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RADIANT REALITY

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IF GOD IS ALL YOU HAVE,
you have all you need.

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This magazine is dedicated to the greatest and the last Prophet Sayyidna Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) on whom the succession of Prophethood ended and was sealed forever. Let us all follow him with utmost spirit.

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Question Answer

Question

Where is Allah?

Answer

The issue of “Where is Allah?” is something that was never debated or made a matter of dispute among the Muslims throughout the ages and eras. Unfortunately, due to immense ignorance about our deen, certain Muslims spend and waste their precious time arguing about petty and trivial issues and forget about their real duties and responsibilities.

The belief (aqidah) one must have regarding his Lord and Creator is that Allah Almighty is One, there is nothing like Him, there is nothing that can overwhelm Him, there is no god besides Him and He is Eternal without a beginning and Enduring without end. He will neither perish nor come to an end and nothing happens except what He wills. No imagination can conceive of Him and no understanding can comprehend Him. He is different from any created being.

Allah Most High says about Himself:

“There is nothing whatever unto like Him.”

(Surah al-Shura, 11).

And He says in Surah al-Ikhlās:

“And there is none like unto Him.” (112: 4).

Due to the above and other texts of the Qur’an and Sunnah, one of the major beliefs a Muslim must have regarding Allah Most High is that there is no creation that is similar to Him. If Allah is regarded to be similar or resemble or have any qualities of His creation, then that would constitute disbelief (Kufr).

Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (Allah have mercy on him) states:

“Whoever thinks that Allah has a body made of organs, then he is an idol-worshipper...

Whosoever worships a body is regarded a disbeliever by the consensus of all the scholars, the early scholars (salaf) and the late (muta’akhirun)” (Iljam al-Anam an Ilm al-Kalam, 6-8).

If one believes that there is nothing similar to Allah in any way, then his Aqidah is correct and there is no need for disputes and arguments. I believe that there isn’t a Muslim that really believes that Allah is similar to his creation in any way, thus disputes and arguments must be avoided. Yes, if one does believe that Allah has hands, feet, face, etc...that is similar to his creation, then without doubt this person would come out of the fold of Islam.

Regarding the question, “where is Allah?” firstly, it should be remembered that this is not something that one will be asked about on the day of Qiyamah. We are in need of people really learning about the basics of Islam, rather than engaging themselves in these matters. Those that argue and cause destruction with such issues are normally ignorant about even the basics of Salat, Zakat, Hajj, etc... We need to really wake up and smell the coffee!

Secondly, this question in itself is wrong. We ask regarding the whereabouts of a person that lives in time and space. For example, I encompass time, meaning I live in time, and I have a body that needs to fill some space.

However, Allah, Mighty and Majestic, is the creator of time and space. If we limit Him to any time or space, then this would imply that we resemble Him to his creation by giving Him a body, as space is limited. If one was to say

that Allah is everywhere, then this is wrong, as 'everywhere' is limited and ends somewhere, whereas Allah is not limited.

Similarly, to say that Allah is on earth, sky, moon, sun, throne, etc... is also wrong, as all these things are limited and to limit Allah to any created thing is Kufr.

Imam al-Tahawi (ra) states in his famous al-Aqida al-Tahawiyya

Answer
"He (Allah) is beyond having limits placed on Him, or being restricted, or having parts or limbs. Nor is He contained by six directions as all created things are." (P. 9).

Imam al-Nasafi (ra) states:

"He (Allah) is not a body (jism), nor an atom (jawhar), nor is He something formed (musawwar), nor a thing limited (mahdud), nor a thing numbered (ma'dud), nor a thing portioned or divided, nor a thing compounded (mutarakkab), nor does He come to end in Himself. He is not described by quiddity (al-ma'hiya), or by quality (al-kayfiyya), nor is He placed in space (al-makan), and time (al-zaman) does not affect Him. Nothing resembles Him, that is to say, nothing is like Him." (See: Sa'd al-Din al-Taftazani & Najm al-Din al-Nasafi, Sharh al-Aqa'id al-Nasafiyya, 92-97).

In conclusion, one must have the Aqidah that Allah Most High is pure from space and time. It is wrong to say that He is everywhere and it is also wrong to believe that He is on something, as all these are limited whereas Allah Almighty is limitless. However, we must believe that His knowledge encompasses everything, and he knows, sees and listens to everything.

Ml. Muhammad ibn Adam

Question

What is the Shar'ee ruling regarding chipped or broken utensils and glasses? Are we permitted to eat and drink from them? Does barakah not enter the homes in which such utensils are kept?

Answer

Eating and drinking from chipped utensils or glasses is permissible. However, one should refrain from drinking from the place where it is chipped as it is possible that one could get cut. The belief that barakah does not enter the home wherein such utensils are found is baseless.

Mufti Zakaria

Question

Is zakaat waajib on shares? If yes, then how will it be calculated?

Answer

Zakaat is Waajib on shares. However, it should be noted that Zakaat is not Waajib on the entire share. Rather Zakaat is only Waajib upon the Zakaatable assets of the company (i.e. the market value of the merchandise contained in the share of the company). As far as the non-Zakaatable assets of the company are concerned e.g. fixtures, fittings, transport vehicles, etc. which are not part of the merchandise of the company, the value of all these things will be evaluated in the share and will not be taken in account when discharging the zakaat. If it is difficult to differentiate between the zakaatable and non-Zakaatable assets of the company, then as a precautionary measure one should discharge the Zakaat on the market value of the entire share.

If a person purchased shares in a company that hires out vehicles, e.g. a trucking company or leases out properties, estates, flats, etc., Zakaat will not be Waajib on this type of share. Instead, Zakaat will only be Waajib on the profits accrued from the share.

Mufti Zakaria

Question

What is the Shar'ee ruling regarding a person who did not discharge the zakaat of his jewelry, wealth and stock in trade for many years? How should he discharge the zakaat of the previous years?

Answer

It is compulsory upon one to discharge the zakaat during the year the zakaat became compulsory. If one delays in discharging the zakaat until the following years zakaat became compulsory, one will be sinful. The law pertaining to zakaat of the missed years is that one will evaluate his zakaatable assets and discharge 2 ½ % of the total for each missed year.

E.g. A persons zakaatable assets are evaluated at R100 000. He will discharge 2 ½ % of R100 000 (R2 500) for the first year. He will be left with R97 500. Thereafter he will discharge 2 ½ % of R97 500 (R2 437,50) for the second year. He will be left with R95 062, 50. He will discharge 2 ½ % of that amount for the third year. In this manner he will discharge the zakaat of the remainder years. This is in the case where one did not spend the wealth.

In the case where the person spent the wealth or sold the stock in trade and he is unable to ascertain the exact amount of wealth he possessed for each year of the ten missed years, he will apply his mind to the best of his ability in trying to work out the amount which he possessed for each year and accordingly pay 2 ½ % of that amount for the respective years.

If he is true and honest in working out his zakaat for the ten missed years and sincerely repents for the sin of delaying the zakaat, then Insha Allah Allah will forgive him.

Mufti Zakaria

Question

Sometimes, it becomes unbearable for me to make Wudhu using water. At those times, if I make Wudhu using water, my skin becomes extremely itchy, inflamed and it bleeds. My doctor said that it is called contact dermatitis and advised me that if I use water in Wudhu, my condition will become even more worse. What do I do in the case of Wudhu if I can't use water?

Answer

In the enquired situation, if a reliable Muslim doctor has confirmed that the use of water in making Wudhu is detrimental to your health, then it would be permissible for you to make Tayammum. (Shaami 1/233)

The necessary method of Tayammum is firstly; to make intention of Tayammum for Wudhu to perform Salaah etc. Secondly, to strike both hands on earth (sand, stone etc.) and to rub both hands on the complete face. Thirdly, to strike both hands on earth (sand, stone etc.) and rub both hands on both arms from the fingertips up to and including the elbows.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

My mother's house was on sale for R1 000 000. My mother sold her house to my sister for R700 000.00 at a discount of R300 000. Is it Islamically correct for my mother's will to reflect that my sister has received her discounted share of the sale of the house-R300 000 as inheritance and exclude my sister from inheriting "again" from my mother's estate?

Answer

A gift or sale of a deceased person concluded in his/her lifetime does not affect the shares of inheritance of the deceased's heirs after his/her demise. Hence, if your mother sold her house to your sister at a discounted price in her lifetime, your sister will still be entitled to her full share of inheritance after your mother's demise as a legal heir. Therefore, the discounted price of the sale of the house to your sister in your mother's lifetime cannot be deducted from your sister's share of inheritance.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

What is pride, and what is its remedy?

Answer

Pride is when a person considers himself to be superior and thinks of others to be lower than

him. The remedy for pride is that a person should ponder over this: “Whatever perfection I may see in myself is not on account of my own achievement. Rather, it is from Allah Ta’ala and in his control. He may take it back whenever He wishes. Then what achievement will I have? Allah Ta’ala has power over everything. He gives honour to whom He wishes and disgrace to whom He wishes.” One should think over this to such an extent that it firmly settles in the mind. Insha-Allah, in this way pride will be removed. (Maktoobaat vol. 1, pg. 23)

Question

Generally we hear people mention that Duaas are accepted upon the completion of the Qur’an. Is this correct? If yes, then after which type of khatam will duaas be accepted? When one completes the Qur’an individually or when the khatam takes place in a madrasa jalsa?

Answer

Duas are answered after any khatam. Whether the khatam is done individually or in taraweeh salaah or with the completion of a student’s hifz. Whichever way the completion has taken place duas are answered.

Mufti Ebrahim

Question

Is Janaazah Salaah necessary for a person who commits suicide?

Answer

The act of committing suicide is a severe sin that is accompanied with severe punishment. Such a person will continuously be punished in the same manner that he had taken his life. Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam said:

“Whoever commits suicide with something, will be punished with the same thing in the Fire.” (Bukhari)

However, the act of suicide does not constitute Kufr and hence, a person remains a Muslim.

Therefore, it would be necessary to perform Janaazah Salaah for a person that committed suicide.

Note: The amount of suicide deaths has increased to a considerable amount amongst Muslims and especially amongst the youth in recent times. Parents should constantly make observations of their children and take necessary steps in advising them accordingly.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

Is it necessary to perform the Sajda-e-Tilaawah on reading the translation of the Qur’an in Urdu or English as it is necessary to perform Sajda-e-Tilaawah while reading the Qur’an in Arabic?

Answer

Yes, it is necessary.

Mufti Zakaria

Question

If I am learning a Surah with a sajdah off by heart, then do I have to do the same amount of sajdah tilawat as the amount of times I recite the aayat of sajdah? If I am making more than one sajdah tilawat then how would I do it? Is it the same as in namaz or do I have to do them all separately with intentions in between all of them because I have quite a few to do from before as well?

Answer

1. If you have recited a specific aayat of sajdah many times in one sitting, then only one sajdah is waajib upon you. However if you recited two different aayaat of sajdah, then two sajdahs will be compulsory upon you despite how many times you recited the both aayaat in the same sitting.

2. You should make the intention that you are making sajdah for the aayaat of sajdah that you had previously recited and thereafter you should perform the sajdahs. You can make any amount

of sajdahs at one time. You will say the takbeer and fall into sajdah and thereafter repeat the takbeer and come up from sajdah. It is mustahab to make the sajdah from the standing posture. However if this is difficult, then it is permissible to perform the sajdah from the sitting posture.

Mufti Zakaria

Question

Is it okay to fold ones sleeves and perform Salaah?

Answer

It is Makrooh (disliked) to fold ones sleeves without necessity and perform Salaah as it is considered disrespectful. (Shaami 1/640) A person should unfold his sleeves before commencing Salaah. This is more respectful and will draw more humility to ones Salaah.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

Is it permissible for one to perform salaah if his bladder is full and he has the need to relieve himself? Similarly if one is performing salaah and one feels the pressing need to relieve oneself, can one continue his salaah or should he break his salaah, and after relieving himself, make wudhu and thereafter perform the salaah?

Answer

It is makrooh to perform salaah in this way. You won't get the thawaab for the salaah when you are pressed to relieve yourself.

If it has come to the point where you cannot concentrate in salaah correctly and your mind is more towards relieving yourself then it is not right to continue the salaah. Rather, you should break the salaah and after relieving yourself, you should make wudhu and then perform salaah.

Mufti Ebrahim

Question

If a person can offer Salaah on a namaz bed by facing his legs towards the qiblah, then should

he offer Salaah like this or by sitting on a chair?

Answer

If one is unable to perform the Salaah standing and carrying out all the postures in the correct manner with sajda on the ground and similarly one is unable to perform the Salaah sitting on the ground and making sajda on the ground, then one may perform the Salaah with signs while sitting on the chair or while sitting on the bed facing the qiblah.

Mufti Zakaria

Question

Is it permissible to use zakaat funds to purchase hampers and feed the poor? Similarly, is it permissible to provide iftaar for the poor in the month of Ramadhaan using zakaat funds?

Answer

It will be permissible to use zakaat funds to feed the poor provided the requirement of tamleek is found. Tamleek means to transfer ownership of the wealth to someone who is eligible for zakaat. Therefore if the poor were given the zakaat hampers, the zakaat will be discharged. If the poor were not given the zakaat hampers but were merely invited for a meal and were allowed to partake of it, then zakaat will not be discharged since the requirement of tamleek was not found. Similar is the case regarding the iftaar food in the month of Ramadhaan. If the poor were given an iftaar hamper, the zakaat will be discharged. If the poor were not given the zakaat hampers but were merely invited to partake of the food provided, then the zakaat will not be discharged since the requirement of tamleek was not found.

Mufti Zakaria

Devourers of Unlawful

They are listeners to the fallacy, devourers of the unlawful. So, if they come to you, judge between them or turn away from them. If you turn away from them, they can do you no harm. But if you judge, judge between them with justice. Surely, Allah loves those who do justice.
(5:42)

This verse mentions another evil trait of unbelievers by calling them: (translated here as) 'Eaters of the Unlawful' making 'the unlawful' to stand for the word, 'suht' in the text. The literal meaning of *Suht* is to uproot or destroy something totally which is the sense in what the Qur'an says in: , that is, (do not forge lies against Allah) lest He destroy you with a punishment - 20:61). But, at this place in the Qur'an, *Suht* denotes bribe. Sayyidna 'Ali (RA), Ibrahim Nakha'ii, Hasan al-Basri, Mujahid, Qatadah and Dahhak (raa) and other leading authorities in Tafsir have explained it as bribe.

