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EDITORIAL

All thanks for Almighty, the most Merciful and Exalted

The Foundation of Spiritual States

You should know, may God have mercy on you, that truthfulness and sincerity are the foundations of every spiritual state. Patience, contentment, true asceticism, pleasure, and intimacy are branches of truthfulness. While sincerity branches out into certitude, fear, love, majesty, shyness, and magnifying [God]. Each believer has a place in one of these stations, which he passes, and which then is the state he is known by.

Hence, it is said of him, fearful, yet he has hope; or hopeful, but he has fear; patient, but he has satisfaction; loving, but he has shyness. The strength or weakness of every state is proportionate to the faith and spiritual maturity of the servant. The foundation of each of these states has three signs by which it is known. Truthfulness is in three things, which are not complete without it: Truthfulness of the heart in faith that is actualized; truthfulness of intention in religious actions; and truthfulness of expression in speech.

Patience is in three things, which are not complete without it: Patience in avoiding those things God has forbidden; patience in [dealing with the difficulty involved in] following the command of God; and patience at the time of a calamity, while anticipating God's grace. Contentment is in three things, which are not complete without it: [Being content with] little materially even though

material means are available; with poverty when possessing nothing and the prospects of future abundance are lacking; and with the tranquility found in the worship of God, be He mighty and majestic, despite being steeped in poverty.

Contentment has a beginning and an end. Its beginning lies in abandoning excess despite the existence of abundance. Its end is the existence of spiritual wealth despite material poverty and lack of worldly means. From this point of departure, one of the sages mentioned that contentment is a higher station than satisfaction. What he meant is complete contentment, because the state of one who is satisfied does not change according to his being denied or given. One who is content is enriched with his Lord. He does not seek any increase along with Him to assuage the desire of his soul—unless that increase is a gift from God to him.

Abstinence is in three things, the ascetic is not called abstinent without them: Ridding himself of worldly possessions; passing up enjoyment of some lawful things; and being carefree because of the large amounts of time [devoted to God]. A man is a true ascetic if he is characterized by three other things: He protects his soul when tempted by his desires; he flees from opportunities to enrich himself materially; he only meets his needs with what he knows to be lawful.

Question Answer

Question.

how to remedy inclination towards strange women?

Answer.

We should sit in solitude and ponder over the origin, end and even the present condition of the strange women whom one is inclined towards. She was created from an impure drop of fluid. When this drop of fluid was transferred from her father to her mother, shariah declared that both her parents were in a state of impurity due to which they could not perform salaah or recite Quran. Thereafter this drop went through various changes of being a clot of blood, a piece of flesh, then hands and feet emerged and eventually life came into it. Its nourishment too was impure blood. Furthermore, with what difficulty she was given birth to! Her nourishment continued to be the impure blood - now in the form of breast milk. As a baby and a growing up child, she knew nothing about purity and impurity. At times her body would be full of impurity and she knew no thing about it. Impurity would be on her hand and she used to put it in her mouth thinking nothing about it.

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

and liquid comes out of her eyes, ears, nose and mouth and when she falls ill she suffers from diarrhoea and vomiting.

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

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

Question.

I remain silent most of the time. However, when I get together with friends and I engage in conversations as well as laugh and talk with them, etc, then I remain uncomfortable the entire night thinking to myself that I should not have done this, I have wasted my time?

Answer.

Islam does not teach us to remain silent all the time and to abstain from talking and joking. This is especially so in today's times. Remaining silent most of the time or remaining in solitude causes weakness to the nerves and is a cause of depression. It is not desirable to remain silent all the time or most of the time. The sole objective is to abstain from sins. Friendship with Allah (wilayat) is dependent on taqwa (piety). It is therefore not prohibited to joke, talk, etc. in order to occupy the heart. However, there has to be a

balance. Spend more time in abstaining from sins whether you are among your elders, those of your age, or among children. Be conscious of Allah no matter in whose company you are. Abstaining from conversations, remaining silent all the time, and abstaining from laughing and talking are not the prerequisites for consciousness of Allah. The person who does not commit sins is a wali (friend) of Allah even if he talks and jokes a lot.

Question.

I am always being haunted by stray thoughts. Kindly let me know how to overcome them?

Answer.

Stray thoughts are not a gauge to indicate that your Imaan is going down. In fact, the person who continues striving under all these states, despite the different feelings that he experiences, his reward is doubled. The Hadith speaks of the person who recites the Qur'an but with difficulty, he will receive a double reward. When he works like this then it is a sign that he is working and striving for the sake of Allah Ta'ala. He is not chasing behind feelings. Many a times, it creates a great trauma in your mind, but this is the plot of Shaytaan. He cannot see you moving. Therefore, he tries to distract you. With the passage of time more doubts, confusion and ambiguity will arise.

Why the ambiguity? One simple reason is that we are not in contact with our Mashaayikh. They may be instructing us, but we may not be practising what they are telling us and this is because of our lack of conviction. Thus, they will be telling us something, but we are not convinced of what they are saying. The conviction will come when we bond with them and frequent their company. Your deeds will be in proportion to your conviction. The pious of the past had a very strong bond with their Mashaayikh and they never let it decrease and weaken. Through

this, one gains stability in Deen and the love for Allah Ta'ala becomes deeply embedded in the heart. Once one reaches such a state it will be difficult for this person to be deterred. This is the reason for connecting with our elders.

One meaning of fitnah is where things are not clear and are ambiguous. You do not see the path to be clear before you. Under the circumstance, what do we do? For many people, just finding out and researching is insufficient. The Jews and Mushrikeen did investigations regarding the truth of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) but it did not bring any results. Nowadays, it is more of a curiosity. Surah Kahf speaks of various types of fitnah, and when it was revealed 70 000 angels brought it. Thus, when a person recites it on a Friday then he is saved from fitnah for the next 8 days. In Surah Kahf, Allah Ta'ala does not give the details of the location of the cave or the exact number of the sleepers in the cave. The reason is that Allah does not want us to lose sight of the actual purpose and goal.

One also gains noor through its recitation. What is noor? It is an inner light through which the path of truth becomes clear to us. No ambiguity or doubt remains. But again, this will come when one has a firm bond with his mashaayikh. It is a simple procedure. The pious of the past would stay for extended periods of time. However, in this time and age it is better that we remain in their company for short periods of time. Nevertheless, all this should be done with complete conviction in the elder. Without this, no benefit will be acquired.

The misuse of the tongue can be extremely disastrous and dangerous. We don't realise what trauma and disaster it can cause. The Hadith says, "Promise me the protection of the tongue, I promise you Jannah." It is an extremely important matter. Even if you are right you need to think how to speak correctly.

Lesson From The Qur'an

Quran text translation: Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi (RA)

Explanatory Notes: Tafsir Division, Darul Uloom Ilahiya.

Surah Al-Imran

Verse 44.47

ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهِ إِلَيْكَ ۗ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يُلقُونَ أَقْلَامَهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ يَكْفُلُ مَرْيَمَ ۗ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يَخْتَصِمُونَ ۗ ۴٤ إِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَأِكَةُ يَمْرُؤِمَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْشُرُكَ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنْهُ ۗ اسْمُهُ الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَجِيهًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ۗ ۴٥ وَيُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا وَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ۗ ۴٦ قَالَتْ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ يَمَسِّنِي بَشَرٌ ۗ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ اللَّهُ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ ۗ إِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ۗ ۴٧

This is of the tidings of the Unseen¹⁴ which we reveal to you¹⁵ and you were not with them when they cast their reeds as to which of them should have charge of Maryam¹⁶. Nor were you with them when they disputed. (3:44) Recall when the angels said: 'O Maryam, surely Allah announces to you a word¹⁷ from Him, his name shall be the Masih, Jesus son of Maryam¹⁸, illustrious in this world and the Hereafter and one of those brought nigh'. (3:45) And he shall speak to mankind in the cradle and maturity¹⁹ and be one of the righteous²⁰. (3:46) She said: 'My Lord! How will there be a son unto me while no man has touched me?' Allah said: 'So it shall be.' Allah creates what He will²¹. When He decrees a thing, He only says to it, 'Be' and it becomes. (3:47)

14. Things unseen belong to a realm beyond the reach of human perception and therefore it would be unseemly to dispute or speculate about them. (Yusuf Ali)

15. This proves the true prophethood of Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) as

knowledge of such events in exact detail cannot be had except by Revelation. (Tf. Usmani)

16. There are only three sources wherefrom knowledge can be acquired – i. Intellect ii. Pick up information through listening or iii. Witness it with eyes. To know the gone past

events with the help of intellect is obviously not possible. Picking up information through listening is also out of question as the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) didn't know how to read or write, and also there was nobody to inform him. With regard to witnessing with eyes – no sensible person would even think about it owing to the difference of more than 500 years between the period of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and Maryam (AS). Therefore, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) narrated the events only after receiving *Wahy*, thus doing a miracle. By narrating such events he proved himself – a Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), and the narration of events - the revelation. (Tf. Mazhari)

17. Although everything that is created by Allah is by the command of a 'word' (*kalimah*) alone, yet Isa (AS) was specifically called 'Word' because, in his case the normal process of creation was overruled and he was brought into being not by means of a father but at the behest of a word *kun* alone. (Ishraq al-Ma'ani)

18. Himself a mere mortal, Isa (AS) was also the son of a frail, ordinary woman, and not the son of God (as proclaimed by Christians). The epithet 'ibn Maryam' calls attention to and emphasizes the fact of his humanity. It is one of the miracles of the Qur'an that in speaking of Jesus it refutes both the Jewish and Christian misconceptions simultaneously and constantly uses a language that implies answers both to the Christian deification and to the Jewish denunciation. (Tf. Majidi)

