth but a person literally covered in human waste! The flames of her passion were, at once, thoroughly doused and she screamed to her servants in horror and disgust, *"This is a madman! Throw him out immediately!"*

I happened to have only one dirham with me. On leaving, I purchased some soap and thereafter went to the river where I cleansed my body and clothing of the filth. When I was done, I went back to my father and did not tell him a word of what had transpired. When I went to sleep that night, I saw a dream in which a handsome man with an excellent fragrance came to me. I asked him who he was to which he replied that he was Jibreel ('alaihi salaam). He said to me, "Allah has sent me to give you the glad tidings of Jannah and to reward you with some of its perfume because of the extent to which you went to avoid falling into sin." He then passed his hands over my face, body and clothing and departed. When I awoke the next morning, I

smelt an exquisite fragrance which, to this day, still perpetually wafts from my body. (At-Targheeb wa Tarheeb lil Yaafi'ee pg. 165)

#### **Lessons:**

1. The pious youngster was prepared to go to the extreme of covering himself with filth and mess in order to avoid falling into sin. We, on the other hand, make an all out effort to ensure that we fall into sin and filth – resulting in us making a mess of our lives.
2. In order to avoid sin, a person will have to stay far from the places and environments of sin. This is especially vital as we enter the holiday season in which places and environments of sin greatly increase.
3. A person who leaves sin for the pleasure of Allah will enjoy rewards in both this world as well as the Hereafter.
4. A true Muslim detests sin even more than he detests filth and faeces.
5. A Muslim is prepared to make any sacrifice necessary in order to keep his link of love with Allah intact.

# Positive or Passive

*Dr. Muhammad Salama*

To have a positive orientation and attitude is to be a constructive member in your society. Social positivity is necessary for a healthy community as it indicates the willingness of its members to take part in guiding and building their communal life, as well as in safeguarding it against wrong practices.

Accordingly, Islam urges its followers to be positive—not passive—members in their community. The Quran, after vowing that humankind is in [a condition of utter] loss [103:2], made exception for those who believe and do righteous deeds and exhort one another to [uphold] the truth, and exhort one another to [persevere in faith with] patience [103:3]. Such exhortation to uphold the truth is the manifestation of their positivity.

The Islamic principle of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong lays the foundation of such social positivity. Allah (exalted is He) said:

*So let there be of you one [united] community calling to all that is good and enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. And it is these who are the [truly] successful. [3:104]*

This is an injunction to have a positive attitude toward communal events.

Passivity allows wrong to spread and expand. The Messenger of Allah

(Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:

He who sees an evil [taking place] let him change it with his hand. If he cannot, let this be with his tongue and if still he cannot, let it be with his heart; and this is the least level of faith.

The hadith teaches how wise a Muslim should be when assessing a situation in order to decide the suitable position he/she should take. In any case, however, the hadith enjoins taking a positive stance. For even the “least level”—which is to renounce the wrong with one’s heart—is actually a positive attitude; because such inner renouncement keeps one’s heart on guard against evil and ever ready to change it when possible. If one does not have such feeling inside, he/she will soon get used to wrong practices and gradually they will appear no longer wrong to him/her.

The Children of Israel were cursed in the Quran for their passive attitude toward wrong practices that took place in their community. Allah, (exalted is He) said:

*Cursed by the tongue of David and Jesus, son of Mary, were those who disbelieved of the Children of Israel. That is because they disobeyed [God] and [persistently] transgressed [His covenant]. They used not to forbid one another from any wrongdoing they did. Truly woeful is what they have been doing! [5:78-79]*

On the other hand, the Quran has provided a variety of exemplary models for taking positive attitudes even when it is dangerous to do so. In Sura Ya-Sin, the Quran recounts the story of a townspeople who belied the messengers sent by Allah to them and even threatened to punish them. Then, in this dismaying scene, there appeared a man from among these people who decided take action. The man, who believed in Allah, felt sorrowful for his people as he knew the disastrous consequences of their disbelief. Hence, he came rushing from the furthest part of the city [36:20] and kept admonishing, arguing with and forewarning his people until they killed him. He could have secluded himself in an isolated place and left them to their fatal destiny; but he sacrificed his life for defending the truth and in his attempt to save his people. Even after his death at their hands, the Quran records his amazing attitude:

*It was said [to him]: Enter [the bliss of] the Garden [of Paradise]! He said: Oh! If only my people could know of how my Lord has forgiven me and placed me among [the ranks of] the honored! [36:26-27]*

Soon after, his people were reduced to ruin.

A similar example can be seen in Surat Ghafir in the account of a believing man from the House of Pharaoh [20:28]. As Pharaoh and his assembly belied Moses and decided to kill him, that man could not bear to stand passive while seeing such unjust treatment to the bearer of truth. Thus, he started to argue logically with them and asked them to be fair with Moses. He also employed different sorts of forewarnings and admonitions in his attempt to uphold the truth and save His people, but

they plotted against him. Unlike in the case of the man in Surat Ya Sin, this one was saved from their evil conspiracy.