The reason for equating bribe with *Suht* (total destruction; also - unlawful earning, detestable enough to be shunned) is that it not only destroys its givers and takers alike but also goes on to uproot the whole country and community and destroy public peace and tranquility (by causing rise in illegal gratification and fall in avenues of honest earning). When bribery gains currency in a country or a department, law freezes and bribery stays hot. As for the law of a country, it is the only power which maintains peace and stability. When law and order stand suspended, nothing remains safe, life or prop-

erty or honour, nothing. Therefore, by calling it *Suht*, the Shari'ah has declared it to be gravely Haram, forbidden and unlawful. Moreover, to block all possible doors of bribery, even the gifts given to officials or leaders or dignitaries of a country have also been classed as *Suht* or bribe in an authentic Hadith, and has been declared to be Haram. (Jassas)

The Holy Prophet (SAWS) has said in a hadith:

Almighty Allah causes His curse to fall on the giver and taker of bribe - and on him too who acts as a broker between them. (Jassas).

The Islamic Legal definition of *Rishwah* (meaning bribery) is the taking of compensation for something the taking of which would not be legally correct. For example, a person doing a job, the doing of which is included within his duty, and the fulfilling of which is mandatory on him, cannot take any compensation for it from any party. If taken, that is bribe. Functionaries of governments, officials or clerks, higher or lower, are all obligated to do their duties by virtue of being paid employees of the government. If they take something from the person whose case they are handling, that will be a bribe. The

father and mother of a girl are responsible for the marriage of their daughter. They cannot take any ‘compensation’ for doing that. If they take any ‘compensation’ from the person who will have the hands of their daughter in marriage, that is a bribe. Sawm (fasting), Salah (prayers), Hajj (pilgrimage) and the Tilawah (recitation) of the Qur’an are ‘Ibadah’ (acts of worship) with which Muslims have been obligated. The taking of any ‘compensation’ from anyone is a bribe. However, the duty of the Teaching of Qur’an and the duty of leading Salah as Imam are exempt from this (as ruled by later Muslim jurists).

Then, a person who takes bribe and does someone’s job as it should rightfully be done, he commits the sin of taking bribe and the money or material he has ‘earned’ is ‘suht’, and unlawful for him. And should he do it as it should have not been done rightfully, then, this becomes another grave crime, that of wastage of what was right and that of changing an express command of Allah, in addition to the initial one. May Allah keep all Muslims safe from this curse.

*Adapted from: Ma’ariful Qur’an
Mufti Muhammad Shafi (ra)*

“She’s Still Small”

Haarith bin Haarith (RA) narrates that they saw Nabi (SAWS) inviting people to bring imaan in the oneness of Allah. The people, however, continued to reject and harm him. Their ill treatment continued until it was eventually midday and the people dispersed. At that point, a girl came to Nabi (SAWS) carrying a bowl of water and a cloth while her upper chest had become exposed. He took the bowl from her, drank some of the water and then made wudhu. He thereafter raised his blessed head and said to her, “O my beloved daughter! Cover your chest and do not fear for your father!” We enquired as to who the girl was and were told, “This is Zainab (RA), his daughter.” (Majma‘uz Zawaaid)

Lessons:

1. Despite the fact that the people had been, just moments ago, relentlessly harming and rejecting him, the priority of Nabi (SAWS) was to make his beloved daughter, Zainab (radhiyallahu ‘anha), aware that a portion of her chest was exposed so that she may cover it. Even in these circumstances, Nabi (SAWS) could not tolerate the body of a woman being exposed.
2. As parents we need to be firm in ensuring that our children, especially our daughters, are dressed correctly and appropriately. This even relates to ‘small things’ such as deep necklines and short sleeves. Making excuses such as “she’s still small” result in their habits being spoilt until “they get too big” to be told.
3. Nabi (SAWS) advised Zainab (RA) to turn her attention to Allah and not fear for her father (SAWS). When a robbery occurs or there is a car accident (may Allah save us), although we dial the police, ambulance etc., our focus should first turn to Allah and we should bear in mind that everything lies in His hands. Similarly, we should work to inculcate this mindset and awareness within our children.

Lessons from Sahih Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

Chapter 17 : (The description of) Salaah in red garments.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Imam Bukhari has quoted this chapter to convey that it is permissible to offer Salaah wearing red coloured garments.

Hadith No. 368

Narrated Abu Juhaifa

I saw Allah's Apostle in a red leather tent and I saw Bilal taking the remaining water with which the Prophet had performed ablution. I saw the people taking the utilized water impatiently and whoever got some of it rubbed it on his body and those who could not get any took the moisture from the others' hands. Then I saw Bilal carrying an Anza (a spear-headed stick) which he planted in the ground. The Prophet came out tucking up his red cloak, and led the people in prayer and offered two Rak'ats (facing the Ka'ba) taking Anza as a Sutra for his prayer. I saw the people and animals passing in front of him beyond the Anza.

Comments

Abu Juhaifa mentions that he saw Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) in a red leather tent. According to Allaama Ayni, the tent was laid at a place called 'Buthaan' near

Makkah, and this incident took place around Hajatul Wida.

As per Abu Juhaifa (RA) Sayyiduna Bilal (RA) brought water for Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), and he performed Wudhu. After that he took the remaining water and the Sahaaba tried to overtake one another to get access to the remaining water. Whoever got some of it rubbed it on his body and those who were unable to get anything were taking the moisture from others' hands. Then Sayyiduna Bilal planted 'Anza' - a stick with an iron tip, into the ground as 'Sutra' and Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) led the Salaah. Abu Juhaifa narrates that he saw people and animals passing in front of that Anza. According to Allaama Ayni, Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) offered two rak'ats of 'Zuhr' Salaah and two of 'Asr' (combining the two during the journey, known as Qasr). The narrator further added that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was wearing a red 'Hulla' - cloak.

"Hulla is the name given to two garments viz., a sheet and a trouser, of the same cloth". (Umdatul Qaari)

Some scholars hold the view that the water was the used ablution water that had flown down the blessed body parts of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

Lessons from this Hadith

1. It is permissible to wear red coloured clothes.
2. It is also permissible to use red tents.
3. Used things of pious people can be had for obtaining blessings as the Sahaaba did by taking the used ablution water of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).
4. Performing Qasr during a journey is obligatory.
5. While in journey, one can combine Zuhr and Asr Salaah.
6. It is permissible to cross from the front of a person offering salaah if there is a Sutra.

Chapter 18 : To offer Salaah on roof tops, pulpit or wood planks.

And Abu Abdullah said, “al-Hasan finds no objection for one to pray over snow or bridges even if urine flowed underneath or over or in front of them as long as there is an object put in front of the praying person to act as sentimental barrier between him and others in front of the person. Abu Huraira prayed on the roof of the mosque with the Imam, and Ibn Umar prayed on snow.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Imam Bukhari first discussed the obligatory nature of the Salaah, then mentioned the prerequisites of Salaah wherein he first discussed the Satr-ul-Awrah. Now he is mentioning another pre-requisite viz., the ritual cleanliness of the particular place where one offers Salaah, even if its surroundings may not be so. The place where a person stands and where he prostrates, should be clean. A hadith says:

“The land has been made for me mosque and ritually clean”.

In this chapter under discussion, Imam Bukhari wants to say that it is not necessary for a Musalli (one offering Salaah) to have his forehead touch the (real) ground when prostrating. If a person is offering his Salaah on a roof, a wooden plank or a pulpit etc., his Salaah is still

valid. Imam Bukhari further says that it is valid to offer Salaah on bridges etc., below which impure things may be flowing. It is also permissible to offer Salaah on snow if it is a little harder and ones forehead rests on it when prostrating. Further, it is also permissible to offer Salaah on anything which is harder and firmly placed on ground and can support one’s head.

Qanaateer and Jasr

Qanaateer means a bridge erected on stones while as Jasr is a wooden bridge. It is permissible to offer Salaah on both of them.

Can a Muqtadi stand above the level of his Imam?

Sayyiduna Abu Huraira offered Salaah on a roof top when his Imam was at lower level. It is permissible for Imam to stand at a higher level than his Muqtadees when such a need arise and vice versa. However, it is not permissible for Muqtadees to stand ahead of Imam whether offering Salaah at the same level, below or above.

Hadith No. 369

Narrated Abu Hazim

Sahl bin Sa’d was asked about the (Prophet’s) pulpit as to what thing it was made of? Sahl replied: “None remains alive amongst the people, who knows about it better than I. It was made of tamarisk (wood) of the forest. So and so, the slave of so and so prepared it for Allah’s Apostle . When it was constructed and place (in the Masjid), Allah’s Apostle stood on it facing the Qibla and said ‘Allahu Akbar’, and the people stood behind him (and led the people in prayer). He recited and bowed and the people bowed behind him. Then he raised his head and stepped back, got down and prostrated on the ground and then he again ascended the pulpit, recited, bowed, raised his head and stepped back, got down and prostrated on the ground. So, this is what I know about the pulpit.”

Ahmad bin Hanbal said, “As the Prophet was at

a higher level than the people, there is no harm according to the above-mentioned Hadith if the Imam is at a higher level than his followers during the prayers.”

Comments

Sayyiduna Sahl bin Sa’d (RA) was asked about the pulpit of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). He said that there was nobody better than him who knew about it. Why he said so, the learned scholars have given two reasons for it viz., 1. In Madina, Sahl bin Sa’d (RA) was the last Sahaabi to die. 2. Probably he meant that among those present that time nobody else knew about it.

There are various narrations about the pulpit of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). It is said that the pulpit was prepared by a person namely Mynoon—a slave of a woman, and a carpenter by profession. In some narrations the lady who owned Mynoon has been mentioned by the name Aisha, and that she was from among the Ansaar. Before the pulpit was prepared, Rasulullah would offer Salaah and deliver sermon near a pillar, and from there only the people near him could see him. The pulpit so prepared had two steps and a sitting dais. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) stood on the pulpit so that people far from him could see him.

Allaama Ayni has quoted on the authority of Jaabir:

“A woman asked Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) if she is allowed to prepare something on which he would sit (during Khutba), as she had a slave who was a carpenter”. (Umdatul Qaari)

Lessons from the hadith

1. An Imam can stay at a level higher than that of Muqtadees at the time of need but not unnecessarily.
2. It does not make Salaah invalid to move a little forward or backward as is evident from the

act of Rasulullah (SAWS). According to the author of al-Muheet it is permissible to move a step or two while in Salaah but more than that will render it invalid. It is not recommended to take two steps in one go. The proper way is take a step and stop and then take another.

3. The minor actions e.g., taking a step, cleaning the nose, setting the headgear right etc., does not render Salaah invalid.

4. It is preferable for an Imam to stand on the pulpit.

(Umdatul Qaari)

Cont'd from page 32

Deen, which everyone can implement immediately and easily. There is a need to fulfill the Obligatory Injunctions such as Salaah, Zakaat, Fasting in the month of Ramadaan, etc. and to fulfill the rights of family, neighbours and others. There is a need to read the Qur’aan Sharief regularly, together with some authentic commentary – a little at a time, as well as giving time to studying some book on Islamic Jurisprudence and reading the life and teachings of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), etc. A reading of the books of virtues of actions such as Salaah, Fasting, Haj, Sadaqaat, Zikr, etc. by Shaykh Zakariyyah Saheb (Rahmatullah ‘alayh) will create enthusiasm in the heart for action.

May Allah grant us His Love and the Love of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), such that it becomes easy to give up all sins and submit to His Obedience. May He protect us all from the mischief of nafs and Shaytaan. May He fill our hearts with Love for this beautiful Deen and inspire us in being a practical and good Muslims and be true role-models to our community

Humanity's Ontological Nature

Ali Unal

The universe, an integral composite entity of interrelated and interlinked parts, may be likened to a tree. The view is especially common in Eastern tradition, and such Muslim sages as Muhiy al-Din ibn al- Arabi (ra) have written books on it entitled *The Tree of Creation*.

A tree grows from its seed or stone. Its entire future life and program is pre-recorded and compacted in the seed. The Creator has established such laws as germination and growth so that the seed may germinate in a suitable soil and climate and grow into a tree. They have the same meaning for the tree as a person's spirit laas for himself or herself. After sowing the seed in the soil, the tree's life proceeds through certain stages to yield its fruit and, having begun in a seed, ultimately ends in another seed. This seed is almost identical with the original one and includes the tree's entire past life.

Consider this: For a book to come into being, its meaning first must exist in its author's mind. If this meaning is not written down, we still can say that the book exists but that its existence will become visible only when the author "materializes" it in a suitable form. Thus something's origin, its real existence, is not its material visible form but its meaning, which is invisible and without material existence or matter. And yet it subsists, constituting the essence

of existence or creation.

Given this, the universe's real existence (the Tree of Creation) is found in its primordial form in God's Knowledge as meaning. Things come into existence in different worlds, one surrounding the other like concentric circles, by Divine Power acting on the primordial forms of things in His Knowledge and in accordance with Divine Destiny's measures. Like things reflected in different forms and dimensions in mirrors facing each other, all things or beings have different forms of existence in those worlds according to each one's spedf conditions.

Muslim sages spoke of the High Emphyrean World in which Almighty manifests His Names almost without veil and thereby enables things to exist in almost pure forms. They mentioned other worlds as well, such as the World of Unconditioned Existence, the World of Symbols or Immaterial Forms, the Visible Material World, the Intermediate World (between this world and the next), and the Other or Eternal World. In this material world, things or beings exist in a hierarchy formed by elements at the bottom, and then proceed to move upward through plants, animals, certain unseen creatures like jinn, and finally reach the hierarchy's apex: humanity.