19. Why did Allah say "and in his maturity" when we know that everyone speaks in his maturity? It is as if to say that he will speak on the same subjects with authority from his cradle as he will in his maturity. (A. Alusi—ref. Ishraq al-Ma'ani)

20. The Prophets (AS) are to have such dignity. In a way - 'one of the righteous' means 'one of the Prophets'. (Tf. Mazhari)

21. Allah's will is all sufficient to bring something into existence. He needs no medium or cause. It is only His command 'Be' which makes things to come into existence. (Ma'ariful Qur'an)

Verse 48-51

وَيُعَلِّمُهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ ۚ وَرَسُولًا إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ۚ أَنِّي قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ ۚ أَنِّي أَخْلُقُ لَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيْرِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ فَأَنْفُخُ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَأُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَةَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ وَأُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا تَأْكُلُونَ وَمَا تَدْخُرُونَ ۚ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لَّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ۚ وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَلِأَجَلٍ لَّكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي حُرِّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَجِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ ۖ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا أَمْرًا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ ۗ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُّسْتَقِيمٌ ۝

And He shall teach him the Book and wisdom²² and the Tawrah and the Injil. (3:48) And a Messenger²³ to the children of Israel with this message, surely I have come to you with a sign from your Lord. Surely I form for you out of clay the likeness of a bird²⁴, and then I breath in it, and a bird it becomes by Allah's leave. And I heal the blind from birth and the leper and revive the dead by Allah's leave. And I declare to you what you have eaten and what you have stored in your houses. Surely in this is a Sign for you, if you be believers. (3:49) And I come confirming the Tawrah that was before me, and to allow to you some of what was forbidden to you²⁴. And I have come to you with a sign from your Lord; so fear Allah and obey me²⁵. (3:50) Surely Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him²⁶. This is the straight path.

22. Book and Wisdom may also mean the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah, because Isa (AS) after his descent will adjudicate according to the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah and this is only possible when he has got the deep knowledge of the two. (Tf. Usmani)

23. (of Allah) which is a very different thing on the one hand from Allah Himself, as misconceived by the Christians; and on the other from a criminal wonder-worker as misjudged by the Jews. (Tf. Majidi)

23. Forming likeness of a bird was making a mould, something permitted in that Shariah. In our Shariah its permissibility is abrogated. (Ma'riful Qur'an)

24. This means that the unlawfulness of some things in the earlier code would stand abrogated by the new one, (that of Isa (AS))

whose station of prophethood was the conclusive argument for that claim of abrogation. (Ma'ariful Qur'an)

25. I.e., fear Allah's punishment that will arrive due to falsifying or opposing me. And follow my command to proclaim the Unity of Allah and to obey Him.

26. Worship him only. This, the worship of the One and Only God, is the true Message of Isa (AS), the gist of his real teaching. Unity, and pure God—worship; no trinity, no incarnation, no son-worship, no mother-worship. (Tf. Majidi)

27. To carry together - the *tawhid* (belief in one God) and total submission to Him, is the only straight path that is authenticated. (Tf. Mazhari)

Bravery, An outcome of Piety

Abu Ali Ruzabari mentions: "The sole reason for my visiting the land of Egypt was to meet a pious man by the name of Bunaan Al-Hammaal. It was famous regarding him that he was once thrown to be devoured by lions but was not harmed by them at all."

The incident is as follows: Bunaan Al Hammaal (RA) once approached the king of Egypt, Ibnu Tooloon, and advised him to rectify some aspects. Ibnu Tooloon was angered at this. Hence he issued the command that Bunaan be thrown to the lions. When he was thrown into the enclosure, the lions ran towards him but then began to merely sniff around him like a cat. They did not harm him at all. Upon observing this unique behaviour of the lions with him, Ibnu Tooloon released him. Observing this peculiar behaviour he was immediately released. Someone asked him: "What was the state of your mind when those huge beasts were around you, sniffing at your body?" He replied: "I began to recall the different views the Ulama hold as to whether the saliva of predatory animals are pure or impure?" (Risaalatul Mustarshideen Pg.98)

Lesson: Those whose hearts are brimming with piety and the love of Allah Ta'ala, do not get over awed by situations. Their focus is constantly on the "hand" and not on the "stick."

Lesson From Sahih al-Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

The Book of Ablution

باب مَسْحِ الرَّأْسِ كُلِّهِ .

لِقَوْلِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى (وَأَمْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ) . وَقَالَ ابْنُ الْمُسَيَّبِ الْمَرْأَةُ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الرَّجُلِ تَمْسَحُ عَلَى رَأْسِهَا . وَسُئِلَ مَالِكٌ أَبِي جَرِيٍّ أَنْ يَمْسَحَ بَعْضَ الرَّأْسِ فَاحْتَجَّ بِحَدِيثِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ زَيْدٍ .

Chapter 39 : To pass wet hands (Masah) over the whole head during ablution as Allah says: "And pass wet hands over your heads". (5:6)

And Ibn al-Mysaiyab said: "The woman is on the same rank as of the man, she should pass water over her head".

And Maalik was asked, "Is the passing of a wet hand over a part of head sufficient?". He argued with the Hadith of Abdullah bin Zaid.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Imam Bukhari (RA) and Imam Maalik are of the opinion that Masah (rubbing head with wet hands) of whole head is obligatory. The same thing has been quoted from Imam Ahmad in one narration. Imam Abu Haniefa (RA) says that Masah on one-fourth of head is obligatory. Imam Shafa'ee does not specify any portion of head for Masah, but as per him even if few hair get wet, it is enough.

Hadith No. 181

8 (Vol.14, No: 168)

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ يُوسُفَ قَالَ أَخْبَرَنَا مَالِكٌ عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ يَحْيَى الْمَازِنِيِّ عَنْ أَبِيهِ أَنَّ رَجُلًا قَالَ لِعَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ زَيْدٍ وَهُوَ جَدُّ عَمْرِو بْنِ يَحْيَى أَتَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ تُرِيَنِي كَيْفَ كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَتَوَضَّأُ فَقَالَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ زَيْدٍ نَعَمْ . فَدَعَا بِمَاءٍ ، فَأَفْرَغَ عَلَى يَدَيْهِ فَعَسَلَ يَدَهُ مَرَّتَيْنِ ، ثُمَّ مَضَمَضَ وَاسْتَنْشَرَ ثَلَاثًا ، ثُمَّ عَسَلَ وَجْهَهُ ثَلَاثًا ، ثُمَّ عَسَلَ يَدَيْهِ مَرَّتَيْنِ مَرَّتَيْنِ إِلَى الْمِرْفَقَيْنِ ، ثُمَّ مَسَحَ رَأْسَهُ بِيَدَيْهِ ، فَأَقْبَلَ بِهِمَا وَأَذْبَرَ ، بَدَأَ بِمُقَدِّمِ رَأْسِهِ ، حَتَّى ذَهَبَ بِهِمَا إِلَى قَفَاهُ ، ثُمَّ رَدَّهُمَا إِلَى الْمَكَانِ الَّذِي بَدَأَ مِنْهُ ، ثُمَّ عَسَلَ رِجْلَيْهِ .

Narrated Yahya Al-Mazini (RA)

"A person asked 'Abdullah bin Zaid who was the grandfather of 'Amr bin Yahya, "Can you show me how Allah's Apostle used to perform ablution?" 'Abdullah bin Zaid replied in the affirmative and asked for water. He poured it on his hands and washed them twice, then he rinsed his mouth thrice and washed his nose with water thrice by putting water in it and blowing it out. He washed his face thrice and after that he washed his forearms up to the elbows twice and then passed his wet hands over his head from its front to its back and vice versa (beginning from the front and taking them to the back of his head up to the

nape of the neck and then brought them to the front again from where he had started) and washed his feet (up to the ankles)".

Comments

The Hadith favours those who believe that Masah on the whole of head is obligatory as Abdullah bin Zaid first rubbed his head from front to back and vice versa, which obviously covers the whole head. Imam Maalik (RA) saw the people of Madina doing the same. There is a Hadith in Muslim and Abu Dawood quoted on the authority of Mugairah bin Shoaba that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) performed Masah from underneath his turban on one-fourth of his head starting from forehead. On the basis of this Hadith Imam Abu Haniefa (RA) says that since Masah on one-fourth of head is proved in this Hadith, so this is the minimum portion of head on which Masah is obligatory. Though Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) often used to perform Masah on whole of head, so that is Mustahab (preferable). But in this Hadith only Masah on one-fourth of head is quoted. So, to perform Masah on at least one-fourth must be obligatory or Fardh.

باب غَسْلِ الرَّجْلَيْنِ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ .

Chapter 40 : The washing of feet up to the ankles.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

This topic has already been discussed by Imam Bukhari (RA) in previous chapters. In order to keep the sequence of Wudu intact i.e., since the washing of feet is at the end i.e., after the Masah of head, so he once again got this chapter here.

Hadith No. 182

حَدَّثَنَا مُوسَى قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا وَهَيْبٌ عَنْ عَمْرٍو عَنْ أَبِيهِ شَهِدْتُ عَمْرٍو بْنَ أَبِي حَسَنٍ سَأَلَ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ زَيْدٍ عَنْ وُضُوءِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَدَعَا بِتَوْرٍ مِنْ مَاءٍ ، فَتَوَضَّأَ لَهُمْ وَوَضَّأَ

النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأَكْفَأَ عَلَى يَدِهِ مِنَ التَّوْرِ ، فَغَسَلَ يَدَيْهِ ثَلَاثًا ، ثُمَّ أَدْخَلَ يَدَهُ فِي التَّوْرِ ، فَمَضْمَضَ وَاسْتَنْشَقَ وَاسْتَنْتَرَّ ثَلَاثَ غَرَفَاتٍ ، ثُمَّ أَدْخَلَ يَدَهُ فَغَسَلَ وَجْهَهُ ثَلَاثًا ، ثُمَّ أَدْخَلَ يَدَهُ فَغَسَلَ يَدَيْهِ مَرَّتَيْنِ إِلَى الْمِرْفَقَيْنِ مَرَّتَيْنِ ، ثُمَّ أَدْخَلَ يَدَهُ فَمَسَحَ رَأْسَهُ ، فَأَقْبَلَ بِهِمَا وَأَدْبَرَ مَرَّةً وَاحِدَةً ، ثُمَّ غَسَلَ رِجْلَيْهِ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ .

Narrated 'Amr (RA)

My father saw 'Amr bin Abi Hasan asking 'Abdullah bin Zaid about the ablution of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). 'Abdullah bin Zaid asked for earthen-ware pot containing water and in front of them performed ablution like that of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). He poured water from the pot over his hand and washed his hands thrice and then he put his hands in the pot and rinsed his mouth and washed his nose by putting water in it and then blowing it out with three handfuls of water. Again he put his hand in the water and washed his face thrice and washed his forearms up to the elbows twice; and then put his hands in the water and then passed them over his head by bringing them to the front and then to the rear of the head once, and then he washed his feet up to the ankles.

باب اسْتِعْمَالِ فَضْلِ وَضُوءِ النَّاسِ .

وَأَمَرَ جَرِيرُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ أَهْلَهُ أَنْ يَتَوَضَّأُوا بِفَضْلِ سِوَاكِهِ .

Chapter 41 : The using of leftover water after Wudu.

And Ibn Jarir bin Abdullah ordered the members of family to perform Wudu with the water in which he had put his Siwak (a piece of or a root of a tree used as a tooth-brush)

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Imam Bukhari (RA) wants to refute those people who believe that the leftover water of Wudu is not Taahir (ritually pure). Imam Bukhari (RA) and Imam Maalik (RA) are

of the opinion that the leftover water is not only Taahir but can also be used to achieve purity and cleanliness i.e., it is Mut-hir مطهر as well. Imam Shafa'ee (RA) and Imam Ahmad (RA) are of the opinion that the leftover water of Wudu is Taahir but purity and cleanliness cannot be achieved with it i.e., it is not Mut-hir. Imam Abu Haniefah (RA) is also said to be of the same opinion, though there is a statement of Abu Haniefah (RA) quoted in which he says that it is not Taahir.

Hadith No. 183

حَدَّثَنَا آدَمُ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا الْحَكَمُ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَبَا جُحَيْفَةَ يَقُولُ خَرَجَ عَلَيْنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - بِالْهَاجِرَةِ ، فَأَتَى بِوَضُوءٍ فَتَوَضَّأَ ، فَجَعَلَ النَّاسُ يَأْخُذُونَ مِنْ فَضْلِ وَضُوئِهِ فَيَتَمَسَّحُونَ بِهِ ، فَصَلَّى النَّبِيُّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - الظَّهْرَ رَكَعَتَيْنِ وَالْعَصْرَ رَكَعَتَيْنِ ، وَبَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ عَنَزَةٌ . وَقَالَ أَبُو مُوسَى دَعَا النَّبِيُّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - بِقَدَحٍ فِيهِ مَاءٌ فَغَسَلَ يَدَيْهِ وَوَجْهَهُ فِيهِ ، وَمَجَّ فِيهِ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُمَا اشْرَبَا مِنْهُ ، وَأَفْرِغَا عَلَيَّ وَجُوهَكُمَا وَنَحُورَكُمَا .

Narrated Abu Juhaifa (RA)

"Allah's Apostle came to us at noon and water for ablution was brought to him. After he had performed ablution, the remaining water was taken by the people and they started smearing their bodies with it (as a blessed thing). The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasal-

lam) offered two Rakat of the Zuhr prayer and then two Rakat of the 'Asr prayer while an 'Unza (spear-headed stick) was there (as a Sutra) in front of him. Abu Musa said: The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) asked for a tumbler containing water and washed both his hands and face in it and then threw a mouthful of water in the tumbler and said to both of us (Abu Musa and Bilal), "Drink from the tumbler and pour some of its water on your faces and chests."

Hadith No. 184

حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا يَعْقُوبُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ بْنِ سَعْدٍ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي عَنْ صَالِحِ بْنِ أَبِي شِهَابٍ قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الرَّبِيعِ قَالَ وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَجَّ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - فِي وَجْهِهِ وَهُوَ غَلَامٌ مِنْ بَنِيهِمْ . وَقَالَ عُرْوَةُ عَنْ الْمُسَوَّرِ وَغَيْرِهِ يُصَدِّقُ كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا صَاحِبُهُ وَإِذَا تَوَضَّأَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَادُوا يَقْتَتِلُونَ عَلَى وَضُوئِهِ .

Narrated Ibn Shihab (RA)

"Mahmud bin Ar-Rabi' who was the person on whose face the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) had ejected a mouthful of water from his family's well while he was a boy, and 'Urwa (on the authority of Al-Miswar and others) who testified each other, said, "Whenever the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) , performed ablution, his companions were nearly fighting for the remains of the water."

Submit Through Love and Fear

The love and the fear of Allah are two such gifts that will bring alive the treasure of submission in our lives. With the absence of love and fear, a person may be tempted to object and to reject the command of Allah and the Sunnah of Rasulallah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam). He will be subjected to doubts and misgivings. Thus he will begin to question the Deen of Allah based on his own logic and reasoning. Often people question the Deen of Allah, thinking that they are very intelligent, whereas in reality they are revealing their ignorance and foolishness. Thus, it is the love and fear of Allah that will clear all doubts, and will pave the pathway to complete submission to the beautiful Deen of Allah.

The Islam Women Were Promised

The earliest generation of Muslims took pride in their compliance to the Qur'an's injunction to abandon female infanticide, an act that was often done to prevent shame to the family. Thus for centuries, Muslims have taken pride in their contributions to the rising status of women. But what pride is there in abandoning burying one's young daughters in the sand only for them to grow to adulthood wishing that they had been? These tragically frequent stories of women violated over and over again can only be described as the perversion of Islam, unfortunately, by Muslims themselves.

By S. Musa

The horrific and heartbreaking news from India is tragic enough on its own: two alleged victims of gang rape have died, one a 23-year-old woman who succumbed to her wounds and a 17-year-old girl who took her own life after being pressured to marry one of her alleged attackers.

These stories are awful enough on their own, but sadly they also bring to mind other similar cases we saw during 2012.

These cases include the 16-year-old Moroccan girl who took her life after being ordered by the court to marry the man who allegedly raped her, and similar cases in Jordan involving 14 and 15 year-old-girls. In these and other cases, the societies involved – and their legal systems – advocated pardoning rapists if a deal could be struck for them to marry their victim. Morocco has its clause 457 (the origins of which go back to

French law and is said to be intended only for cases of consensual premarital sex), and Jordan has its article 308. Similar laws exist in other countries where, apparently, the honor of a woman reflects on her family in a perverse way where, where the stigma of rape outweighs the sanctity of that woman's life and dignity.

When I read of these cases I am always left baffled at how Muslims can support allowing a rapist to obtain a pardon by marrying his victim, often by pressuring their victims and their families to cooperate. As a specialist in Islamic law, I know that these cases are egregious violations of what Islam teaches on the rights of victims, the definition of justice and the meaning of marriage.

The Islamic worldview is clear concerning the rights and obligations of self-defense and defending others from attacks

against person and dignity. This is especially the case for sexual assault, where a woman is obligated to fend off her attacker and bystanders are obligated to come to her assistance. Some scholars advocate that a woman's self-defense extends even to the after-effects of an attack, including restoring their feeling of security, treating the emotional trauma, and aborting a pregnancy resulting from rape. Advocates of this position argue that this is consistent with the noble purposes of the sacred law that place protection of the life and the intellect of the woman above protection of lineage, property, and reputation. The sacred law is also clear that marriage is a relationship based on affection, mutual respect, intimacy, trust, kindness, and a refuge from uncontrolled carnal lust.

Compelling a rape victim to marry her rapist (alleged or convicted) denies her the opportunity to defend herself and exposes her to additional attacks against her person, intellect and dignity. It also forces her to live in a relationship that is based upon hatred, alienation, violation and abuse, and it rewards her attacker for his violence.

Exhortations to mercy are ingrained in Islam. Pardoning rapists who agree to marry their victim and compelling their victims to do so are mercy's antithesis.

We have already seen that compelling victims to marry their rapists has the potential to lead to suicide. Forcing victims to marry in such a way places family dignity above her own life, intellect, and dignity – which is opposite the order of priorities assigned by the sacred law. How can one reconcile this inversion of priorities with the Islamic worldview which views spreading corruption and the wrongful taking of a single life each as akin to slaying mankind in its entirety, and the saving of a single life akin to saving mankind in its entirety (Qur'an 5:32)?

Some advocates do so on the grounds that it is cultural and falls within Is-

lam's flexibility towards local culture and custom, and that local culture places such a great shame on rape (whether alleged or proven) that the victim is better off married to her rapist (alleged or convicted). While it is true that the sacred law does include a degree of flexibility regarding local culture and custom, it is limited to those that do not contradict the sacred law or subvert its noble purposes. In short, the sacred law affirms practices that agree but rejects practices that contract or subvert it.

Other advocates suggest that the laws are intended to apply only in cases of consensual sex, such as when couples do so in hopes of forcing their families to allow them to marry, and that when reported, the act is recorded as rape. Using this term to somehow protect society from the shame of admitting that women engage in consensual premarital sex opens a life-destroying door of forcing women who were already wronged to an even greater wrong, sometimes leading them to take their own life out of anguish and desperation.