The Quran furthermore tells of positive attitudes taken by non-human creatures. A group of jinn came to hear the Messenger of Allah reciting the Quran. The light of the Quran shined in their hearts and they immediately admitted that it is wondrous and that it guides to the truth. But they were not selfish. They returned to their people calling on them to believe in the Quran and to follow the Messenger of Allah.

They were active and positive members among their community, keen to enlighten them about the truth they had come to know. When one knows useful information, he should love to convey it to others—in this way right and good can spread and prevail over wrong and evil.

Even birds are represented in the Quran by a positive member. During the reign of Solomon, who had hosts from the jinn, the human beings, and the birds, a hoopoe of his hosts saw the people of Sheba bowing their faces down to the sun in worship instead of bowing to Allah. This spectacle of associating other gods with Allah provoked the hoopoe and thus he decided to take action. He returned to Solomon and delivered this information to him. The hoopoe himself could not interfere and so he informed Solomon to take action. This gives a lesson to the Muslim to seek the help of authority when the situation is beyond his/her ability to make change.

Insects, too, are represented by a positive-thinking ant. While they were marching, Solomon and his hosts came upon the Valley of Ants. Seeing such a great multitude advancing toward their dwellings, the ant felt worried and acted



positively. She shouted: O you ants! Enter [quickly] into your dwellings, [and] let not Solomon and his hosts crush you while they are unaware! [Surat Al-Naml, 27:18]. At times of danger, one has to think about others as well and to take social responsibility.

The above Qur'anic examples present positive attitudes that take the initiative toward making changes and differences in their environments. In various circumstances, a Muslim should think not only about himself and his own

interests. He has to be an active and positive individual who reacts appropriately to the events that take place in his surroundings. To be passive is to allow evil to thrive.

Sometimes a positive reaction might cause one to endure self-sacrifice for a public interest or for the superiority of the truth—which is not easy for many people to do. But faith in Allah and in His promised reward facilitates such sacrifice and allows it to be enduring and even to be done with pleasure.

## **Actions Speak Louder than Words**

'Ali (RA) once set off for a battle when he noticed that some of his armour was missing. After the battle was over, he returned to Kufah. While in Kufah he one day happened to see a Jew with the same armour he had lost! He immediately confronted the Jew saying, "The armour is mine! Neither did I sell it, nor did I give it away!" The Jew, however, denied this claim and said, "The armour belongs to me and, furthermore, it is in my possession." On hearing his denial, 'Ali (RA) suggested that they go to the qadhi (judge). The Jew agreed and they were soon in the presence of Qadhi Shurayh (ra).

Qadhi Shurayh (ra) asked 'Ali (RA) to present his case first to which he stated, "This armour, which is in the hands of the Jew, belongs to me. Neither did I sell it, nor did I give it away." Qadhi Shurayh (ra) then turned to the Jew and asked him, "What do you have to say, O Jew?" the Jew once again denied the claim saying, "The armour is mine and furthermore, it is in my possession." Qadhi Shurayh (ra) thereafter turned to 'Ali (RA) and enquired, "Do you have any proof, O Ameerul Mu'mineen?" 'Ali (RA) replied, "Yes! Qumber and Hasan (RA) will testify that the armour is mine." Qadhi Shurayh (ra) rejected this evidence saying, "The testimony of the son is not accepted when in favour of the father (referring to the testimony of Hasan [RA])."

When the Jew heard the decision of Qadhi Shurayh (ra) in his favour, he immediately exclaimed, "The Leader of the Muslims took me to his own judge and his own judge passed judgement against him in my favour? This, really, is truth!" The Jew then recited the shahaadah and accepted Islam. (Taareekhul Khulafaa' pg. 184)

### **Lessons:**

1. The Jew was so impressed at the justice of Islam that he instantly renounced Judaism and accepted Islam. If we once again live our lives according to the principles of Islam, we will become beacons of guidance and attract disbelievers around the world to Islam through our sublime character.
2. We, as Muslims, are all representatives of Islam. Unfortunately, when our behaviour is incorrect, we not only give the world at large a negative impression of Islam but even give them the chance to mock and ridicule Islam due to our wrong actions.
3. Justice and fair treatment need to be exercised in every aspect of our lives. If we have a domestic worker at home, justice demands that we don't keep her back even a single minute overtime, we are timeous in paying her, we don't accuse her of stealing etc. without having proof to back our accusation, and we don't extract such work from them which is more than what they can manage. Let us all ask ourselves, "Have I, through my conduct, attracted my domestic worker to Islam or have I distanced her from Islam?"