Any work points to the one who does it. For example, a book shows its writer. Similar-

ly, all creatures come into existence through the Divine Names' manifestations and function as signs revealing the Almighty Creator or signposts leading to Him and making Him known. This obviously requires the existence of one equipped with certain faculties (e.g., intellect, consciousness, and heart) who will recognize God and serve as a most comprehensive mirror to reflect Him. Other creatures, such as angels, have a certain knowledge of God but cannot reflect all of His Names and Attributes comprehensively, for they have no free will and cannot acquire a perfect knowledge of things and use them as steps to reach God. Therefore Divine Wisdom required a being to manifest all Divine Names and Attributes, primarily Knowledge and Will, in the Realm of Existence. This being--humanity--would be the Tree of Creation's furthest and most perfect fruit.

This existential reality is almost the same in the universe (as macro-cosmos), humanity (as normo-cosmos), and an atom (as micro-cosmos). Even in the universe has been compacted in our nature, which leads Muslim sages to describe humanity as a specimen of creation. Our pure spiritual aspect corresponds to the angelic world; our memory and power of conception correspond to the Supreme Guarded Tablet, upon which all things and events are prerecorded and preserved both before and after they appear in the universe; our bodily composition corresponds to nature's main elements; our evil-commanding self corresponds to devils; and our Power, lust, and certain negative

feelings and qualities requiring discipline (e.g., vindictiveness, cunning, deception, greed, rapaciousness, etc.) correspond to certain animals, each of which is distinguished with one such quality.

Thus each person has two aspects: one angelic, pure, and spiritual, and the other one turned to elements, plants, and animals, for all people are "children of the world." We have been equipped with lust (e.g., for the opposite sex, children, umney; earring, and comfort), anger (to protect ourselves and our values), and intellect. By nature we are fallible, forgetful, neglectful, fond of disputing, obstinate, selfish, jealous, and so on. Since our free will distinguishes us from other conscious beings, such as angels, these powers, faculties, and negative-seeming feelings are not restricted. However, to attain individual and social happiness in both worlds and to rise to higher ranks of humanity, we should restrict them according to certain precepts or channel them into virtues. For example, obstinacy can be channeled into steadfastness in right and truth, and jealousy into competition in doing good things.

Humanity is no more than our struggle against our nature's negative aspects, restricting or channeling them into virtue, and acquiring distinction with good qualities so that we may become good, worshipful servants of God and useful members of society. The Last Prophet of God (SAWS), said: "I have been sent to the standards and beauties of good morals".

Abu Hurairah (RA) reported: I heard the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) saying, "When the Iqamah are pronounced, do not come to it running, you should walk calmly with tranquility to join the congregation. Then join in what you catch for and complete what you miss." [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

Saying 'Alhamdulillah'

Karima Burns

There are many examples in the Qur'an and Hadith of the virtues of a positive mental attitude, perseverance and optimism in the face of adversity. However, did you know that patience and a positive outlook on life are two of the greatest healing tools that you can use?

The Qur'an (2:155) says, "Give glad tidings to those who exercise patience when struck with adversity and say, 'Indeed, we belong to God and to Him is our return.' Such ones receive [the] blessings and mercy of their Lord, and such are the guided ones." According to the findings of modern science, it appears that this mercy may often come in the form of improved health.

Bernard Jensen says, in his book *The Science and Practice of Iridology*, "The doctor of the new day will recognize that a man's most important workshop is not the physical body, but the mind that controls it." Dr. Ted M. Morter confirms this in his book, *Your Health... Your Choice*, when he says that "negative thoughts are the number one acid producer in the body (and high body acidity levels are a major cause of disease) because your body reacts to negative mental and emotional stress brought about by thought the same way it reacts to 'real' threats of physical harm."

In fact, hospital studies show that, of all the patients who consult outpatient clinical facilities in the United States, an astounding seventy percent are found to have no organic basis for their complaint. That figure is amazingly high. However, although medically these patients are not found to have an obvious organic source

for their complaints, there actually is a physical basis for this phenomenon. Since Freud popularized the idea of psychoanalysis, people have often focused exclusively on the mental realm to solve certain problems, forgetting that we cannot separate the physical and mental realms. The mind is in the brain, and the brain is an organ. Like all other organs, it feeds from the same pool of nutrients that other body organs feed from and is susceptible to all of the same problems. Ultimately, the brain is just a part of our body like all of the other parts and is completely dependent on the body. It requires sugar to develop energy unlike other tissues that can develop it from potassium and fats. Consequently, it is the first organ to suffer from low blood sugar and it reacts most severely. Freud himself said that psychoanalysis was not suitable for treating diseases such as schizophrenia, and he postulated that their causes eventually would be found to be biochemical.

If we keep in mind that the brain is an organ and that it works in harmony with the other organs and feeds from the same bloodstream, we can understand how various mental events can affect us physically. For example, simply using our brains to think and study burns up nutrients in our system, particularly phosphorus. Heavily exercising the brain can cause us to suffer from a phosphorus deficiency. And we find that the reverse is also true in this relationship. People who have high intellectual capacity usually have high levels of phosphorus in their system.

There is much wisdom in the Prophet's

(SAWS) statement (narrated by Abu Huraira), “The strong [person] is not the one who overcomes the people by his strength, but the strong [person] is the one who controls himself while in anger.” In fact, staying patient and calm is key to physical strength.

Phosphorus is not the only nutrient that can be depleted by mental stress and a lack of spiritual calm. If the thyroid gland, the primary organ to handle our emotions, works overtime, we can suffer from a deficiency in iodine. Stress from a demanding job, a divorce or relocating can cause a loss of potassium and sodium in the body because it effects the adrenal glands creating more of a need for these minerals.

Even hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) can be caused by excitement. The prophet (SAW) recommended our taking the more moderate path in life; however, we often engage in or expose ourselves to intense excitement by yelling, excessively watching television, and going to the mall, movies, parties, amusement parks, etc. When we see something exciting, our adrenal cortex is stimulated and there is an increase in our blood sugar. This, in turn, stimulates the pancreas to secrete insulin into the blood to lower the sugar level, causing us to then feel tired or weak.

It produces calm and health to practice saying, “Alhamdulillah” for what we have and for what we are faced with. We should try to keep our home and work environments peaceful and as free from stress as possible. One way we can counteract the effects of stress are to simply be aware of the stress we are encountering, and to consume sufficient nutrients and supplements such as herbs.

For instance, if a person is up late praying or reading Qur’an during Ramadan, they can eat phosphorus rich foods and those that will help them maintain their phosphorus intake. If a person is moving, traveling or making Hajj or Umra, they may want to increase their intake of foods high in potassium and sodium as well as

vitamin B complex.

If we completely ignore the relationship between mental and physical health, we are missing an important detail in the picture of personal health. And, as in most health problems, practicing prevention is superior to finding a cure. Therefore, the best manner to avoid having negative attitudes and emotions control our bodies is simply to practice the wisdoms that we have been given throughout the Qur’an and Hadith. We should say, “Alhamdulillah” for what we have; “Insha’Allah” for what we intend; and, “Subhana’ Allah” when we see something exciting or amazing. We should remember to say, “Astaghfir’Allah” when we lose our tempers or become weak, and most importantly, “Allahu Akbar” when we are faced with the challenges of life. These five phrases, said regularly, are like taking a multi-vitamin for holistic health.

My Child's Salaah

The difference between the parents of yesterday and the parents of today is that yesterday's parents were concerned about nurturing the child's inner qualities and outer actions, whereas today the parent's main concern is the comfort, education and entertainment of the child. Thus the children of today lack discipline and righteousness.

As mothers let us help our child to become a saahib e tarteeb, that they do not miss a single salaah from the day of their maturity. Let us ensure that our son goes to the masjid with his father and our daughter performs salaah with us at home. Daily we need to check on their salaah. Our children will be the coolness of our eyes when deen comes into their lives. Salaah is the stepping stone to complete deen coming alive in our children.

LEARNED HELPLESSNESS

Dr. Ovamir Anjum

IN 1965, MARTIN E.P. Seligman, while studying the relationship between fear and learning, accidentally discovered an unexpected phenomenon while doing experiments on dogs using Pavlovian (classical conditioning) technique. Seligman used a harmless electric shock to condition and restrain the dog so it will not run away. Next, he put the conditioned dog into a shuttle box, which consists of a low fence dividing the box into two compartments. The dog could easily see over the fence, and jump over if it so wished. So Seligman rang the bell. He was expecting the dog to jump over the fence. Surprisingly, nothing happened! Then, he decided to shock the conditioned dog, and again nothing happened! The dog just pathetically lay there. Hey, what's going! When Seligman put a normal dog into the shuttle box, who never experienced inescapable shock, the dog, as expected, immediately jumped over the fence to the other side.

Apparently, what the conditioned dog learned in the hammock was that trying to escape from the shocks is futile. This dog learned to be helpless! In another experiment, a rat was taught helplessness, and put with another fresh rat into a vessel of water. While the helpless rat drowned in two hours, the fresh rat struggled to

escape for sixty hours.

The theory of learned helplessness was then extended to human behavior, providing a model for explaining depression. We decide and choose to be helpless, depressed, pessimistic and cynical. Helplessness, therefore, is a learned behavior. It lives in our minds, not out in the world.

The majority of the Muslim Ummah is, in a word, a self-inflicted state of learned helplessness. We, and only we, with the help of Allah, can get ourselves out of it:

Indeed, never will Allah Change the condition of a people until they change it themselves (with their own souls). But when once Allah wills a people's punishment, there can be no turning it back, nor will they find, besides Him, any to protect. [Sûrat Al-Ra'd, 13:11]

How have Muslims learned to be helpless and believe that their efforts will not bear fruit, therefore, it is no use to try, and that their enemies will always get their way? Closely connected with this helplessness is conspiracy theory mentality that incapacitates us.

A true revival of the Muslim Ummah is not possible until we begin to believe in ourselves and believe that our actions matter, both in this world and in the hereafter.

In this regard, there is something to learn from some of our fellow Americans who mobilized against the unjust war their administration was waging against the innocent civilians of Iraq. Their attitude in their efforts against the war was commendable – their efforts are untiring – their attitude was “we could stop them in Vietnam, why not now, we can still do it!”

One woman in California lived on a tree for two years – for two whole years she left her home and lived on a tree – to save trees from being cut down. The winning spirit and passion for relatively small things make us wonder: why can't we garner the same for Allah, His Messenger (SAWS) and his Dîn? Where has our energy gone? It has been sacked by our psychological defeatism and helplessness, the other name for weak faith and weak wisdom.

Winners are winners and losers, losers, before they begin their contest. It is their attitude and self-confidence that make all the difference. It is all inside us.

Speaking to my acquaintances in the Muslim world about the Iraq war (It had not begun by then), I realized that while most people were aware of and very deeply torn and aggrieved by the war on Iraq, they were mostly sitting quiet because they believed that they could not do anything. Many other instances have taught some of them that they were helpless. While certainly their emotions and love to the Iraqi people were infinitely more – they felt as one blood and one body – Muslims did not fill and roar their streets in the Muslim countries, and in the US, even as much as the peace-activists in a small American town to protest and denounce the war. They learned helplessness.

The Way Out

Power, or weakness, is, Allah informs us, within ourselves: in our perspective, our mind, our soul, our understanding and our worldview. The following two factors are indispensable to our freedom from helplessness.

Faith

Faith, or Îmân, is the greatest power, and the only way out for the Ummah. Îmân is not only belief, but also reliance and trust. It means believing that Allah is powerful over all things. This seemingly invincible military might of the tyrants of today is nothing more than tiny ants that Allah can crush any time, if He wills, through any of his infinite means. Do we not know the Army of the Elephant? Or about the children of Israel in Egypt, as they crossed the Red Sea walking by the permission of Allah and their mighty enemy was drowned? Or how the early Muslims' faith and trust turned them from shepherds into masters of the world in few years?

Wisdom and History

The book of Allah incessantly orders us to look at the histories of past nations, and learn lessons from them:

Many were the Ways of Life that have passed away before you: travel through the earth, and see what was the end of those who rejected Truth. [Sûrat Âl'Imrân, 3:13]

The order to walk through the earth to learn lessons from history is repeated no less than 13 times in the Book of Allah. Learning history and its lessons, keeping the big picture in mind, and gleaning wisdom from the history of Muslims as well as other nations, therefore, is incumbent upon us.

How many of us know the history of their own countries, or of early Islamic communities? Or the American and Western history? Are we not guilty of constantly defying the orders of Allah to be informed, educated and learned?

Lessons from history are the biggest source, along with true faith, to avoid helplessness trap.

Looking at the World and History

There are two ways of looking at the world and its history. One is static: you see and care

about only what is now and here. You do not know any better and cannot think any better. You do not look at where we came from and do not care where we are going. In this case, if you are powerful you become arrogant, vain, pompous, and you play god. The Pharaohs of the past and present are the textbook examples of this arrogant way of thinking.

The Quran teaches us another way of thinking about the world and history, and that is dynamic. You know your past, and learn lessons from it. You know that societies and nations go up and down. They are always moving, but the rate of their movement is imperceptible. Just like the sun and the moon, you look at them and you think they are static and they will always stay there. Until you look at the bigger picture and you learn that the Sun was rising in the East a few hours ago and you predict that it will set in the West a few hours later, you realize that it is constantly moving.

The lack of power that characterizes the Muslims today is not permanent, neither is the supremacy of any world power. Do you remember that until only 400 years ago the greatest military world power in the world was the Muslim Ottoman Empire? Do you know that 60 years ago America was not a world power, never thought to become one, was very conservative and religious, and all the sexual promiscuity and shamelessness rampant on the street today were unknown to its people? Read history and you will realize that the civilizations that stooped to such low levels of immorality, and did not repent, were wiped off the face of the earth. Do you realize that a few decades of world dominance in the large scale of Allah's plan mean less than a split second?

So lose not heart, nor fall into despair: For you must gain mastery if you are true in Faith.

[Sûrat Âl'Imrân, 3:139]

THE FOX, THE FOWL, AND THE DOG

One moonlight night a Fox was prowling about a farmer's hen-coop, and saw a Fowl roosting high up beyond his reach. 'Good news, good news!' he cried.

'Why, what is that?' said the Fowl.

'King Lion has declared a universal truce. No beast may hurt a bird henceforth, but all shall dwell together in brotherly friendship.'

'Why, that is good news,' said the Fowl; 'and there I see some one coming, with whom we can share the good tidings.' And so saying he craned his neck forward and looked afar off.