There is something deeply wrong when a Muslim society views the shame of a single rape to outweigh facilitating the spread of corruption and the wrongful taking of life.

The earliest generation of Muslims took pride in their compliance to the Qur'an's injunction to abandon female infanticide, an act that was often done to prevent shame to the family. Thus for centuries, Muslims have taken pride in their contributions to the rising status of women. But what pride is there in abandoning burying one's young daughters in the sand only for them to grow to adulthood wishing that they had been? These tragically frequent stories of women violated over and over again can only be described as the perversion of Islam, unfortunately, by Muslims themselves.

Courtesy of the Washington Post

Coping with Less than Ideal Conditions

Sheikh Salman al-Oadah

Anyone who studies the present day in careful detail and considers it in conjunction with the many Prophetic reports that talk about future times will notice many things about the state of the world around them that escape other people's attention. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) only spoke about the future so that later generations would be forewarned and avoid the pitfalls that awaited them. Also, by being forewarned that circumstance will be less than ideal, people will be more mentally prepared to cope with those circumstances when they happen, and less likely to succumb to frustration and despair.

For instance, Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "You will follow in the ways of those who came before you, inch by inch, yard by yard, so that even if they were to go into a lizard's burrow, you would follow them into it."

His Companions asked him: "You mean the Jews and Christians?"

He replied: "Who else?" [Sahih al-Bukhari (7320) and Sahih Muslim (2669)]

Here Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is foretelling how Muslims will gradually start acting contrary to Islamic

teachings more and more as time goes on. By doing so, he makes that eventuality less difficult for the people who live to witness it, and easier to cope with. They will understand what is going on, and therefore suffer less from stress and anxiety. They will, as a result, act sensibly, appreciating that they do not live in the Prophet's time and properly gauge how much they can expect from the people. This does not mean that they will accept the falsehood going on around them, but rather that they will be gentle and patient in the way they work to correct things, and not insist upon an idealistic vision that is out of touch with reality.

Moreover, they will appreciate that what they are witnessing, since it was accurately foretold by the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), is actually a sign of his prophethood. Allah says: "When the believers saw the confederate forces (assembled against them), they said: 'This is that which Allah and His Messenger promised us. What Allah and His messenger told us is true.' It only confirmed them in their faith and submission." [Sūrah al-Ahzāb: 22]

Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) used to inform his secretary,

Hudhayfah b. al-Yamān (RA), of the tribulations that were to come. Hudhayfah (RA) later recalled: "When one of those things happened, I would recognize it after having forgotten all about it, just like when you see the face of someone you have forgotten about, you immediately know who that person is."

Hudhayfah (RA) would say on those occasions: "My dear friend had spoken truly." Other Companions had similar experiences.

We need to understand the difference between what Allah's decrees will take place in the word and what Allah has prescribes for us to do when it happens. They are two different things. This is why a believer never uses Allah's decree as an excuse to avoid responsibility or to be heedless of the wrongdoing that goes on in the world. A believer knows that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) meant to warn us against that wrongdoing, and this will make the believer all the more steadfast.

Therefore, the Prophet's foretelling of these events has a two-fold benefit. On the one hand, it gives us fortitude in the face of adversity. We do not grow despondent or feel the need to retreat from the world and its people in order to avoid their ills. We will, instead, see the best in the people around us, recognise the situation for what it is, and work to make things better. On the other hand, we will be able to avoid the pitfalls that the people have stumbled into, because we have been forewarned. This is why the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) promised such a great reward for those who are able to hold fast to the true path at the time when the community becomes corrupted.

This provides a further, crucial lesson for those who wish to engage in reform and the betterment of society. That is the importance of understanding the world around us, its political, economic, and social realities, on the local, regional, and global levels. If we

attempt to institute hasty reforms without properly considering the people's culture, level of understanding, and tolerance for change, we are going to make a mess of things. Furthermore, we will make an unfair assessment of the people, assuming that they are simply hostile and governed by base self-interest, and fail to see the considerable goodness that they have within them. In turn, we will become unjust in the way we treat them. This is why sensitivity to the circumstances and culture of the people is inseparable from the task of calling them to what is right.

Speaking to his Companions about the difficult days that future generations will face, Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "Those who work for good in those times will have the reward of fifty people doing the same work."

They said: "Do you mean they will get the blessings of fifty people from their time, or the blessings of fifty of us?"

He answered: "I mean they will get the blessings of fifty of you." [Sunan al-Tirmidhī (3058), Sunan Abī Dāwūd (4341), and Sunan Ibn Mājah (4014)]

Likewise, he said: "There will come a time when being steadfast in faith will be as difficult as holding a burning coal in your hand." [Sunan al-Tirmidhī (66)]

Here the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is encouraging patience and fortitude for those who live in a time when most people will be acting contrary to what is right. This is the most that can be hoped from a believer. Personalities differ, and many people find it very difficult to remain aloof to what is going on around them while remaining actively engaged in society.

This is why, when the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was asked what kind of people are better, he replied: "The believers who strive with their persons and wealth for the sake of Allah." Then, when

they asked him who was next in rank, he answered: "Those who withdraw from society to worship their Lord, and eschew their people's wicked ways." [Sahīh al-Bukhārī (2786) and Sahīh Muslim (1888)]

Here, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) gives preference to those who strive with their persons and their wealth for Allah's sake while actively engaging in society: calling people to the truth, imparting knowledge, helping the poor and indigent, and redressing injustice.

Then, for those whose hearts cannot cope under such circumstances, the next best thing for them to do is keep their distance and protect themselves. This does not mean that they cut themselves off from society completely. They are not supposed to leave off congregational prayer in the mosque, or places of learning, or family gatherings that they must attend to maintain proper ties of kinship, or live without friends. What it means is that they stay away from superfluous activities which will expose them unnecessarily to sin and distress.

In this context, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "Soon there will come a time when people's state will become confused and entangled, and the worst of them will endure, their affairs and trusts will be indistinguishable, like this." and he interlaced the his fingers of his two hands.

The People asked him: "What should we do when that happens?"

He answered: "Hold firmly to what you know, eschew what is condemnable, stick closely with one another (on the truth), and avoid the general masses." [Musnad Ahmad (7063)]

Count Allah's Blessings

If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep ... you are richer than 75% of this world.

If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish someplace ... you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.

If you awoke this morning with more health than illness ... you are more blessed than the million who will not survive this week.

If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation ... you are more blessed than three billion people in the world.

If your parents are still alive and still married ... you are very rare.

If you hold up your head with a smile on your face and are truly thankful ... you are blessed because the majority can, but most don't.

If you can read this message ... you are more blessed than over two billion people in the world that cannot read at all.

Have a good day, count your blessings to thank Allah, and pass this along to remind everyone else how blessed we all are.

(Courtesy of Al-Balaagh)

There Can Only Be One Truth, Right?

Shafiur Rahman

There can only be one truth, right? So when it comes to Islamic law this must also be the case. There may be different opinions but only one of them is correct and therefore my 'shaykh', 'madhab', 'tariqa', 'group' is usually right to the exclusion of others. This may be the type of logic that leads to much of the intolerance amongst Muslims today, particularly in the West. You only have to momentarily interact on social media or talk to people, usually around the masjids, to experience this.

The more troubling thing is that this type of attitude often comes from people who appear to have little or no religious training apart from being an activist belonging to this or that group or being a follower of Shaykh X. What has led us to this dire situation?

Due to the fact that a Muslim is defined as one who surrenders to Allah and then acts in accordance to Islamic law, issues of fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) and its associated debates and differences have invariably become an essential part of an 'active' Muslim's life. The shari'ah (Islamic faith, law and ethics) is central to a Muslim's identity as it informs his or her values and actions.

However, our tradition in general—and our legal tradition in particular—has always been one that accommodated diverse opinions within an agreed framework. Take

the Qur'an itself; there are at least seven different but equally valid ways of reciting the Qur'an. These have been narrated widely on the authority of our Imams (leading experts) of recitation all the way from the Sahaba (companions of the Prophet (who all learnt the Qur'an directly from the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)).

Take a look at our legal system. We have four surviving legal schools (madhahib), but there were many more. Muslims throughout history have generally recognised them as equally valid schools. Then within the schools you have a whole range of diverse opinions between the founder of the schools and their students or later scholars of the madhab. However, often the followers or supporters of the very same madhabs or their shaykhs (scholars) become fanatical or go to extremes due to various factors, one of them being their lack of understanding of what a madhab actually is. This misunderstanding is not restricted to a madhab alone; it can be applied to an opinion or a particular scholar.

Shaykh al-Hasan al-Dedew describes the madhab in this respect: 'The madhab is a way of dealing with the text (Qur'an and Hadith). Therefore everything that Jibril `alayhi alsalam (Angel Gabriel, AS) related from Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala (exalted is He) is not the exclusive property of anyone's madhab. Everything which is considered qat'i

(‘definitive’, clear cut) from the texts is not the exclusive property of anyone’s madhab. Therefore the madhab (exists) only in those issues that require ijtiḥād (reasoning, in order to arrive at the meaning or legal implication.)’

In other words those texts from the Qur’an or ḥadīth that are agreed upon, in terms of their meanings and legal implications, are not the exclusive property of anyone’s madhab or shaykh but rather it is obligatory upon all to accept and follow them without any difference. The differences and therefore the existence of madhabs occur in those texts that are ‘speculative’ (dhanni) in terms of meaning, and carry more than one interpretation due to a number of factors, which are outlined in the books of Usul al-Fiqh (legal jurisprudence). The question here is in this regards, where legitimate differences of conclusions occurs, is there only one actual truth in the matter?