'What is it you see?' said the Fox.

'It is only my master's Dog that is coming towards us.

What, going so soon?' he continued, as the Fox began to turn away as soon as he had heard the news. 'Will you not stop and congratulate the Dog on the reign of universal peace?'

'I would gladly do so,' said the Fox, 'but I fear he may not have heard of King Lion's decree.'

MORAL: Cunning often outwits itself. one who is clever and witty, one who can see though the bull and trickery and turn the tables on his adversary.

The Real Fight

The corpse of a beardless youngster who had been murdered was once brought to ‘Umar (RA). The body of the youth had been found lying face down on the road. ‘Umar (RA) tried his utmost to investigate and determine what had happened to the youngster and identify his killer. However, the investigation of ‘Umar (RA) did not produce any leads.

His inability to apprehend the killer and mete out justice greatly concerned ‘Umar (RA). He thus turned to Allah and made du‘aa saying, “O Allah! Grant me success in finding the killer!” The case thereafter went cold with no leads turning up until the year had almost ended. At that point, a newborn baby was found lying on the road in the exact same place where the corpse of the youngster had been found!

When the baby was brought to ‘Umar (RA), he immediately realized that this baby had something to do with the murdered youngster and thus exclaimed, “Insha-Allah I will soon succeed in meting justice on behalf of the murdered youngster.” He thereafter handed the baby to a woman and instructed her saying, “Look after this baby and take the money for its expenses from us. Watch to see who will come to take this baby from you. When you find somebody kissing this baby and clasping it to their chest then immediately inform me of that person’s location.”

The baby thus began to live with the woman and time passed. One day, when the baby had now grown to become a young child, a slave

girl came to the woman and said, “My mistress has sent me to you to request that you send this child to her. She wishes to see the child and will return the child to you thereafter.” The woman replied, “Definitely! Take him to her and I will also accompany you.” They proceeded together until they entered the home of the mistress. There the woman observed as the mistress set her eyes on the child, grasped him and began to kiss him. The mistress, was the daughter of an Ansaari Sahaabi of Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam).

The woman went to ‘Umar (RA) and informed him of what had happened. No sooner had he heard report of the incident, he took his sword and set out for the home of the mistress where he found her father (RA) leaning against the door. ‘Umar (RA) addressed him asking, “O so-and-so! What is the condition of your daughter?” The Sahaabi (RA) replied, “O Ameerul Mu’mineen! May Allah reward her! She is among the people who best understand and fulfill the right of Allah and their father. Together with this, her salaah, fasting and all matters pertaining to her deen are excellent.” ‘Umar (RA) said, “I would like to enter your home so that I may address your daughter and further encourage her to strive in the line of righteousness and piety.” The Sahaabi (RA) said, “Wait here so that I may inform the people in the home of your arrival.” ‘Umar (RA) agreed and after some time, was invited into the home.

When he entered the home, ‘Umar (RA)

unsheathed his sword. He then addressed the girl with a warning and said, "Speak the truth or else I will put you to my sword!" The girl immediately realized why 'Umar (RA) had come and so replied, "O Ameerul Mu'mineen! Please do not be hasty! By Allah I will speak the truth! There was an old woman who would come to visit me. I took her as a mother and she would treat me like a daughter and took me as one. Our relationship continued in this way for some time. Eventually, one day she said to me, 'O my daughter! I need to travel to a certain place. I have a daughter who lives in such-and-such a place and I fear for her safety. I therefore wish to bring her to stay with you until my return.' She thereafter brought her young son to me who she had dressed up as a young girl. So convincing was her disguise that I did not at all suspect that the person before me was actually a boy. Even when staying with me, the boy would look at me and treat me like another girl would. This, however, soon came to an end. I was one day sleeping when I awoke with a shock to realize that the "girl" staying with me was actually a boy who was on top of me and was in the process of abusing me! I desperately grabbed a knife ly-

ing nearby and used it to kill him. I thereafter got some people to carry his body to the place where you had found it. Soon after, I gave birth to the boy's child and also had the baby sent and left at the place where you found it. By Allah! What I have just told you is the story of the baby and the dead boy."

'Umar (RA) replied, "You have spoken the truth! May Allah grant you barakah (blessing)!" 'Umar (RA) thereafter gave her some advice and made du'aa for her and left. As he left, he said to her father (RA) in high praise of her, "May Allah grant you barakah in your daughter for what an excellent daughter it is that you have!" (Manaaqibu 'Umar ibnil Khattaab [RA] li Ibnil Jowzi pg. 79-81)

Lesson

A true Muslim woman will even be prepared to kill a person to preserve her chastity and honour. How lamentable it is that some women are now prepared to kill their chastity and honour to have a 'good time' with some person. We need to murder our carnal desires and passions and give life to our imaan and love for Allah.

No Opportunity for Doubt

Nabi (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) said: "Two persons should not whisper into each other's ears in the presence of their companion (a third person) for verily that will cause him grief." (Abu Dawood)

Man's nature is such that when two people are whispering to each other in his presence, he automatically feels that he is being discussed, though most of the time this is not the case. Nevertheless the teachings of Islam are so refined that it does not even allow such a situation to arise which could be a source of pain or grief to the next person.

Furthermore, this hadeeth teaches us to avoid doing such things that will give others an opportunity to have suspicion and doubts regarding us. This will also apply to going to doubtful and suspicious places.

Beyond the Tilting Point

Syed Iqbal Zaheer

In every branch of knowledge, a point arrives during human pursuit after which further knowledge leads to no further clarity, but indeed, to confusion. It can be called the tilting point. After this boundary line, the more the humans try, the more they feel muddled. If they persist, they enter into a chaotic world of ideas that begin to contradict each other.

When pushed to its limits, every fundamental theory of physics runs foul of our poor understanding of information.

It may be no understatement to say that the biggest breakthrough in physics must come in information theory rather than quantum mechanics or relativity. (<http://www.technologyreview.com/>)

In that zone, there is more darkness than light. To cite an example from philosophy, when asked, Swiss philosopher Carl Jung is said to have answered at the prime of his life, after having fried and stewed much philosophy in his earlier robust years, to the effect, "I do not know who I am .. cannot say much about myself .. except that I am a product of circumstances." He was at the tilting point.

This is the situation with frontier sciences and scientists now, in our times. Whether it is astronomy, biology, physics, or chemistry, hu-

mankind seems to have arrived at a point which could be classified as the tilting point. At this point the Sun of knowledge and understanding seems to be setting into the dark zone: "Until, when he reached the point at which the Sun sets, he found it setting into a slimy lake" (the Qur'an, 18: 86).

Some scientists believe that they are in a situation which can be described as the "end of science", although the word goes in muted voices. Nonetheless, books dealing with this theme have already begun to appear.

Joachim of Floris, a 13th century ecclesiastical writer had divided religious history into three phases: the Age of the Father, the Age of the Son, and (his own times) the Age of the Holy Ghost (Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, p.19). Now, since nothing of the Holiness remains in the Western Machine Civilization, it can be renamed as the Age of the Ghosts. In fact, in keeping with the ghostly tendencies of the modern scientific findings, a certain class of sub-atomic particles are aptly named as Ghost Particles.

Science is not dead. In every field of knowledge, immense number of men and women are active in research and experiments, and immense amount of data is being collected, clas-

sified, and stacked or stored. But, not all of it is retrieved often because they are unable to make much out of them. In quite a few instances the data is baffling. In some cases, it is absolutely incredible and illogical. It is inconsistent with the well-known laws of nature. But, repeated experiments yield the same results and confirm the conclusions. Perhaps this accounts for the appearance of disciplines such as Fuzzy Logic or the Chaos Theories.

Astronomy is one such cosmos of dark horizons. Some time back the Hubble Telescope discovered stars that seem to be older than the Universe. Either the age of our Universe as estimated by the astronomers was wrong, or the measurements were wrong. But neither seemed to be wrong. Yet here were a naughty bunch of stars teasing bright in the telescope, demanding explanation. After 200 hundred years of research and experiments, theory-building, and observation, some scientists were ready to revise the age of the universe, others the Cosmological constant, while some others were on the verge of joining forces with those who have always looked at the Big Bang theory with suspicious eyes.

If we compare the two age determinations, there is a potential crisis. If the universe is flat, and dominated by ordinary or dark matter, the age of the universe as inferred from the Hubble constant would be about 9 billion years. The age of the universe would be shorter than the age of oldest stars. This contradiction implies that either 1) our measurement of the Hubble constant is incorrect, 2) the Big Bang theory is incorrect or 3) that we need a form of matter like a cosmological constant that implies an older age for a given observed expansion rate. (<http://map.gsfc.nasa.gov/>)

Another example comes from the frontiers of Black Holes. Einstein vigorously denied them for several decades and died on his belief. He thought they were a “mere mathematical curiosity.” But the invisible black holes have been becoming more and more visible. (The British

scientist Stephen Hawking is said to be a leading expert on Black Holes). What is a Black Hole anyway? Well, when a star of certain size has burnt all its fuel, it starts to shrink under the pressure of its own gravitational force which grows in intensity as the star shrinks. Ultimately, the star-body is shrunk to such small size and its gravitational power grows to such stupendous magnitude, that nothing can escape from it; not even light; and, therefore, it becomes invisible; hence its name Black Hole. It can be detected by indirect means alone. To put it in scientific jargon:

Every star, however, must eventually exhaust its nuclear fuel. When it does so, its unbalanced self-gravitational attraction causes it to collapse. According to theory, if a burned-out star has a mass larger than about three times the mass of our sun, no amount of additional pressure can stave off total gravitational collapse. The star collapses to form a black hole. For a non-rotating collapsed star, the size of the resulting black hole is proportional to the mass of the parent star; a black hole with a mass three times that of our sun would have a diameter of about 10 miles. (<http://www.pbs.org/>)

But latest observations have sent the telescope-peering scientists back to supercomputers. All along they had said that a star of 3 and above solar masses should turn into a Black Hole after it had burnt out all its energy. But now it has been discovered from observation that a few neutron stars seemed to have formed from stars that once had 40 solar masses. That is, these stars (known as “magnetar”) must have actually become Black Holes. How dare they are neutron stars?

By comparison with these stars, they found that the star that became the magnetar must have been at least 40 times the mass of the Sun. This proves for the first time that magnetars can evolve from stars so massive we would normally expect them to form black holes. The previous assumption was that stars with initial masses between about

10 and 25 solar masses would form neutron stars and those above 25 solar masses would produce black holes. (<http://scienceblog.com/>)

Confusions neither start here, nor end here; like space, they have no boundary. As you follow the findings, you also discover that none less than a Nobel Prize winning scientists would, in fact, obliterate the Black Holes with his thumb:

Nobel prize-wining physicist says black holes and space-time singularities cannot exist in his latest model of the universe. (<http://www.technologyreview.com/>)

The scientist concerned is Gerard 't Hooft. He won the Nobel Prize in physics in 1999. (He has a splendid Website that offers excellent guidelines to students pursuing science courses).

Age and size questions are major confusing issues in astronomy. How old is the Universe and how big? As soon as one raises the issue, the first question shot back at him is: "Which Universe?" If you are baffled, you will be explained that there are several universes. And, if you do not cease to be flabbergasted, you are told that they could be in billions! You could also be told (if you refer to enough number of books) that you bat an eye, and a new Universe comes into existence.

In fact, someone suggested that the stars older than "our universe" detected by the Hubble telescope could be from another Universe. But scientists will accept no such nonsense because they will tell you that those other universes are beyond human visibility. Some of these universes might be crossing through our own universe, but going through clean and dry, without any clash, in a fashion similar to the jaw-dropping Japanese Precision Cross March. So, we are told that we live in a world of multiverses. Except for our own, the others are invisible, and will remain so, because of dimensional problem. Ours has only 4, others perhaps 8, perhaps 11, perhaps more.

At all events, as you learn to properly word

your question and ask, "What's the size of our Universe," you get a variety of answers. A straight jacket answer is: it is 13.7 billion years old; which implies that the Universe is of size 13.7 light years across. But you couldn't be more in error.

Another scientist (they are careful not to answer all the questions in one book), would clarify that if the oldest photons reaching us are 13.7 billion years old, then, it must be kept in mind that the figure gives us the radius; which means the width of our Universe has to be twice that, i.e. roughly 28 billion light years. In other words, light traveling at the speed of 300,000 km/second, will take 28 billion years to travel edge to edge. 28 billion years by the way is 28 followed by 9 zeroes (28,000,000,000). Multiply that figure by 60, and then by 60, then by 24, and then by 365 to get the distance in km. Order a cup of tea before you reach out for your calculator.

A third scientist might tell you that you are far from truth. The universe could be 156 billion years old. When you come out of the shock, he will explain to you that this is because the Universe is expanding at almost the speed of light in every direction. That is, it becomes 600,000 km. bigger in diameter, every second. Therefore, while the light ray was tiresomely plodding through the distance to kiss your retina, the Universe was mercilessly expanding, and the poor photon took 78 billion years for touch down. Double it up and you get 156 billion light years. That's the size of the Universe; that is, 'our Universe.'

That was taking for granted that the Universe is 13.7 billion years old. But is it? Let us hear another authority:

The new finding implies that the universe is instead about 15.8 billion years old and about 180 billion light-years wide. (<http://www.space.com/scienceastronomy/>)

If you wish to give up the question of the size of this Universe out of frustration, you are

still left with a piece of information that they tend to ignore but which ultimately knocks at your door; viz. you will never know how big this Universe is. Whoa! Yes. And it is such a simple conclusion that you should have arrived at it instantly. To explain: since the universe is expanding at almost the speed of light, light from the cosmic bodies at the extreme edge can never reach you because, by the time they travel “a distance”, the world stretches itself by twice that distance, and, therefore, the photons will never have the pleasure of kissing your retina. Those cosmic bodies that sent you the gift of light rays, have gone out of vision, and you will never know how big this Universe is! The same authority as quoted above says:

This (14 billion light ears) would be the diameter of just the observable universe. The actual size of the total universe may be 10 – 1000 times larger.

To proceed with our original issue of the “tilting point” in mind, questions about the shape of the Universe bring out the most amusing answers. For quite a while the scientists held – and many still hold – that the Universe had no edge and no boundary. Others say that they still do not know whether space is curved or flat. To the question, what lies beyond the edge, the answer was, and remains in many scientific circles, “there is no beyond.” Whoa again.

But, one need not be disheartened too soon. Ask others. They might say the Universe it is cone-shaped. Yet others are now speaking of a torus-shaped Universe, or, to simplify, doughnut-shaped.

But what about the beginning? Do we have any clear evidence about how it all began? “Yes,” the scientist might jump in excitement, “it began with a Big Bang.” When you ask when it was, the answer is, “That was 10-43 seconds after the Big Bang.” You ask, “But what was it like at Zero time?” The answer is, “We do not know what happened before 10-43 seconds, because

calculations begin to fail from that point backward. You cannot go any further than Planck’s constants. Further, there was a time after the Big Bang, when the infant Universe was in its dark zone, about which nothing can ever be known because the Dark Body did not allow any radiation to leave its surface.”

So, if there are boundaries at the end of the Universe, beyond which lies the unknowable world, there are boundaries too at the point it started which is also the unknowable world; and we are in between the two unknowables.

One can go on and on with dozens of more questions. The more the data sought, the fuzzier the situation seems to sound. It is the same story in any other scientific field, be it physics, chemistry, biology, geology, or even economic theories or political philosophies. There is much data, but little understanding. Or, to be precise, little room for understanding. Long back, Einstein had called the earliest Quantum findings as “the spooky world of physics.” It seems the entire sciences, as well as humanities, have acquired a spooky character.

This little preamble should prepare us to consider with considerable respect the claim of a leading scientist that this Universe of ours does not need a Creator. He can explain it without God.

Man is a little bit of a funny creature. He can press a humorous point when dealing with most profound subjects. (The British are specially known for a fine sense of humor). Man does not know the nature of his Universe, he does not know what it contains, he does not know what its shape is, he does not know how big it is, he does not know how many there are, he does not know how it began, he does not know how it will end, but he knows that it can be explained without taking God into consideration!

He is perhaps in the zone beyond the tilting point.

YMD:Oct-2010

EVIL GLANCES

If someone says that we accept that grief and sorrow is experienced when looking at beauties, but grief and sorrow is also felt when we force our eyes not to look. A person feels regret in his heart saying, "O how pretty that face may have been." So what is the difference? One will be causing pain to the heart either by looking or not looking. The answer to this is that the pain experienced by looking at a beauty is more severe than the pain felt in guarding the eyes.

When a person casts evil glances at a beauty then one comes to know of her shapes and features. "Her eyes are like this, her nose is like that and she has a model face..." This grief is termed as "grief of known and recognized beauty" which is more severe and causes more restlessness and uneasiness in the heart. However, if one guards one's eyes then this will be "regret of unknown and unrecognized beauty." When a person does not look, then the regret, pain and grief will also be light and minimal. The effect of this pain and grief will fade away quickly. The sweetness of faith which one attains from the regret of not attaining the "unknown and unrecognized beauty" will be so enjoyable that it will surpass all the combined enjoyments of the world.

On the other hand, by casting evil glances and making oneself go through regret and grief of "known and recognized beauty," the anger and wrath of Allah descends. As a result of this, the heart becomes restless and uneasy. One fails to find even a moment of contentment in the heart, and life also becomes bitter. Therefore, there is a world of difference between the two pains. One is the world of mercy and the other the world of curses and wrath.

The difference between the two griefs and pains is like the difference between Paradise and Hell-fire. Hence, the command of lowering the gaze is a great favor of Allah upon the believers. By making us go through the pain of "unknown and unrecognized beauty," He saved us from the pain of "known and recognized beauty." Just like the example of a person who gets stung by a mosquito, and another gets bitten by a snake.

The one who is stung by the mosquito thanks Allah that he remained safe from the snake bite. Similarly, the pain and regret of guarding the eyes from "unrecognized beauty" is like the stinging of a mosquito, and the pain and regret of "known and recognized beauty" is like the snake bite.

Sh Hakeem Akhtar Saheb (ra)

Islam and the Importance of Family Stability

Out of all the previous divine religions, none has given due importance to the family as Islam did.

In doing so, Islam has legislated procedures and means which maintain security and preserve stability within the family. It has also prescribed some measures which prevent the family from collapse and destruction.

We, particularly in the present time where immorality abounds and temptations are overwhelming, have to return to the endless spring of the Quran, the Sunnah (Prophetic tradition) as well as the sayings of the righteous predecessors which are guiding beacons for us along our road to maintain family stability.

Reconciliation After Disputes

Islam has initiated several measures to maintain the stability of the family as well the whole Muslim community. Here, we will discuss only some of the measures that Allah The Almighty has legislated to avoid the disintegration of the family structure and to maintain the unity of the Muslim community and steadfastness in the face of the huge challenges that the entire Muslim Ummah (nation) is facing.

Restricting the gates to divorce is the first requisite to maintain marital life and safeguard the community. To avoid making divorce the first decision in case of dissention and dispute,

Islam stated stages for reconciliation between the spouses.

The policy of reconciliation between the disputing spouses is essential here. Reconciliation is recommended even before dissention worsens and its evil consequences emerge. The arbitrators are chosen from the spouses' families because they are more capable of reconciling them and of knowing the details. The arbitrators should truly seek reconciliation and maintenance of the marital life, and as such God will help them to achieve this:

{And if you fear dissension between the two, send an arbitrator from his people and an arbitrator from her people. If they both desire reconciliation, Allah will cause it between them. Indeed, Allah is ever knowing and Acquainted [with all things].} [4: 35]

Accordingly, Islam directed the spouses to exert their best efforts in reconciliation when dissention and dispute occur among them:

{And if a woman fears from her husband contempt or evasion, there is no sin upon them if they make terms of settlement between them – and settlement is best. And present in [human] souls is stinginess.} (4: 128)

Commenting on the last verse, At-Tabari, may God have mercy upon him, said:

“There is a consensus that this is applicable when the wife is unattractive or very old and

feels that her husband no longer desires her, treats her with contempt or inclines to other women. In such a case, she can waive some of her rights in order to appease him and maintain her marital life.”

Be Patient

Islam warns against following whims and desires as well as surrendering to emotions, which overwhelm and change. A husband may feel aversion towards his wife, but if he is patient, this feeling will soon change. Therefore, it is not acceptable that a husband divorces his wife because of these temporary feelings of aversion. God says:

{And live with them in kindness. For if you dislike them – perhaps you dislike a thing and Allah makes therein much good} (4: 18)

In a Hadith, the Prophet, peace be upon him, said:

“No believing man should hate his believing wife. If he dislikes some of her characteristics, he would surely like another.” [Muslim]

This means that a husband could hate one of his wife’s characteristics while he is heedless of her other good ones. Consequently, he has to think deliberately before divorce as he may prefer keeping her and his feeling of dislike could change.

It was narrated that a man consulted ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab, may God be pleased with him, about divorcing his wife and ‘Umar said to him: “Do not do so.”

“I do not love her,” the man argued.

‘Umar may Allah be pleased with him said, “Are families built only on love? Where is, then, mutual care and the maintenance of rights and duties?” [Fi Thilaal Al-Quranby Sayyid Qutb]

The statement of ‘Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, indicates how Islam is keen to maintain the solemn marital contract as Allah describes it in the Quran:

{And they have taken from you a solemn cove-

nant.} (4: 21)

Even if love is missing in marital life, there is still scope for cooperation, solidarity and the fear of blame for divorce which distresses the wife, the children and the husband himself in many cases.

The Importance of Fulfilling People's Rights

Hazrat Shaikh Moulana Muhammad Zakariyya (ra) once mentioned:

The issue of huqooqul ibaad (the rights of the servants of Allah) is an extremely serious matter. One will not be forgiven by merely repenting to Allah (i.e. until and unless one does not make amends by discharging the outstanding rights one owes to the servants of Allah or seeking their forgiveness, one will not be forgiven). Just as you are the servant of Allah, so is the person whose rights you have trampled. On the Day of Qiyaamah, in exchange of two rupees taken unjustly, seven hundred accepted salaahs of the person who had usurped the rights will be taken and given to the person whose rights were usurped. If the one who unjustly took the rights of another does not have sufficient accepted salaahs in his account, the sins of the one whose rights were usurped will be loaded onto the usurper in proportion to the injustice he had committed.

(Malfoozaate Hazrat Shaikh 2/162)

Lesson We Can Learn from Birds

Sarah al-Shamy

EVERY HUMAN BEING, Muslim or not, can attest to the extreme beauty and diversity in Allah's creation. He created man with multiple skin colors, various ways of speaking and living in many nations. But all have the same purpose and that is to worship Him and to attain His pleasure.

All living creatures worship Allah in a submissive way. Do you think it is mere coincidence that you see a flock of birds chirping in unison along power lines just before Maghrib prayer? Or a tree that mysteriously has bowed its limbs toward the Ka'bah over time? Allah mentions in Surat Al-Nûr:

Do you not see that Allah is exalted by whoever is within the heavens and the earth and by birds with wings spread in flight? Each of them has known his means of prayer and exalting Him, and Allah is Knowing of what they do.

[Sûrat Al-Nûr, 24:41]

He mentions in the âyah birds specifically then states: Each of them has known his means of prayer. Each creature, each bird, is submissive to his Creator in his own way.

Birds are one of those peculiar creatures that have been mentioned in the Quran numerous times. They seem like such normal, mundane creatures, we all know what birds are and what they look like, but have we ever contemplated the miracle of birds?

Due to the force of gravity, all objects in the air will eventually fall to earth. But bird's flight is indeed a miracle of Allah as they can propel themselves through the sky. They glide so effortlessly, sometimes without even moving their wings.

If you have ever seen a baby chick plunge itself from the nest being only days old, would you say this is mere trial and error? Or do these birds inherently know that their wings are meant to help them fly?

Mention of Birds in the Quran

Allah mentions the word 'bird' in the Quran five times and mentions the plural form 'birds' thirteen times. Nothing is mentioned in the Quran without deep wisdom so let us take a look at some of these âyahs. Allah says in Sûrat Al-Nahl:

Do they not see the birds suspended in mid-air up in the sky? Nothing holds them there except Allah. There are certainly signs in that for people who believe. [Sûrat Al-Nahl, 16:79]

The word 'suspended' in Arabic 'musakharât' suggests that Allah holds them up in the sky by His command and that they fly by His command. He is the one who directs the birds during their migration period and keeps them on track without getting lost! (How many of us get lost just traveling to a new shopping center?) The âyah

also suggests that being ‘musakharât’ means they have submitted to something, or have bound themselves to Allah and submitted to Him. Also in Sûrat Al-Mulk Allah says:

Do they not see the birds above them with wings outspread and [sometimes] folded in? None holds them [aloft] except the Most Merciful. Indeed He is, of all things, Seeing. [Sûrat Al-Mulk, 67:19]

The word used in this âyah that refers to holding the birds is ‘yumsikuhunna’. This literally translates into ‘upholding them’ or ‘holding them poised’ and not as taking them, or catching them or any meaning that would suggest their lack of freedom. So we see that these tiny birds are at the mercy of their Lord; what can be said of the gigantic airplanes we ride in to transport us from one country to another? We must be grateful to a Lord whose mercy and graciousness allows us to be safely propelled in the air and arrive at our destinations with comfort and ease.

Mention of Birds in Hadith

Umar ibn Al-Khattâb reported that the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) said:

If you were to rely upon Allah with reliance due to Him, then He would provide for you just as He provides for the birds. They go out in the morning with empty stomachs but return full. (Tirmidhi)

Tawakkul, or relying on Allah in your affairs, is a characteristic of the believers. Allah says in the Quran:

...and in Allah, therefore, let the believers put their trust. [Sûrat Al-Taghâbun, 64:13]

So why is it that such small creatures, like birds, possess such a noble characteristic (tawakkul on Allah), that many of us like to think we have, but in reality, we often do not?

We fear for our future, we fear for our grades, we over-think situations, we lose sleep over petty things, we think our failures were meant to destroy us; do we also forget that Allah is in control

of all of our affairs? We should always work as hard as we can, and strive as long as we can, but we must realize that Allah is in control of our affairs in the end, and He does not forget.

It is reported by Anas ibn Mâlik in a famous hadîth:

A man said to the Prophet ﷺ: ‘Oh Messenger of Allah! Should I tie my camel and trust in Allah, or should I leave her untied and trust in Allah?’ The Prophet replied: ‘Tie her and trust in Allah’. (Tirmidhi)

Furthermore, Allah says in the Quran:

And He will provide him from [sources] he could never imagine. And whoever puts his trust in Allah, then He will suffice him. Verily, Allah will accomplish His purpose. Indeed, Allah has set a measure for all things. [65:3]

Another verse, in Sûrat Al-Mulk, a sûrah that many of us read every night:

Say: ‘He is the Most Gracious (Allah); in Him we believe, and in Him we put our trust. So, you will come to know who it is that is in manifest error.’ [67:29]

Also in Sûrat Al-Anfâl:

The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a fear in their hearts and when His Verses are recited to them, they increase their Faith; and they put their trust in their Lord. [8:2]

When we recite Sûrat Al-Fâtiha in our prayers each day, we say with great conviction and belief:

You alone we worship, you alone we ask for help. [1:5]

Additionally, the Prophet (SAWS) was reported to have said:

A group of people (both men and women) whose hearts will be like the hearts of birds, will enter Jannah. (Muslim)

This hadîth has been interpreted to mean that it is those people who put their trust in Allah who will be in Jannah. Under this interpretation,

there seems to be direct correlation between the way the people of Tawakkul lived their lives in this world, and their reward. It is the people of Tawakkul who would never have worried about their provisions, food, and means of subsistence, and are like the birds who do not collect any food to keep in reserve, but go out every morning in search of food, hoping for and believing in Allah's provision, and then returning home to their nests fully satisfied. (This interpretation is according to the renowned author of Riyâd Al-Salihîn.) Allah says in the Quran:

Do they not then think deeply about the

Quran, or are their hearts locked up (from understanding it)? [47:24]

There are some very noble lessons to learn from birds. Not only are they a living, breathing, flying miracle of Allah's creation, but they are also a token of reliance on Allah. They represent how believers should go about their daily lives (in terms of reliance on Allah), and how we should submit to His majesty by fulfilling His commands. Nothing is mentioned in the Quran in vain, no matter how minute it may seem. There is so much we can learn from Allah's creation; if we only open our hearts and eyes to see!