Before we proceed to answer this question it is worth clarifying another common confusion. There is a difference between something being legally valid and something being correct or the only truth. There may be several opinions on one issue and if they are issued from qualified scholars who have followed sincerely the procedures of ijtiḥād and have exerted their utmost efforts to arrive at the truth, then all of the opinions may be legally valid and acceptable. Even though only one of them may have arrived at the actual truth of the matter or the correct answer.

To give an example the Hanafis consider bleeding to invalidate wudu (ablution) whilst other schools like the Shafi’*e* madhab are of the opinion that it does not. Both opinions are considered by all sides to be legally valid for the layman in that for someone who follows either opinion, his wudu is valid.

So we return to the question as to whether or not there is in actual fact only one correct ruling on the issue, even if others are

incorrect but valid. Al-Shawkani says that Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Malik, Imam Shafi’*e* and the majority of the jurists (may Allah’s mercy be upon them) are of the opinion that in such matters the truth (ḥaq) is one, but it is not defined or known to us, though it is known to Allah (swt). In other words there is only one correct opinion, which Allah (swt) knows and is not knowable by anyone else with 100% certainty. However, the other opinions, even if they are not the actual correct one, are still valid for the ordinary person to follow.

If we could all just accept a general rule that different madhabs and opinions of the jurists are all equally valid as long as they are as a result of valid ijtiḥād from qualified scholars and are not from the anomalous (shadh) opinions that have been rejected by the vast majority—we could then begin to understand the nature and dynamics of our shari’ah that would enhance unity amongst our communities particularly in the West where basic Islamic literacy levels are low and where diverse Muslim communities are often living together with access to a plethora of thoughts, madhabs and opinions.

We should ponder the words of Imam al-Shafi’*e* (RA) who is reported to have said, ‘I believe my opinion is right with the possibility that it is wrong and I believe the opinion of those who disagree with me is wrong with the possibility of that being correct.’ This was the attitude of most of the Imams. The Sahabas who were trained by the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) differed amongst themselves on legal matters but maintained brotherhood and respect.

Once this is clear, the other logical point to then move on to and accept is to avoid condemning other legally valid opinions as ‘batil (inferior),’ ‘haram (unlawful),’ ‘misguided’ etc. In other words—don’t ‘enjoin the good and forbid the evil’ on issues of valid

Cont’d on page 21

Qur'anic Sciences

Justice Maulana Taqi Usmani

Nowadays a voice is being raised that every individual should take up the task of understanding Qur'an according to his own comprehension. Though it is all more necessary to understand the Qur'an but lack of fundamental knowledge in this regard can drive a person towards unknown extremes and wrong interpretations. This is the next article in the direction of knowing some fundamental requirements for interpreting the Qur'an correctly.

2. EXEGESIS OF THE SUFIS (MYSTICS)

Certain words of the honourable sufi's about the verse of the Qur'an which may seem to be an exegesis but those words contradict the obvious meanings. For instance, the Qur'an says,

Fight those of the disbelievers who gird around you. (At-Tawbah. 9:123)

About it some Sufis have said

"Fight your soul because it is nearest to man."

Some people have taken such sentences as interpretations of the Qur'an, but in fact they are not so. The Sufis never meant that these represent the actual intentions of the Qur'an and not the meanings that are apparent. Rather they have full faith in the apparent meanings proved from its original sources and admit this to be the true interpretation of the Qur'an, but alongwith it they also give vent to the ecstatic feelings they sense during

the recital of the verse. Hence, the Sufi's do not say that the foregoing verse does not advocate jihad against the unbelievers. What they mean to express is that while the verse in fact calls on us to fight the unbelievers, at the same time it tells us that nearest enemy is his own soul that repeatedly prompts him to commit evil. Hence, he must engage in Jihad with it also at the same time as he is bound to wage Jihad with the disbelievers.

We find a large number of such intuitive interpretations of the Sufi's in the Exegesis of renowned commentator 'Allamah Mahmud Alusi (RA). He has explained the views of the Sufis in the following words:

"The deliberations reported from the Sufi's in connection with the Qur'an in fact point to those deep and fine disclosures that they read in it. These disclosures are truly based on the apparent meaning. The Sufi's do not believe

that the apparent meanings are to be ignored against intuitive meanings because this is the belief of the Batiniyyah apostates who have adopted it as stepping stone to negate the Laws of Islam. Our mystics have nothing to do with this belief, and it cannot be, because they insist that the apparent meanings of the Qur'an must be adopted first." (Ruh-ul-Ma'ani)

But, the following considerations must be kept in mind in regard to such deliberations of the mystics.

1: These deliberations should not be regarded as exegesis of the Qur'an, we should believe that the true exegesis of the Qur'an is the one that is apparent from its real source, and these deliberations are just intuitive deductions which cannot be regarded as exegesis without going astray. Imam 'Abdur Rahman Sulmi (RA) had written a book, Haqaa'iq-ut-Tafsir which consisted of such deliberations. Imam Wahid (RA) has said about it that, "whoever believes it a Tafsir would turn into an apostate." (al-Itqaan)

2: Of all such deliberations only those may be taken as correct which do not negate the apparent meanings of a verse or an established principle of Islamic Law. If the established rules and regulations of religion are defied under the guise of intuitive deliberations it is open apostasy.

3: Intuitions of this kind would be reliable only so long as they do not interpolate the words of Qur'an. If anything is connoted by distorting the word of the Qur'an then that is also apostasy and a wavering from the path. For instance, take the verse: *من ذا الذي يشفع* "Who is he that shall intercede". Someone said about it that it is actually *من ذل الذي يشفع* where *من ذل* means "soul" giving the phrase the meaning. "Whoever shall disgrace the soul shall be cured. Remember it." Allamah Sirajuddin Baqillani on being asked about it, said. "Such a person is a heretic." (al-Itqaan)

4. In the earlier times, there was a group of

heretics named 'Batiniyyah' They claimed that in fact Allah did not mean what is understood in the Qur'an on the face of it, but every word points to an intrinsic meaning which is its true interpretation. Such a belief is unanimously regarded apostasy by the Ummah. Hence, it will amount to subscribing to the misconceived ideas of, 'Batiniyyat' if we attribute such a belief to the deliberations of the Sufi's.

The deliberations of the mystics (Sufi's) can be studied with due regard to these four cautionary notes. Indeed, some people having an ideal bent of mind have benefitted from these deliberations. That is why 'Allamah Alusi has devoted an entire chapter named Bab-ul-Isharah fil Ayat in his Tafsir Ruhul Ma'ani in which he has mentioned such intuitions.

To sum up, the intuitive deliberations made by the Sufis are not against the Qur'an or Sunnah and to blame them for Batiniyah is not justified. In spite of that, we cannot resist quoting Ibn-us Salah:

"Despite this, how I wish these people had not been so careless in delving upon these deliberations because there is much possibility of creating misunderstanding and doubt through them."

3. SELF-CONCEIVED INTERPRETATIONS

The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has said,

"Whoever opines on the Qur'an, he committed a mistake even if he may be right."

Allamah Mawardi (RA) has stated that some people with a mischievous bent of mind assert that this tradition makes it unlawful to say anything about the Qur'an on the basis of one's opinion and thinking. They go to the extent in saying that even meanings cannot be derived at in accordance with the principles of Shari'ah. But this is a misconception because the Qur'an itself has described deliberations and deductions a praiseworthy

effort. If restrictions are imposed on the thinking and deliberation, the door to deduce laws and regulations from the Qur'an and Sunnah will be closed for ever. Hence this tradition does not intend to restrict every kind of self-conceived opinion. (Adopted from al-Itqaan)

There is a consensus among the scholars that, in the light of the Qur'an and Hadith, this tradition does not disallow one to think, deliberate and reason in studying the Qur'an. But an exegesis arrived at only by personal opinion and ignoring the established principles of exegesis of the Qur'an, shall be unlawful, and any person drawing conclusions in this manner shall be committing a sin even if his conclusions are correct because he took a wrong approach. There can be several ways in which a person may ignore the principles of exegesis. These are:

- 1: Anyone who is not competent to talk about the exegesis of the Qur'an may interpret it through his own deliberations.
- 2: Anyonemay ignore an explanation of a verse explicitly proved from the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) or his Companions and their followers (Tabi'in), and forward his own opinion as final.
- 3: Someonemay make an interpretation ignoring usage, literature and lexicon when an explicit interpretation from the companions and Tabi'in is not reported.
- 4: Someone may extract rulings from the Qur'an although he is not competent to do so directly from the Qur'an and Hadith.
- 5: Someone may infer from the verses of the Qur'an the meanings of which the Qur'an itself states that these are known to none but Allah alone and then stands by his inference.
- 6: He may draw an interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an which clash with other established belief and tenets of Islam.
- 7: Wherepersonal deliberation and deduction is permissible one may declare his own unsubstantiated opinion as conclusive and at

the same time firmly negate the deliberations of other scholars.

These are the possibilities of an exegesis on personal opinion which the foregoing Hadith declares illegal. All these possibilities are summed up in another saying of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam):

"Whoever says anything about the Qur'an without knowledge, let him make his place in the Fire (of Hell)

However, if an opinion is expressed which is not against the Qur'an and Hadith and conforms to the principles of exegesis and established rules and regulations of Islam, it does not attract the wrath of this Hadith. But it must be understood that such deliberations themselves are not possible without a deep knowledge of the Qur'an and Hadith and experience in Islamic Sciences. The scholars have laid down certain principles for this purpose, which form part of the principles of Islamic Jurisprudence and principles of exegesis. A very useful summary of these principles has been given by Allamah Badruddin Zarkashi in his book *Al-Burhan-fi-Uloom-il-Qur'an*, in the 41st edition particularly under 'kinds of Tafsir.

This entire discussion is very useful but one cannot benefit from it without a sound knowledge of Arabic and its sciences. Hence, we do not see any advantage in presenting its translation here.