Lower the Gaze

Generally women are of the misconception that the command to lower the gaze is restricted to the man only, and they are free to look at men, whereas the command is for women to lower their gazes as well. At times curiosity gets the better of us. Especially on the occasion of a marriage, we are all too eager to get a glance at who the bridegroom really is. What we fail to realise is that in breaking the command of Allah of lowering the gaze, we deprive ourselves of the sweetness of imaan. Just one glance and our hearts are captured, our minds are thrown off balance and we lose all concentration in our acts of worship. We need to ask ourselves whether it is worth the glance; that for a moment of false pleasure we lose that clear communication we once enjoyed with our creator Allah? Really, we do not know that behind the lowering of our gaze on which specific occasion lies our entry into paradise. Let us strive to lower our gaze and raise our stage.

Giving Up the Haram

Maulana Yunus Patel (ra)

There are many, many Muslim brothers and sisters throughout the world who due to various negative influences and bad elements, find themselves 'de-railed' from Deen. Many others sit on the fence, wanting to enjoy or benefit from both sides of the fence – engaging in sins as well as being practical on certain teachings of Deen. However, deep in their hearts is the desire to get back on track, and once again become good, practical Muslims; to jump off the fence and enjoy the green pastures of Islam. So they write, e-mail, phone, fax seeking guidance and direction.

The main weakness is indulgence in sins; sometimes many sins and excessive indulgence in those sins. A standard prescription that I give as a reply, is as follows. Alhamdulillah, many who followed through with this prescription have found a whole new life – of peace, happiness, blessings and mercy. On tasting the sweetness that comes with obedience, there is no desire to return to any form of disobedience.

The ideal is that we abstain from sins, out of love for Allah. He has granted us so much – He has granted us everything and it is the nature of human beings that we love the person that is kind and generous to us. Then what of

Allah who has provided us with plentiful – with everything? The sight, hearing, speech, the organs that are functioning in such an amazing manner, the limbs – all in our service – for eating, drinking, walking, sitting, etc. The gifts of wealth : the clothing, shelter, transport, food, drink, and so many other comforts. ...We use them all, but do we keep in mind, the Generous Benefactor ? Do we give thanks for these bounties or show any appreciation to the Giver ?Developing the conscious awareness that Allah is with us : He is watching us, He is hearing us, He knows all and everything about us; We cannot hide from Him; We cannot conceal our actions from Him. Then should we not feel ashamed that in His Presence, we are disobeying Him? Are we not showing ingratitude to the Benefactor, when engaging in sins in His very Presence ?Keep in mind that the angels too are witness to all our actions; that the earth is recording our behaviour and that all of it is also noted in our books of deeds – that we are accountable to Allah on the Day of Judgement. Added to this, our actions are also presented to Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), so we should give thought to whether our actions are a source of joy or grief to him. ...In this manner, we will de-

velop that shame and modesty which will make it easy to restrain from Haraam. Muraqabah is meditating on the actions engaged in during the day : We should reflect over our deeds for the day and seek forgiveness for shortcomings and resolve not to return to those bad deeds. We should also express gratitude on good deeds and make dua for an increase in them. Ponder over the fact that the Angel of Death does not give respite. It must not be that whilst obeying the nafs in sinful pleasure, the Angel of death visits; and departure is in disgrace, and return to Allah is at a time when He is angry, and that death is an embarrassment to the person, family and community who find out that death came in sin. May Allah protect us all from death in a state of transgression, but this is very much a reality.... Death visits – more often, very unexpectedly, and no true Muslim would want to be seized by the Angel of death when Allah is displeased. I often say : We now have instant tea, and instant coffee, and instant cereal and instant pudding and so many other things on the market are instant – we are also living in times when death is just as instant. So any sin is too much of a risk in the face of the reality of death. ...The Hadith is explicit : That we will be resurrected on the day of Judgement as we have died and we will die as we have lived. ...Would any Muslim want to rise up on the Day of Judgement in sin, for all of mankind to witness what kind of life he led? Ponder over the fact that Allah has blessed us with the gift of sight, hearing, health, wealth, and so much else – and has also granted us the gift of respect. However, what He gives, He can also take away. He has explicitly stated that ingratitude for His Gifts will draw very severe punishment. So is sin not abuse and ingratitude for the gifts of sight, of heart, of mind, of limbs ?

A little contemplation on the consequences of such behaviour and a little bit of mujahada – which entails ‘not doing’ and Alhamdulillah, the sicknesses are cured.

Together with this :

Attend the talks of the learned Scholars of Islam whenever possible, or listen to recordings of their talks and read their books to gain benefit of pious, righteous company. Join and participate in the Deeni activities with those who follow the Qur’aan and Sunnah. On will, Insha-Allah, find a great improvement in one’s condition by keeping the right company. Make the effort to read Salaah punctually. Men should make every effort to read their Salaah in Jamaat. Read good, Islamic literature. Abstain from magazines or books that have filthy and indecent contents and pictures. Give up television viewing. ...90% of the content is Haraam. If a person offers a full glass of clean and pure water, and mentions that there is just one drop of urine, would any sensible person, drink it ?... Then when the major content of television is Haraam, what would we then say ? When the gaze, heart and mind are consuming and digesting so much of Haraam viewing, what else would be the end result except indulgence in the same Haraam. Lower the gaze from the opposite sex. Dress as a Muslim should – Wearing the pants above the ankle and keeping the beard, one fist in length must not be considered as insignificant actions. These are teachings of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) which he has emphasized. Although it is permissible to wear the shirt and pants, the dressing of the righteous (i.e. the kurta) has a speciality which benefits in different ways. A person with this appearance will think a hundred times before engaging in an open sin, when he is being recognized as someone who must be very pious. So this attire and appearance will offer a protection, Insha-Allah. Women too should dress modestly as is prescribed by Shariah. By doing these few things, you have won more than half the battle. And it is not as difficult as Shaytaan and nafs will whisper. A little courage, a little effort and a little sacrifice are all that is required.

Of course, these are just basic aspects of
Cont'd on page 11

Religious Illusions - II

Dr. Jamal Badawi

Host: Are there prophecies in the Quran that are more specific than those that we discussed in the last program?

Jamal Badawi:

When what we find in chapter 30 "The Romans" is compared to what actually happened in history we find a striking accuracy. At the time when Muslims were not strong enough, during the Meccan period, it was 614 in the Christian calendar the Roman empire was defeated by the Persians. In fact the defeat was so bad that many people thought that the Roman empire was finished. For example in the year 610 the Persians had stunning victories and dominated so many parts that were under the Roman rule which included Egypt and North Africa. There was no apparent hope for the Romans and it was under these circumstances that the first few verses of chapter 30 where it says that the Romans had been defeated but that they will have victory again in a few years. The original Arabic word for "a few" is *bide'* in Arabic means anywhere between 3-9 years. It is interesting to note that despite the defeat of the Romans, the Arab Pagans were happy because they were pro the Persians who were closer to the pagan practice than the Romans who were Christians. According to historians such as Gibbon in regards to the rise and fall of the Roman empire

in which it is stated that about 7 years after that prophecy during 622 there was a battle in which the Romans won against the Persians in Issus and two years later the Romans were able to penetrate the Persian empire and so many places that were under their rule like Musul which is now in Iraq. Notice here the Prophecy that the Romans would win even though they were soundly defeated.

Second, there would be war within a maximum of 9 years and that the Romans despite their weakness would be the winners during that war. Nobody could speculate and no military expert could have predicted that in such a time a battle would take place and who the winner would be. There is something equally stunning about that particular passage because it ends by saying that in that day the believers would be happy with the victory of God. When we consider the 9 years after the prophecy was made at the same time that the Roman's were defeating the Persians the Muslims were victorious against the pagans in the very famous battle of Badr which is mentioned in the Quran and where Muslims were outnumbered more than 3:1 they were ill armed and ill equipped and they still had a brilliant victory. This type of prophecy is beyond any human capacity. This is not the only prophecy about the punishment of the dis-

believers or about the battle of Badr.

Host: Can you explain the battle of Badr?

Jamal Badawi:

For example in (54:45) it makes a prediction “Soon will their multitude be put to flight, and they will show their backs.” The interesting thing is that this passage was revealed in Mecca at a time when Muslims were so few and almost helpless and there was anticipation whatsoever that there would be any confrontation between the Muslims and the pagans who sought to destroy them. Nobody predicted that at all to the point that Omar, a close companion of the Prophets, asked what kind of multitude that would be? One of the earliest revelations of the Quran in Surah (8:20) Al Anfal where the last passage says that Allah knows that some of you will be very tired during the day in seeking your living, some will be traveling and some will be fighting in the path of Allah which is why the night prayer was relaxed a little bit. The interesting part is that the prophecy came early on before any notion of fighting would have occurred to the mind of anyone and that there would eventually be a military confrontation between the Muslims and the Pagans which did come to pass.

Another equally stunning Surah in the Quran is (44:10) describes a prophecy that came to pass down to the minutest detail. What it says for them to wait in response to their dispute until the sky will bring forth a sort of myst or smoke and that this would be a time of great suffering and difficulty. Then it says that they would pray for Allah to remove this difficulty and that this difficulty would be removed but that they would go back again to their disbelief and then that they should wait till the mighty punishment comes. This sounds very vague but when we analyze what happened after this prophecy was made we find that as with Moses because of their disbelief Prophet Muhammad called on God to punish them for this and to give them a

sign that they may head his message.

Historians tell us that after this passage was revealed a great famine took place. The pagans suffered so much that one of them would look into the sky and see that it looked like smoke. They were so hungry that things were so hazy. It was reported by historians that they ate anything including bones which they tried to scour just to keep alive. It also happened that they went to the Prophet and they asked him to pray to Allah to remove this difficulty and if He does we will be good, he prayed and the difficulty was removed but yet again they went back to their disbelief. The third part of the prophecy says for them to wait for the big punishment. After the removal of this difficulty they were involved in the battle of Badr where they were soundly defeated. This was a mightier punishment which was inflicted upon them. One of the interesting parts about the Quran is that immediately after these few verses it mentions Prophet Moses as if to show the connection in the behavior demonstrated by the pagans and the Pharaoh in their denial of the message of their Prophet Moses.

Host: Are there prophecies that relate to specific individuals?

Jamal Badawi:

One of the uncles of the Prophet was known as Abu Lahab which translates literally to the father of flame. This was his nickname because he had a very fiery temper. In the very early days of Islam when the Prophet received the command to declare the message when he collected the people from the different tribes and he stood and said “If I were to tell you that there was an army behind that hill, going to invade you would you believe me?” And they responded “Yes, we never caught you telling a lie.” Then he told them that he was the Prophet and that he was warning them against God’s punishment unless they followed the right path. After he made this statement his uncle Abu Lahab

swore at the Prophet and said “Are you collecting us so that we hear this kind of talk? Tabban Lak (may you parish)! He swore at the Prophet. Following this rude comment towards the Prophet a Surah 111 was revealed which said that the perishing would be of the log of Abu Lahab. It describes how he and his wife used to hurt the Prophet so much and how they used to throw all kinds of things in his path in order to hurt him especially at night and that they would both be punished in Hell Fire.

The question may arise as to what the prophecy is in this case? Not only does Surah 111 prophecy that Abu Lahab would be punished in the Hereafter which we can not verify now, because it has not come yet, but the interesting part is that we know from history that there were many individuals in History who were as bad as Abu Lahab, resisters of the Prophet, persecutors of the Muslims who ended up believing. How could anyone make a prophecy with certitude and confidence that this particular fellow would die an unbeliever and that he would never believe. This was verified 11 years later when he died after the battle of Badr without believing. How can anyone say for sure that he would not be a believer and that he would die as an unbeliever is beyond us? In fact some scholars ask an interesting question. They say that Abu Lahab like any other opponent of the Prophet was very eager to prove that the Message of the Prophet was not genuine or that the Quran was his own thought or invention and they used all kinds of means to prove it, how come Abu Lahab did not pretend to be a Muslim just to prove that the Quran is false? He could have said that he believed so that he gave the message to people that the Quran was false because it prophecies that he would not believe. How could he have not been able to do that unless this is the truth of revelation coming directly from Allah.

There is a similar case of an individual known as Al Walid Ibn Al Mughira who was like a ring

leader among those who apposed the Prophet and tried to hurt him. Whenever he heard the Prophet talking about his teachings he would shout “ancient tales” in Arabic “astatear al awaleen.” We find that there is one Surah in the Quran (68:16) which prophesied exactly what would happen to that individual.

First, it was implied that he would not believe till he was punished, he would live long enough to engage in a fight against the Prophet and that he would eventually he would get hit on his snout which would be a mark of his disbelief. If this was speculation how would one know that he will not believe, that he would live long enough till the time of the battle, how do we know that during the time of that battle he would be healthy enough to participate in it, how do we know that he will get injured in that battle and particularly on his nose? There is no way that anyone can say with confidence that this would happen to that particular individual. Time goes on and this is exactly what happened to him. Where did the Prophet get this information from if it were true that the Quran immolated from his own thinking.

Host: Can you explain further the viewpoint that the Quran could not have been a reflection of the experience of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)?