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legal differences as one of the conditions to forbid an evil (munkar) is that it should be an agreed upon evil and not one in which valid differences of opinion exist.

As our communities here in the West grow and develop, our scholars will be called upon to deal with a whole range of difficult and often unprecedented issues. They won't necessarily all agree but if we understand the above we will respect each other's differences and remain united as communities in spite of our differences.

The Red Heart

Abdurrahman Umar

It could have been the splash of red or the overabundance of hearts or the young man in a designer jeans that caught his eye, but Sheikh Hamaad stopped under the bold "Valentine's day Specials" banner, set his shopping basket on the floor and watched the young man battling to select an appropriate gift from the heaps of hearts, teddy bears and chocolates. Like a busy humming bird he flitted from shelf to shelf struggling to choose.

Sheikh Hamaad approached him as he stood scratching his head, "Asalaamu Alaikum, young man, seems like you're battling to make a choice."

"Eish, Moulana, this is more difficult than I thought. And lucky I only have to choose for two of them," he said, picking up another heart decorated teddy bear, examining the price and putting down with disappointment.

"For your sisters?" Sheikh asked, feigning innocence.

"Naah, just friends, you know how it is. You have to do these things" came the prompt reply.

Sheikh Hamaad remained silent and fixed his gentle gaze on the young man, something more than the loud Billabong T-shirt and hipster jeans told him that this young man had more than a spark of intelligence.

"Tell me, how many Valentine's gifts

do your sisters receive?"

"Hey, hey.... Moulana my sisters are not like that. They don't do this boyfriend thing. My sisters...they are pure," exclaimed the young man an angry frown crossing his face. "Just let the guy try and send my sisters one flower and I'll make him eat it. You don't know me!"

"Oh," said Sheikh Hamaad without any apology, "And your mother, how many Valentine's gifts does she get?"

The young man took a step back and glared at Sheikh Hamaad, "La howla wa...." his words swallowed by his anger, "how can you even say such things about my mother? My mother, she doesn't do this stuff. She is like an angel. She is pure.

Sheikh paused, waiting for the silence to absorb the boy's anger, then said, tauntingly, "So they don't receive any Valentine's gifts or have boyfriend's at all."

"I told you, Moulana, my family is pure and they don't do this junk stuff."

Knowing the moment was right Sheikh but forward his reasoning, "So you really don't like your sisters receiving these gifts or having boyfriends."

"No ways," came the emphatic reply, "not on my life"

"Then don't you think," Sheikh ventured, "that other people would also not like their sisters, mothers or aunts to receive such gifts. Just as you would like your sisters to

remain pure, they would also like their sisters to be pure?"

The young man dropped his head and shifted his feet nervously, "You have a point, Moulana. Didn't ever think of it like that. I don't want to say...but you are right. I shouldn't be polluting other people's family if I don't like my family to be polluted. This is all quite wrong isn't it?"

"Yes, it's quite wrong," without a hint of reprimand in his voice, "this is not our way."

"But," he asked, trying to conceal his embarrassment, "It's not like we doing anything serious. I mean it's only a gift. Not like we doing something physical...so it should be ok, no?"

Without disturbing his calmness, Sheikh Hamaad replied, "Do you like to go fishing?"

"Now you talking my language. Not a Sunday, not one, that we not by the dam," he replied his hands waving with excitement, "We sit the whole day me and my buddies. First we prime the place with milie bombs.

Just so the fish know we there. And they come, Moulana. They come for the bait. The whole lot, man...carpe, bass, barbell, you name it. But what's that go to do with buying gifts."

"When Shaytaan wants to trap someone," Sheikh replied serenely, "he first puts some bait. Innocent stuff like gifts, the odd sms, just a hello and then when the time is righthe will strike and how you say...you fall hook, line and sinker. Then he's got you and it's not long before he reels you in. So it starts with just a little bait. Just like the little gift that seems so innocent – it's the bait."

The young man beamed with this new found revelation and couldn't wait to ask, "You are so right! And you have an amazing way of getting a point across Moulana, you didn't just lecture me but you showed me how it is wrong. Thanks a mil. You must have learnt from a great teacher?"

"No doubt, I learnt from the best of all teachers," Sheikh answered, "In fact, the best of all mankind...The Noblest Messenger of Allah- Rasulallah sallahu alaihi wa salam"

Is Pleasure Happiness?

Pleasure and happiness are two such terms which, if properly understood, will answer many of our concerns. Pleasure is something very temporary and is linked to the physical body. Happiness is a lasting condition and is linked to our heart. The material things of this world can only give us temporary pleasure whereas lasting happiness lies in obedience to Allah Ta'ala and Rasulallah (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam). It is for this very reason that despite going on that five star overseas holiday, refurbishing the entire home, reading the bestselling novel or wearing the latest designer outfit, we are still unhappy. One may have felt some temporary pleasure in the above mentioned aspects but it was definitely far from any lasting happiness. We need to always keep in mind that the world and all that it contains cannot give us a moment of happiness. It is only the blessed commands of our beautiful Allah Ta'ala and the beautiful sunnats of our beloved Rasul (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) that will fill our empty lives with lasting happiness.

Reasoning Beyond Reason

V. A. Muhammad Ashrof

Bigotry in every form - religious, scientific or social, has to be opposed and counteracted. According to materialistic point of view, there is no design or purpose in creation. Hard scientific truth interpreted peripherally denies an ultimate significance and a sense of the worth of our own actions; it subverts values by insisting upon the contingency of all that we do. On the other hand Revealed Source of Knowledge urges man to think and to decipher the Signs of God so that man may realize his potential and fulfill the mission for which he was sent to this world as a vicegerent of God. Real devotion is not mere ritual but obedience to the will of God, following the Moral Law laid by Him, identifying oneself with the purpose which He has assigned to the universe (30:30, 2:177). This unconditional submission to the will of God, is Islam in its literal as well as theological sense. This brings the life of man in harmony with the law of the universe, which is the law of man's own nature.

The earth with its unique combination of star (i.e., sun), distance from the sun, atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere and other ingredients, seems uniquely designed as a unique abode for life. Evidence is accumulating that the entire universe is so constructed as to support life. The Anthropic Cosmological

Principle builds on the fundamental constants of nature and the basic structure of matter, showing that if these were not almost exactly as they are, life could not have existed in the cosmos. It suggests a connection between the existence of man and principles of physics that are supposed to have little bearing on biology. The cosmos is neither a self-operating, automated workshop as a group of ignoramus is wont to fancy. It is a well organized, superbly ordered system which is fully under the control of its Creator (13:2). The system regulating the universe testifies to the fact that an all-pervasive power controls it and that an immense wisdom permeates it. The structure of the universe clearly indicates that it will not last forever.

When that moment comes, the present world will vanish into nonexistence and will be replaced by another one (4:87, 23:16, 14:48). After contemplating the secrets of the universe and the order, precision and unity of

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purpose it includes, a truth-seeker feels the obligation of accepting the unicity of God (21:21 -22).

A firm belief in *Tawhid* arms the researcher with a comprehensive view of nature and no more sees it as a bundle of isolated pieces, rather he observes this interrelations and their common origin. He sees a unity behind this multiplicity. Every cause, which is not itself primary, is traceable to some other cause and this to some other and so on. But the series of this cause and effect taking its rise in this finite world cannot be infinite. It must terminate at some point. The final cause is, therefore, the Creator of the universe (Qur'an 53:41,57:3). The vast masses of matter rolling in space without disturbing each other's motion invoke contrivance and design. As Werner Heisenberg expressed his awe and wonder: 'I am strongly attracted by the simplicity and beauty of the mathematical schemes which nature presents us'. John Polkinghorne, the great physicist-philosopher, points out correctly: 'The creation is not just about some initiating instant; rather, it is a continuing act of God's will which maintains the cosmos moment by moment'.

God has created this universe including this earth with all the ingredients for sustenance of all living things in general and man in particular in a planned way. Man has to use these bounties in a proper way for better life with the only objective that could serve God better. Knowledge helps a man to visualize the Signs of God in His creation and the foundation of faith becomes more stable. Because of such an importance of knowledge, the Qur'an not only praises it but acquiring knowledge has been included in its code of life as an

obligatory duty (17:36, 67:23). Simply saying 'God is great' will not let one know the immensity of His greatness. To understand the greatness of God one must understand the vastness of His Kingdom, containing universes, heavenly bodies, the energy pattern, and the gravitational and repulsive forces that keeps the universe in balance by the will of God. The universe demonstrates an elegant inclination towards the improbable. Despite overwhelming odds against it, the cosmos manifests a bias towards life, the possibility for moral and aesthetic consciousness, and the stunning powers of symbolic communication in language and culture. And most improbable of all, we human beings are able to contemplate the cosmos, to learn about nature and ourselves, and to help direct the course of our destiny. The Qur'an argues that only men of knowledge will fear God (35:28,7:32). For such fear is akin to appreciation and love, - appreciation of all marvelous beauties of God's world, and love because of His Grace and kindness. The Qur'anic *ayat* (verses) decipher those cosmic *ayat* (signs) for people who otherwise were unable to read them due to their lack of orientation.

Science has removed the obscuring veil of mystery from many phenomena, much to the benefit of the human race; but it confronts us with a basic and universal mystery - mystery of existence in general and of the existence of mind in particular. It is the ultimate Revealed source, the Qur'an, which answers the questions such as: Why is the world-stuff what it is? Why does the world exist? Why does it have mental or subjective aspects as well as material or objective ones? The Qur'an is not basically a book of natural science but a

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Book of Guidance and Enlightenment, and wherever there is reference to the natural phenomena, it is meant to guide human being through them. Muslims consider the laws of nature not as independent laws, which go on their own way as if the world had an ontological independence of its own. He sees these laws as reflections of the Wisdom of God and also as a result of His Will. In a profound sense one might say that the whole of nature is *Muslim*, meaning that it obeys totally to the Will of God. All creatures follow the nature, which God has given them. A coconut tree always bears coconuts; a fish always remains true to the nature of the fish and a bird to that of the bird. It is only man who has been given the freedom of rebellion against his own primordial nature. Therefore, the created world or the world of nature is a constant reminder to man of what it means to be a perfect Muslim in the sense of being surrendered to God's Will. Concluding with the words of the great Islamic philosopher-theologian Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali that 'all miracles are natural and all nature is miraculous'.

Smile Away Sadness

A pleasant countenance is also one of the bounties of Allah. A simple way of removing ones grief and keeping happy is to smile at everyone. It is obvious that a woman is not permitted to smile at a strange man. In fact, smiling at strange men will only increase her grief. Put it to the test, smile at someone and automatically that person smiles back. The heart is almost delighted when a person with a happy countenance is seated near one. On the other hand everyone wishes to distance themselves from a person who is straight faced and grumpy. Smiling and cheerfulness is a very healthy form of exercise. It facilitates the digestion of the food. The happiness of the heart is as effective as good medication. If we want good for ourself, we will continue smiling. Together with a smiling face, let our eyes also smile. Be happy and make others happy as well. According to a consultant of Columbia University smiling has the following benefits:

- 1. Makes us Attractive to others: There is an automatic attraction to people who smile. (It is impermissible to do anything to attract a non mahram)*
- 2. Changes Moods: If you try, even when it's difficult, to smile when you are not feeling good, there is a chance it might improve your mood and change the way you are feeling.*
- 3. Contagious: Others will want to be with you. You will be helping others feel good.*
- 4. Relieves Stress: Stress does express itself right in our faces. When we smile, it can help us look better, less tired, less worn down.*
- 5. Boosts Immune System: Smiling can actually stimulate your immune response by helping you relax.*
- 6. Lowers Blood Pressure: When you smile, there is evidence that your blood pressure can decrease.*
- 7. Releases Endorphins and Serotonin: Research has reported that smiling realises endorphins, which are natural pain relievers, along with serotonin, which is also associated with fell good properties.*

Islamophobia or 9/11: Which Came First?

The framing of narratives and views about the Islamic world serves to present Islam as a threat to the West's security, supremacy, and values, and it persists despite the secular transformation (to various extents) of Western societies. The difference merely lies in the change of rhetoric, from Islam being a contrast to Christianity, to it being hostile, violent and incompatible with Enlightenment values, liberalism, democracy and so forth, writes :

ARWA AL-RIKABI

"Muslims hate our freedoms!" How many times have we heard this? It seems like Goebbels was right; repetition does work, and people will eventually believe anything given it is repeated enough. Many people in the West (and strangely in the Muslim world as well) have come to believe this simplistic explanation for what happened on a Tuesday morning 11 years ago in New York.

The common "wisdom" is that Muslims are a violent, irrational, prejudiced people who cannot and will not assimilate and accept Western values. And there is proof: they perpetrated the 9/11 attacks.

This logic is still being used despite the numerous holes in the official story and regardless of the fact that many experts and investigators are pointing the finger away from Muslims such as Gen. Albert Stubblebine, Col. Robert Bowman, Francesco Cossiga (Former Italian President), Paul Craig Roberts

and many others who are positioned to be well-informed.

Nonetheless, even if the official line was true, the question remains, does this sufficiently explain the anti-Islam trend in the Western world? Many analysts and think tanks answer with a resounding no. Even as early as 2001, for instance, the European Union Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) conducted a study on Islamophobia across 15 EU countries following the 9/11 attacks. In their report they clarified the following: "much of what occurred post 9/11 drew heavily upon pre-existent manifestations of widespread Islamophobic and xenophobic attitudes."

Why is this significant? The perception of 9/11 as the reason behind fear/hate of Islam creates an illusion: If only Muslims would stop terrorism, anti-Islamism would miraculously vanish. Far from accurate, such

belief in false causes will inevitably lead to faulty solutions; case in point: the Afghanistan and Iraq invasions.

Therefore, it would be beneficial to explore the roots of this anti-Islam ideology, and even though such complex issues are always multifaceted, with political, social, economic and historical aspects, [we] will attempt to highlight the most prominent factors in the Western fear/hate of Islam.

Shadows from the past?

All Muslims know this: Anti-Islamism started simultaneously with the religion's advent. In a sense, it's business as usual whether it is the Quraysh tribe, the Christian Western world, or our modern anti-Islam institutions, public figures and literature. When it comes to Islam and the West, it is no secret that tensions, prejudice, and conflict have characterized relations.

Throughout history, the conflict between Islam and the Christian West has manifested in different arenas, intensifying in particular areas called "frontiers". The result is a foundation of perspectives, images and concepts embedded in both sides' intellect and psyche. Arab Islamic conquests between the 7th and 10th centuries shocked the Christian

Edward Said (Palestinian American literary theorist) argues that the denigration of Islamic civilization is central to the concept of Western civilization.

and resentment between the two civilizations. This legacy permeated the Christian/Western self-concept, which is closely linked to the view of the Muslim "other". Edward

Said (Palestinian American literary theorist) argues that the denigration of Islamic civilization is central to the concept of Western civilization.

This derogatory image of Islam and Muslims was heavily promoted in the Middle Ages, forming a Western collective subconscious of superiority. With the technological progress in the 17th and 18th centuries, this sense of supremacy was reinforced, viewing the East as immobile and archaic, thus lending justification to the colonial project. In our modern times, the end of World War II marked the intensification of confrontations between the imperial European countries and their Muslim mandates with decolonization and independence struggles.

The artificial creation of Israel, its consequent occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, and the appearance of the US Navy in the Gulf are all examples of actions that further exacerbated the relations and gave way to violent confrontations that continue to this day with no end in sight yet. This state of affairs plays a deciding role in how the West perceives Islam and Muslims, and naturally in the way Muslims view the West as well.

Eugenio Chahuam, Professor of history at the University of Chili, writes of the Western strategic need to portray Islam and Muslims as antithetical to Western civilization: **"The longstanding negative mental construct the West has of Islam and the Arabs has been intensified by the determining role of the media these days, especially when they are in the service of colonial interests, military and economic expansionist ideologies, or a vehicle for the promotion of Western values, which necessarily calls for the demonization of the Other. In this sense Islam gets converted into the basis of anti-Westernism, anti-modernism and anti-civilization all in one."**

This framing of narratives and views about the Islamic world serves to present

Islam as a threat to the West's security, supremacy, and values, and it persists despite the secular transformation (to various extents) of Western societies. The difference merely lies in the change of rhetoric, from Islam being a contrast to Christianity, to it being hostile, violent and incompatible with Enlightenment values, liberalism, democracy and so forth.

This paves the way for solidifying the case for racism, xenophobia, wars on Muslim countries and the "benevolent" spreading of democracy and Western values. It also provides a rationale for maintaining US (the current leader of the West) hegemony over the world

and sustaining permanent military presence as Ralph Schoenman (American author and commentator) says. **Since the justification for the constant preparation for war and the maintenance of huge missile and nuclear capacity was removed with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the new rationale became the "war on terror," which necessitates demonizing Islam and Muslims.**

This "war on terror" was ideologically cemented before 9/11 when, for example, well-known fellows and directors of the Project for a New American Century (PNAC), such as William Kristol and Thomas Donnelly, published extensively on issues of Al-Qaeda and war on terrorism. Schoenman goes on to say that perpetual war on the people of the region (the Middle East), the seizing of their oil, the destruction of their sovereignty is rationalized by means of anti-Islam rhetoric: "a model of what has been done in Iraq, a model of what has been done in Afghanistan. That's the ideological content of imperialism at the moment." Similarly in his book

"Islamophobia: the Ideological Campaign Against Muslims," Stephen Sheehi contends that the many modalities of Islamophobia operate on the assumption that Muslims suffer from a culture deficit, preventing them from progress, democracy and human rights.

And while this assumption originated in the colonial era (or even before), Sheehi

The Westerners seem to forget that their history and recent past does not qualify them to give lessons to anybody. Those who systematically denigrate Islam should be reminded that, in this context, there have never been bloody inquisitions such as ours, nor genocides of entire people such as those of the American Indians and the Aborigines, nor the collective extermination of an entire people of the magnitude of Hitler's holocaust, nor the use of lethal weapons as in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. (Juan Goytisolo)

demonstrates that it was refurbished as a viable explanation for Muslim resistance to economic and cultural globalization and honed into the empirical basis for interventionist foreign policy. Such historical and political factors are key in understanding contemporary attacks on Islam and Muslims from some Westerners, though those "some" are an influential lot.

Ironically, Juan Goytisolo (Spanish writer) provides a sobering response from within the Western legacy: "The Westerners seem to forget that their history and recent past does not qualify them to give lessons to anybody. Those who systematically denigrate Islam should be reminded that, in this context, there have never been bloody inquisitions such as ours, nor genocides of entire people such as those of the American Indians and the Aborigines, nor the collective extermination of an entire people of the magnitude of Hitler's holocaust, nor the use of lethal weapons as in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

[Courtesy: Arab News]

Islam and Muslims: Same-Sex Marriages

Physical intimacy is not simply a biological action and reaction. It is bigger than that. It is more about the value system that one prefers and adopts because it affects not only the individual, family and the society but human civilizations and cultures as well as the rise and fall of nations.

Dr. Aslam Abdullah

On the one hand there are Freudian followers who argue that civilization is a by-product of repressed sexuality and on the other hand are those who in the words of J.D. Unwin believe that "in human records there is no instance of a society retaining its energy after a complete new generation has inherited a tradition which does not insist on pre-nuptial and post-nuptial continence."