Jamal Badawi:

This is an issue that many scholars have devoted discussions to this topic like Muhammad Shara-wi, Rasheed Rida, Dr. Draz. If the Quran were the product of the subconscious of the Prophet whether he realizes it or not then it is not reasonable to expect that the Quran would include correction of the Prophet and blame. If you author something you would not reveal your mistakes and especially ones that are small. In the Quran (80) the Prophet during the early days of Islam was talking to the leaders of the tribes and was trying to persuade them to accept the message of Allah and follow the path of Islam,

to give up their paganism and evil practices. At that time a poor blind man by the name of AbduAllah Ibn Umm Makthoom came to the Prophet and wanted to ask him questions. The Prophet at the time felt that this fellow was already a believer and could wait, so he frowned and was irritated because that fellow was pressing for an answer while the Prophet was busy with those important people. That was not such a bad mistake and some people would not consider it to be a mistake at all. In his mind if he convinced those respected leaders it may guide many people to the path of Islam. However in Surah 80 we find a very severe blame on the Prophet by God that he should pay attention to that poor blind person. This established a different way of looking at things. What kind of person authors a book and reprimands himself for a mistake that he was not even aware of. In the Quran (8:67) after the battle of Badr the Muslims took 70 of the strong people of Qurishe as prisoners of war even though the Muslims were outnumbered 3:1. What happened is that there was some discussion as to whether those people should be returned immediately, should have been let go for ransom or should they be held until the disbelievers were subdued. The Prophet with his soft heart leaned towards a more charitable approach of freeing them for some kind of compensation from their people. Anybody would look at that and agree that it is a humanitarian approach and not an erroneous behavior on the part of the Prophet. However we find that in the Quran itself the Prophet is told that the more accurate thing was for him to wait, subdue the unbelievers first till they achieve complete victory and the the Muslim community is secured, then the question of returning prisoners could be considered but not to release them and create an additional threat for future battles. Again nobody could have suspected any wrong with this kind of decision. In the battle of Tabouk some people came to the Prophet and asked permission to stay be-

hind and did not want to participate. Again the Prophet did not want to investigate whether they had a good excuse or not and he simply allowed them, which was militarily too liberal. Again nobody would see a problem with his decision. However, the Quran in (9:43) blames the Prophet for allowing them without verifying it even though no one else objected to this decision.

As narrated in both Bukhari and Muslim when one of the staunchest enemies of Islam, who was a hypocrite and pretended to be a Muslim, by the name of Abdu Allah ibn Abi Ubi died the Prophet wanted to pray on him out of kindness. Again the Quran in (9:84) corrects the Prophet that for people who deliberately reject faith and live this kind of life one should not ask forgiveness for them. In another case when his uncle Hamza was martyred in one of the battles and a woman was so savage that she asked someone to open his stomach and took his liver and started chewing it. His dear uncle who was a staunch Muslim in this mutilated state, so the Prophet got very angry and swore that he would punish the disbelievers in a similar way. Again anyone would say that this is only human even if one doesn't really intend to do it. In (16:126) it addresses the Prophet that says that when he punishes he should punish in a way that is similar only to what damage that has been done to you but if you be patient (forgive and wait) it is better for those who persevere. There are aspects that pertain to the personal life of the Prophet that people didn't know about that the Prophet was corrected as we find in Surah 33 and 66 about things that the Prophet did simply because of over sensitivity. The Question is how can someone author a book while pointing out their own very small mistakes which are associated with human judgement.

Host: Are there other psychological aspects that would collaborate that the source of the Quran is beyond the Prophet himself?

Jamal Badawi:

From a psychological standpoint when we are angry it takes us a while to cool down. We find that when one reads in the Quran in (8:67-68) first there is very strong blame to the Prophet then forgiveness and acceptance. This usually doesn't happen in human psychology. There was a case where some hypocrites promoted all kinds of malicious against the integrity of the Prophet's wife Aisha. For one month he did not say a word about it, he could have saved himself and claimed that there was a revelation that she was innocent. But for one month he sat and waited till the Quran came down and showed the evil design of those people and that Aisha was totally innocent of this accusation. There are certain aspects in the Quran where verses were revealed and the Prophet did not know the meaning and would wait until another revelation would come to explain the wisdom behind it. Again if revelation emanates from himself how could he have a revelation of something he doesn't understand.

One example is a verse revealed in the Quran that says that one should fear that if they hide anything that Allah will know it. Some people were almost in a state of despair when they asked if they were going to also be held responsible for their thoughts. Then again the Prophet could not answer till another verse another verse from the Quran came to show that one should try his best and it did not mean what they had interpreted it to mean. During the Treaty of Huddibiah the Prophet made a decision based on religion and he did not know how to defend it and there was almost an insurrection in the army and he could not give an explanation till the wisdom was revealed later a long time after the action took place.

THE FRUIT OF FORGIVENESS

Allamah Sayyid Sulaiman Nadwi said,

"When I obtain the wealth of Your grief, then I become free of the grief of both the worlds."

The grief expressed for Allah's sake is extremely delicious. This is the portion of the messengers and saints. Allah takes half a life in His path but He grants thousands in replacement. Therefore, those whom Allah has granted His love and recognition, they discard all sins.

There was a drunkard who left drinking wine and sported a beard. Yet he used to drink so much that people had to carry him away after his rendition of poetry. He himself says, "Now is the fear of the day of Reckoning, I have had an unlimited amount to drink."

But when the fear of Allah came, he repented. He met a pious person and asked him to make Dua so that he could quit drinking, perform Hajj and sport a beard. The result was that he sported a fist-length beard and quit drinking. The doctors advised him that if he did not drink, he would die. He replied that he would die but if he kept on drinking, for how long would he live? The doctors said he may manage another two to four years. He said that it is better for me to die now by quitting than to live with the wrath of Allah because now my death will be in the shadow of Allah's mercy. And if I died while drinking, I would die with the anger of Allah.

Thus it is better that I die now. Consequently, with the mercy of Allah, he remained alive for a long time and his health improved tremendously.

~ taken from the discourses of Sh Hakeem Akhtar Saheb RA ~

We Are, Yet We Are Not!

Abu Hudhaifa Muhammed

Free. Are we really free? Consider the hadith of Rasulullah (SAWS):

May the slave of the gold coin, silver coin and the shawl perish! He is happy if he receives but unhappy if he does not.

Slaves of gold, silver and stylish clothes . . . Is this not a true description of most people in the world today? Slaves of rands, dollars and pounds, slaves of our businesses and jobs, slaves of our appearances . . . slaves of the material world! So, are we really free? Should I say, 'Free, but not'?

Consider another hadith of Rasulullah (SAWS):

The dunya is the prison of the Believer and the paradise of the unbeliever.

We implore Allah for protection from rejection of any hadith because it defies logic. People sometimes question the veracity of this hadith. 'Look around you' they exclaim, 'so many affluent Muslims and thousands of non-Muslims living in abject poverty. Are affluent Muslims not enjoying a type of worldly paradise? On the other hand, is suffering and misery heavenly?' This question was posed to one of Rasulullah's (SAWS) grandsons. 'You have not understood the meaning of the hadith' he replied, 'Its meaning is that in comparison to the luxuries of Jannah, the life of a Believer – no matter how

wealthy he may be – is comparable to a prison. Worldly luxury and comfort are incomparable to the bounties that await the Believer in Jannah. On the other hand, the worldly suffering and misery of unbeliever are incomparable to the suffering and misery of the inhabitants of Jahannam. Thus, the worldly difficulty of the unbeliever is always a paradise in comparison to what awaits him in Jahannam.'

Besides, comparison of one thing to another does not demand equality between the two in every aspect. For example, a brave man is often called a lion. This does not mean that he walks on fours, has a tail, smelly mouth and a thunderous roar like a lion. The comparison is only in bravery. Likewise, comparison of the Believer's life in the dunya to a prison is only with regards to restrictions that he has to observe. He is not permitted to do whatever he desires. He may only do what Allah permits him to do. Similarly, comparison of the unbeliever's life in the dunya to a paradise is only with regards to the absence of restriction. He does whatever he desires.

Returning to where we started, are we really free? Politically, we are free. We are not slaves of other people. Yet, we are the slaves of Allah! Thus, Allah repeatedly calls us His slaves. Therefore, we are free, yet we are not!

Our Purpose, Our Obligation

With regards the purpose of man's creation, Allah says:

I only created jinn and man so that they would worship me.

The Arabic word for worship, 'ibaadah, is derived from the same root as the Arabic word for slave, 'abd. Thus, the meaning of this aayah is 'I only created jinn and man so that they behave like my slaves.' Furthermore, the Arabs say:

Man is the slave of benevolence.

Do a man a favour and he becomes obliged to you. Allah is man's greatest benefactor. In fact, He is man's only benefactor. Therefore, should man not behave like His slaves? Is it not our purpose and obligation, even if we are free?

A Question of Perception

You must have heard the adage 'Beauty is in the eye of the beholder'. The same is true with regards to pleasure etc. It is a question of perception. One man's satisfaction may not be the same for another. The Indian eats his spicy hot food with relish, even if it causes excessive perspiration. The European thinks he is punishing himself. 'Crazy Indian' he thinks. Obedience to Allah's command is similar. In the eyes of the onlooker, it is restrictive, strenuous and demanding. For the worshipper, however, it is Jannah. His solace is in worshipping Allah. The following quotations depict this phenomenon:

"If this is the condition of the dwellers of Jannah, they certainly have a pleasant life."

"Poor worldly people! They leave the world without tasting the most pleasurable and delightful aspect in the world."

"If the kings and their children know the pleasure we enjoy, they would draw their swords to snatch it from us."

"There is a Jannah in the dunya and the one who does not enter it will not enter the Jannah of the Hereafter."

Accordingly, such people are in a prison, yet

they are in a Jannah.

Alive but Dead . . . Dead but Alive

Describing the virtue of dhikr (remembering Allah), Rasulullah (SAWS) said:

The example of the one who remembers his Rabb and the one who does not is like that of the living and the dead.

The one who remembers Allah is physically and spiritually alive. However, the one who does not remember Allah is spiritually dead. Even if he is alive, walking, talking and doing everything living people do, he is dead! He is alive, but dead!

On the other hand, Allah tells us with regards the martyrs:

Do not say with regards those who are slain in the path of Allah, 'They are dead'. No, they are alive but you do not realise.

Thus, the martyr is dead, yet alive.

Wealthy but Poor . . . Poor but Wealthy
Rasulullah (SAWS) said:

Wealth is not abundance of material possession. Wealth is contentment.

On one occasion, he (SAWS) said to Sayyiduna Abu Hurayrah (ra):

Be content with what Allah has destined for you and you will be the wealthiest of people.

In the light of these narrations, a wealthy man who is not content with what he has is actually poor. Can he truly enjoy his wealth? Conversely, a poor man who is content is actually wealthy. Despite the absence of wealth, he enjoys his life. Thus, the former is wealthy yet poor and the latter is poor yet wealthy.

Knowledgeable Yet Ignorant

Allah only accepts tawbah from those who do wrong ignorantly and make tawbah soon thereafter, those are the ones whose tawbah Allah accepts – and Allah is All Knowing, All-Wise.

The word *bijahalatin* could be interpreted

to mean that tawbah is only accepted from one who sins due to ignorance of the sharee'ah. Hence, Allah does not accept the tawbah of a person who sinned knowing that his action is sinful. Your tawbah will only be accepted if you did not know. This interpretation, however, is erroneous. The commentators of the Qur'aan unanimously maintain that this is not the intent of the word *bijahalatin*. On the contrary; it means that sin is ignorance. Thus, every sinner is ignorant, whether he knows that his action is sinful or not. Therefore, a man who sins knowing that his action is sinful is knowledgeable yet ignorant.

Married Yet Single

A man takes a second wife because it is a sunnah but then disregards the shar'i injunction of treating both wives equally. Thus, he now neglects the first wife as if she does not even exist. Would you not say that he is following the sunnah yet he is not and that his first wife is married yet single?

Salaah and Saum

How many of us perform salaah yet we do not? Our bodies are in salaah but our thoughts are everywhere else but salaah. Likewise, we so often fast yet we do not. Our stomachs fast but not our ears, eyes and tongues. We abstain from the things which nullify our saum, but we see, hear and speak what we are not supposed to.

Are We Muslim Yet . . . ?

Following the above, could we add that we are Muslim yet we are not? We say that we are Muslim but we do not behave like Muslims. In view of the consensus of the Ahlus-Sunnah that no sin besides disbelief renders a person out of the pale of Islam, we would not go that far, we would not say that we are Muslim yet we are not. After all, imaan is the key to Jannah. Thus, even sinful Believers will eventually enter Jannah. Nevertheless, the importance of adhering to Allah's commands and abstaining from His prohibitions must not be trivialised because just as every key has teeth, good actions are the teeth of the key to Jannah.

Empty Threats

When parents threaten their children with a certain punishment for misbehaving, provided that the punishment is appropriate and within the limits of sharee'ah, and the child is deserving, it is essential that they implement the punishment.

While the parent has many functions to fulfil e.g. protector and one showing love, a very important role and function of the parent which serves to develop the child's discipline and behavior is that of "figure of authority".

If the parents fail in administering their threat, the child will lose his respect for them as the "figures of authority" in his life. He will view his parents as people who make empty threats because they cannot stick to their word and have a weak resolve. Apart from the harm caused by the child losing respect for his parents, they are further harming him by setting a bad example – the example of somebody who does not keep to their word.

Miraculous Speech

Allaama Syed Sulaiman Nadvi (ra)

The sermons of the Holy Prophet (SAWS) were in reality a Divine miracle. It softened and moved the hearts of even the most hard-hearted persons in a few minutes.

Once he recited the verses of the Surah An-Najm which had so much effect that not only the Muslims but the disbelievers also fell into prostration.

A person who used to treat men under the influence of charm heard the foolish people of Makkah say that Muhammad (SAWS) was under the spell. He came to protect him. Allah's Messenger (SAWS) delivered a short sermon before him. He said: Repeat these words of yours to me, and the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) repeated these to him thrice. He said: I have heard the words of sooth-sayers and the words of magicians and the words of poets but I have never heard such words as yours.

Once a newly converted tribe came to Madinah. The Holy Prophet (SAWS) felt that they needed help. He collected all the Muslims in the Masjid-i-Nabvi and addressed them reciting the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:

O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single Soul.
Then he recited the following verse of the Surah

Hashr:

And let every soul look to that it sendeth on before for the morning.

After this said:

Give in charity dirham, cloth, corn or a piece of date which you can afford for the sake of Allah.

Despite the condition of the Muslims, the effect of the Holy Prophet's (SAWS) eloquent and heart-moving speech was that whatever was with them was put before him. Some brought the wearing clothes, the others the household corn etc. An Ansar went to his house and brought a bag of gold coins which was so heavy that he could hardly carry it.

It is said that two big heaps of clothes and corn lay before him in a short time and the face of Allah's Messenger (SAWS) was brightened. In extreme provocation and anger, a few sentences spoken by him settled the dispute and created an atmosphere of love and affection. The age old enmity and warfare of Aus and Khazraj tribes turned into friendship and love due to this quality of his. Before the battle of Badr, he came out riding. The hypocrites were sitting together. The Muslims greeted them with respect; but the hypocrites uttered an abusive sentence.

This spark could burn the thrashed grain and war might have broken out but a few sentences which he spoke extinguished the fire of anger. On return from the battle of Mustaliq, the hypocrites tried to cause dissension among the Muslims by instigating them against each other over an incident and an appeal to arms was made between the Muhajirin and Ansar. When the whole affair was reported to the Holy Prophet (SAWS), he came and addressed them so that they again became friends. The men of Aus and Khazraj quarrelled at a watering place and began to fight. The swords were about to be un-sheathed in the Masjid-i-Nabvi, but the speech of the Holy Prophet (SAWS) impressed them so much that the danger was averted and they again became brothers.

In the division of the spoils of the battle of Hunain, some of the Ansar felt discontented. He delivered an eloquent and impressive speech at that time as a result of which the Ansar who were displeased with him a few moments before wept until tears rolled down their beards and they said: Yes we are well-satisfied, O Prophet of Allah! with our lot and share.

At the conquest of Makkah, Muhammad (SAWS) proclaimed amnesty to the chiefs of Quraish against the expectations of Ansar. Some of them who were not yet fully aware of his magnanimity and large-heartedness objected to it and said: At last love for your relatives and native city has overcome you. When he came to know about it he collected all the Ansar and said to them:

O Ansar! Have you entertained such thoughts? They replied in the affirmative. Upon this the Holy Prophet (SAWS) remarked: I do not give preference to my native city or relatives. I am the servant and the Messenger of Allah and I have migrated to Madinah at His command. I will live and die with you.

This speech had so much effect on the hearts of Ansar that tears rolled down their eyes. A companion has drawn the picture of his speech in

the following words:

One day Allah's Messenger (SAWS) delivered such an eloquent sermon which brought tears to the eyes and moved the hearts.

Hadrat Asma' bint Abu Bakr has described the influence of his speech in these words: The Holy Prophet (SAWS) stood up to deliver us a sermon about the torments of grave. As he was saying about it, the Muslims started crying.

It has been reported by Hadrat Abu Huraira and Abu Sa'id (RA): Once the Holy Prophet (SAWS) said during the Khutbah: He in his hand my life is. He repeated these words thrice and then he bowed his head. These words had so much effect that everyone of them bowed his head at his place with tears in his eyes. The narrator said: Even I failed to understand the exact nature of his oath.

It has been reported by Hadrat Anas (RA) that Allah's Messenger (SAWS) one day delivered a sermon which was so eloquent that I never heard the like of it before. He said in the course of his Khutbah: Had you known what I know, you would laugh less and weep more. On hearing this, the condition of the people was that they covered their faces with cloth and could not control their tears.

Seeking the Faults of Others

Nabi (SAWS) said: "O those who have accepted Islam with their tongues while imaan has not entered their hearts! Do not backbite the Muslims and do not search for their faults, for verily the one who searches for their faults, Allah will take him to task for his faults and the one who Allah takes to task, Allah will disgrace him in his (own) home." (Abi Dawood)

Islam-First to Teach Tolerance

M. Marmaduke Pickthall

ONE of the commonest charges brought against Islam historically, and as a religion, by Western writers is that it is intolerant. This is turning the tables with a vengeance when one remembers various facts: One remembers that not a Muslim is left alive in Spain or Sicily or Apulia. One remembers that not a Muslim was left alive and not a mosque left standing in Greece after the great rebellion in 1821.

One remembers how the Muslims of the Balkan peninsula, once the majority, have been systematically reduced with the approval of the whole of Europe, how the Christian under Muslim rule have in recent times been urged on to rebel and massacre the Muslims, and how reprisals by the latter have been condemned as quite uncalled for.

In Spain under the Umayyads and in Baghdad under the Abbasid Khalifas, Christians and Jews, equally with Muslims, were admitted to the Schools and universities; not only that, but were boarded and lodged in hostels at the cost of the state. When the Moors were driven out of Spain, the Christian conquerors held a terrific persecution of the Jews. Those who were fortunate enough to escape fled, some of them to Morocco and many hundreds to the Turkish empire, where their descendants still live in

separate communities, and still speak among themselves an antiquated form of Spanish. The Muslim empire was a refuge for all those who fled from persecution by the Inquisition.

The western Christians, till the arrival of the Encyclopaedists in the 18th century, did not know and did not care to know, what the Muslim believed, nor did the Western Christian seek to know the views of Eastern Christians with regard to them.

The Christian Church was already split in two, and in the end, it came to such a pass that the Eastern Christians, as Gibbon shows, preferred Muslim rule, which allowed them to practice their own form of religion and adhere to their peculiar dogmas, to the rule of fellow Christians who would have made them Roman Catholics or wiped them out.

The western Christians called the Muslims pagans, paynims, even idolaters. There are plenty of books in which they are described as worshiping an idol; and in the accounts of the conquest of Granada there are even descriptions of the monstrous idols, which they were alleged to worship, whereas the Muslims knew what Christianity was, and in what respects it differed from Islam.

If Europe had known as much of Islam, as

Muslims knew of Christendom, in those days, those mad, adventurous, occasionally chivalrous and heroic, but utterly fanatical outbreak known as the Crusades could not have taken place, for they were based on a complete misapprehension.

That was the kind of “history” on which the populace in Western Europe used to be fed. Those were the ideas which inspired the rank and file of the crusader in their attacks on the most civilized peoples of those days. Christendom regarded the outside world as damned eternally, and Islam did not. There were good and tender-hearted men in Christendom who thought it sad that any people should be damned eternally, and wished to save them by the only way they knew — conversion to the Christian faith.

It was not until the western nations broke away from their religious law that they became more tolerant; and it was only when the Muslims fell away from their religious law that they declined in tolerance and other evidences of the highest culture.

Therefore the difference evident in that anecdote is not of manners only but of religion. Of old, tolerance had existed here and there in the world, among enlightened individuals; but those individuals had always been against the prevalent religion.

Tolerance was regarded of un-religious, if not irreligious. Before the coming of Islam it had never been preached as an essential part of religion.

For the Muslims, all three religions — Judaism, Christianity and Islam — are but three forms of one religion, which, in its original purity, was the religion of Abraham: Al-Islam, that perfect Self-Surrender to the Will of God, which is the basis of Theocracy. The Jews, in their reli-

gion, after Moses, limited God’s mercy to their chosen nation and thought of His kingdom as the dominion of their race.

Even Christ himself, as several of his sayings show, declared that he was sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel and seemed to regard his mission as to the Hebrews only; and it was only after a special vision vouchsafed to St. Peter that his followers in after days considered themselves authorized to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles.

The Christians limited God’s mercy to those who believed certain dogmas. Every one who failed to hold the dogmas was an outcast or a miscreant, to be persecuted for his or her soul’s good. In Islam only, is manifest the real nature of the Kingdom of God.

The two verses (2:255-256) of the Qur’an are supplementary.

Where there is that realization of the majesty and dominion of Allah Almighty, there is no compulsion in religion. Men choose their path — allegiance or opposition — and it is sufficient punishment for those who oppose that they draw further and further away from the light of truth.

What Muslims do not generally consider is that this law applies to our own community just as much as to the folk outside, the laws of Allah being universal.

Intolerance of Muslims for other men’s opinions and beliefs is evidence that they themselves have, at the moment, forgotten the vision of the majesty and mercy of Allah Almighty, which the Qur’an presents to them.

An abridged version of Pickthall’s lecture that he gave on several aspects of Islamic civilization at the invitation of The Committee of “Madras Lectures on Islam” in India, in 1927.

Who ‘Wrote’ the Code?

Tom Bunzel

If DNA is Software, Who “Wrote” the Code?

We all love our gadgets, particularly our PCs, Macs, tablets and cell phones – why?

Mainly because of what they empower us to do – the software or “apps” that they run that enable us to connect, perform tasks and calculations and be productive. In the “old days” before apps computer users needed to learn a bit of what is “under the hood”; perhaps not programming per se but some of the arcane commands that made the machines work. And sometimes we forgot they were even machines. One of my first incredible experiences was when six computer disks at a law firm taught me word processing. I was awestruck by the reality that intelligence could actually be encoded in silicon. This was my introduction to “software.”

Several business and computer books later, somewhat cognizant about how to write “code,” I was fantasizing about writing a sci-fi screenplay about an intelligent computer program discov-

ered by neuroscience in the brain when I saw a video on TED by geneticist Juan Enriquez. Enriquez described an apple as an [computer] application which runs as an “executable” – it reads or processes its DNA code from top down, executing each line in turn as an instruction. In the case of an apple, when it receives sufficient energy from the sun, Enriquez said, it executes and drops from the tree.

Enriquez explained how sequencing DNA decodes its programmatic intentions through a combination of proteins, symbolically represented by 4 letters of our alphabet, A, C, T and G. Side by side with HTML, the code for a web page, it looks very similar.

Moreover I realized from the video that

TABLE 4

Wild type	Phenotype
-CAT TTT CCG TCT-	tryR
An insertion	
-CAT TTT CCG//AA//AT TTT CCG TCT-	tryR
An excision	
N* footprints	
F501-48 -CAT TTT CCG_TTT_CCG GTC	-9 aa* tryR
F501-64 -CAT TTT CCG_GCC GTC	-9 aa* tryR
E501-2 -CAT TTT CTT_TTT_GTT	-4 aa* tryR
E501-3 -CAT TTT CCG_TTT_TTT_GTT	-4 aa* tryR
E501-9 -CAT TTT CCG_GTT	-4 aa* tryR
E501-16 -CAT TTT CCG_TTT_GCC GTC	-9 aa* tryR
E501-28 -CAT TTT CCG_TTT_GCC GTC	-9 aa* tryR
N revertants	
D112-15 -CAT TTT CCG TCT-	tryR
F501-34 -CAT TTT CCG TCT-	tryR
F501-45 -CAT TTT CCG TCT-	tryR
F501-65 -CAT TTT CCG TCT-	tryR
F501-66 -CAT TTT CCG TCT-	tryR
F501-67 -CAT TTT CCG TCT-	tryR
F501-68 -CAT TTT CCG TCT-	tryR
F501-69 -CAT TTT CCG TCT-	tryR

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<html>
<head>
<title>How of Hector Chavez - Joe Smith</title>
</head>
<body>
<h1>Howe page of Hector Chavez</h1>
<h2>My house is your house</h2>
<p>Here are my hobbies.</p>
<dt>
<dt>travel</dt>
<dd>I have traveled to 18 countries or three continents. I have traveled by plane, helicopter, train, ship, car, bus, and canoe. I plan to add submarine and hot air balloon to the list. I have not seen the pyramids in Egypt or the Great Wall of China, so I am not done with traveling yet.</dd>
<dt>Fishing</dt>
<dd>I started fishing with my father when I was 4 years old. He had to bait the hook and load the fish for me like. But I held the pole all by myself! I still enjoy fishing on a quiet lake or by a babbling brook.</dd>
<dt>Soccer</dt>
<dd>I never played soccer as a child. But now I am a big soccer fan. I go to my son's games (Viva Los Lobos!) and watch the big team on TV.</dd>
<dt>Cooking</dt>
<dd>Dad taught me early that if I could catch a fish, I could clean and cook it, too. After a few smoky experiences, I have gotten rather good at cooking fish on a grill. In fact, I will grill anything that is edible!</dd>
</dt>
</body>
</html>

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geneticists aren't ever creating life – they are switching the genes on and off using its internal software – and “copying and pasting” the code to, for example, revive extinct species – a process described in the video. I contemplated the reality that perhaps we don't need to look for “intelligent life” on other worlds... Clearly, to the extent that it is “instructed” by DNA, life itself is intelligent – and it was so before humans even existed.

This insight moved me deeply and as you use computer software every day, I invite you to think about this:

Is software something that arises by accident? We have direct experience with many “programs” that are encoded; each and every one was intentionally conceived to perform a task. (One can presume that in the case of DNA the task is first to survive, and then? To awaken?) It is akin to the notion expressed by astronomer Fred Hoyle that to consider the possibility of DNA arising by chance would be like a tornado going through a junk yard and assembling an aircraft. (Hoyle said this about Life – DNA is the software of life).

So within your biological reality there is software – as Eckhart Tolle says, an immense intelligence that runs you breath, digestion, elimination, and ALL body functions, if all goes well, harmoniously.

How do we account for such an apparently immense intelligence that is billions of years old? It is looking inside in the same way that we might look outside at the heavens and grope for a rational explanation but find none, and in our gut we feel the MYSTERY.

There are really only two “explanations” – if we eschew the non-explanation of calling it “God.”

One, we can kick the can down the road and presume that some other intelligence (aliens) wrote DNA code and genetically modified us for some alien purpose. This is a popular theme first raised by Chariots of the Gods by Erik von

Daniken, held in contempt by modern science, but possibly true.

The other direction we might go – and this is where neuroscience and quantum physics is headed kicking and screaming – is really the most obvious – Intelligence is not the exception – it is in computer terms, the “default.” Life is a priori intelligent, or a direct expression of a much vaster, infinite and higher intelligence.

This is of course an affront to our scientific hubris but it is the message of Science and Non-duality and the promise of an “observer-based” science that is humble and reverent in the face of “what is.” It is the recognition of nondualism – that all conceptual explanations only further the mystery – and that future discoveries must account for subjectivity and encompass the totality of phenomena. It is not pat, warm or fuzzy – but it is what IS.

With so many people confused and unsure of how and where we came from or what we are, and current science essentially ignoring this question (Consciousness – the hard question), it seems that the opening is right in front of us. Open a web page and View > Source and then recognize that software far more sophisticated is operating – right now – in your body, mind and consciousness.

And ask yourself, if DNA is software, where did it come from? And then let the question seep deeply into your awareness.

Ibn Mas`ud (RA) said: The Messenger of Allah (SAWS) said, “None of my Companions should convey to me anything regarding another because I desire to meet everyone of you with a clean heart.”

[Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi]

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