Unwin, a sociologist at Cambridge University, published "Sex and Culture" in 1934. He studied 86 societies and found no exceptions to the rule that the cultures flourished during eras that valued sexual fidelity and discipline. He demonstrated through empirical data that whenever sexual mores loosened, the societies declined, and whenever they followed rigid sexual discipline they rose again.

In our recent history, the fall of the Soviet society offers a recent example where Vladimir Lenin espoused a "glass of water" theory about sex, explaining that sexual desire is just like desire for food or water. The

theory collapsed, and with it collapsed the Soviet society.

However, new interpretations are being offered to explain the Freudian ideas. Barbara Ehrenreich, a widely read and award-winning author of 21 books, wrote not very long ago that sex, preferably among affectionate and consenting adults, belongs squarely in the realm of play. This "demoralization" of sex is promoting a new sexual ethics that legitimizes and justifies everything in the name of pleasure and freedom.

What was presented as his personal opinion by President Barack Obama about same-sex marriage is an effort to legitimize the de-moralization of sex to develop a new culture where every sexual activity is fine as long as individuals engaged in the act have their consent and pleasure.

His perspective is based on a world view, a world view that Islam does not share. **Islam regards physical intimacy as an act of responsibility between a man and woman within the confines of contractual marriage.**

Islam, on the basis of its value system, takes a strong stand on pre-marital and post-marital physical relations as well as on physical relations between people of the same gender. Islam calls for sexual discipline in society and recommends restrictions in sexual behavior to help people channel their energy in matters that are fundamental in preserving the interests of people.

However, Islam does recognize the rights of people to reject this world view and acknowledges the freedom of people to adopt an alternative perspective with the admonition that people are responsible for the consequences of their action in the eyes of God.

Marriage is an institution promoted and protected by all religions. Islam recognizes it as part of the revealed knowledge, a knowledge that is given by the divine to help human beings find their way to a better life in this as well as in the hereafter. Obviously, those who do not believe in the idea of divine revelation would find it hard to accept this notion. But this is what Islam expects its adherents to accept.

Accepting an alternative definition of marriage is like changing the revelation and the divine guidance, an act that is not supported by Islam.

Obviously, Obama and those who want to demoralize sexuality and promote the idea of extending the term "marriage" to same-sex unions would not find support among the followers of Islam, because Muslims would view it a challenge to their own value system.

They can give whatever term they want to this type of relationship, but when

they would refer to that as a marriage, it would be seen conflicting with Islamic value system. This does not mean that people who do not view Islamic value system should be discriminated and denied their basic rights including the rights and privileges in matters of health and education and opportunities. If Islam recognizes the right of people to reject

Marriage is an institution promoted and protected by all religions. Islam recognizes it as part of the revealed knowledge, a knowledge that is given by the divine to help human beings find their way to a better life in this as well as in the hereafter. Obviously, those who do not believe in the idea of divine revelation would find it

the idea of God as the creator and master of the universe, it also recognizes the rights of people to follow an alternative value system.

Muslims owe it to ourselves and our future generation an education that promotes the value system that we deem right for ourselves and others. We must speak out on this important issue to let the people know about what we stand for.

Our political pundits have already presented the Obama perspective as an electoral and political issue. It is much more than that. It is about the value system that we adopt as our guiding principle. It is our right to share our value system with others without being intimidated and trying to be politically correct. If others have a right to promote their ideas based on Freudian ideas, we Muslims also have the right to present our perspectives based on revealed knowledge.

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Back to School

The heart being closer and better linked to physical hearing than to sight, the effect of what is heard transmits quicker to the heart than does what is seen, and the hearing of a beautiful, melodious, and apposite sound may lead one to swoon, which is not likely to occur upon seeing beautiful sights.

Umme Ammarah

Schools are about to open and you're probably feeling excited and maybe a little sad that holidays are just about over. Back to School comes with a barrage of projects, homework, sports practice and of course a day filled with pickups and drop offs.

Back to school time also means adjustments for children and families; the first day of grade one, new schools, new classrooms, new teachers and for adults sometimes new jobs.

Change is sometimes exciting and sometimes frightening, but this can also be an opportunity to set new goals. It's a new year, 1434 of the Hijri Calendar and each year goes so fast like a quick turn of a page. This is why planning and setting goals is so important. As Muslims all our plans should be aimed at achieving our final goal which is to please our Creator Allah.

He who fails to plan, plans to fail!. Here are a few points to keep in mind when planning for this year.

- Niyah: Our intention before doing anything is very important. The Messenger of

Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has said "Every deed is judged by its intention." (Bukhari) Plan and Do lots of good but it must be ONLY to please our Allah.

- Dua: Everyone of us needs to ask and pray to Allah daily for all our needs. A very beautiful dua that The Beloved Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) made whenever he left his home:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ، تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللَّهِ، اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ أَنْ

أُضِلَّ أَوْ أَضَلَّ، أَوْ أَزِلَّ أَوْ أُزِلَّ، أَوْ أَظْلِمَ أَوْ أُظْلَمَ،

أَوْ أَجْهَلَ أَوْ يُجْهَلَ عَلَيَّ - رواه أبو داود

"In the name of Allah, I trust in Allah, oh Allah I seek refuge in You from straying or being led astray or against slipping or being caused to slip or doing injustice or injustice being done on me or doing wrong or having wrong done to me." (Abu Dawud)

- Make mashwera/shura (mutual consultation): All activities whether big or small should be discussed. Sit with the family daily at a mutually convenient time and plan our

activities. See where we are and where we want to go this year. Check our level of Deen and plan to improve upon it. Discuss our day to day affairs. We may even discuss and allocate turns for house chores, or even who sits where in car, etc...this can save a lot of time and arguments early in the morning. To make Mashwera is a sunnah and will bring great barakah (blessings) in our home. It will also grant us an opportunity to plan our lives Islamically.

- Make attainable goals: Sets goals realistically and intelligently. Set goals that are attainable. Most important Make Deen the priority in our lives. Monitor your progress and place reminders and back your resolutions with planning.
- Family time: Your children need your presence more than your presents. Set aside quality time for them. Be interactive. Listen to them and pay attention to them when they call on you. Engage them in Taleem (Educational programs), for the smaller ones also read Islamic stories and even make it a practice to discuss the day's events with them. There is NO SUBSTITUTE for parental guidance and supervision.
- Homework: Turn off the T.V, BBM, Facebook and other social networks...put away your concerns and concentrate on being a parent. Look through your child's homework diary as your child's teacher uses this as a main connection between you and the school. Don't do homework for them, Do it with them!
- Daily routines: Let your child be involved in the small things like packing lunch, laying out clothes (uniforms) etc this teaches them responsibility. Start bed time routines a week before school starts. Ensure punctuality in Salaah (prayers). Read your duas together in the morning and evening. Make going to and from school educational by reciting duas collectively in the car. In a short time they will memorize the duas of travelling.

- Educational goals: Plan big! Enroll your kids for the best available Islamic Education...enroll your kids for Hifdh (memorisation of the Qur'an). You may have also realised how weak your Islamic knowledge is. Make time to attend some Islamic classes, or sit for Taleem Halqa at the Masjid. Ladies can join the weekly taleem (educational) programs in their area. Consult with your local Islamic Scholars regarding suitable Islamic educational programs.

- Identify your career goals: Choose your curriculum carefully and wisely. Maybe you always talked about making the career switch to a more Halaal source of income or adjusting your work times for salaah with jamaat (congregation). You may need to adjust your times so as to spend some quality time with your family. Whatever your reasons maybe, identify a career that will benefit your family both in this world and the aakhirah (hereafter).

- Wake up every day with a purpose: We wake up often knowing we should be doing something important today, but have failed to plan! Prepare for our higher purpose otherwise our day will become less productive.

- Uniforms and Stationery: Make sure uniforms are purchased timorously and that it conforms with sharia (Islamic requirements). If your kids encounter any resistance from the educational institution regarding their Islamic attire or other Islamic practices then be diplomatic and discuss and resolve the matter with management respectfully. Also ensure that you obtained a list of stationery required early so that it could be budgeted for and purchased well before hand.

- Lunch boxes, breakfasts and diets: Research shows that breakfast eaters have better concentration and muscle coordination. Kids need healthy lunch box snacks that maintain blood glucose levels

which help concentration, so keep away from fuzzy drinks, chips and chocolates for lunch. A good idea is to plan a lunch box menu for the week.

- Take account of yourself daily: We need to be alert of our development so that we progress. Therefore we need to daily reflect on our progress or a lack of it. The Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has said "the feet of the son of Adam will not move on the Day of Judgement until he is asked about five things: how he spent his life, how he spent his youth, from where he acquired his wealth and how he spent it, and what he did with his knowledge." So we need to be conscious on how we profitably use every second of our lives.

Remember that a Muslim sets goals that are in harmony with our accountability in the Hereafter... so take pen to paper and plan for a better life, seeking Allah's Guidance, Help and Forgiveness. The Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasalam) has encouraged us to make the following du'a "Oh our Lord, give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and save us from the torment of the fire."

You will be Counted amongst those whom you are Inclined to!

Nabi Loot (AS) was amongst those personalities who were divinely selected to receive prophethood and guide their nations to Allah Ta'ala. He was sent to a people who had become void of all natural and instinctive tendencies. They refused to take heed to the repeated calls of guidance given to them by Nabi Loot (AS) and their depraved behaviour was worse than that of even animals. They became inhuman, losing all moral values. Nabi Loot (AS) continued to advise them for a long time. Eventually when they transgressed all limits, they "invited" such a punishment which was to be as severe as their crime.

Hence Nabi Loot (AS) was instructed to leave his village along with his family members after nightfall, for by morning a severe punishment was to befall them. They were all commanded not to look back even once when the punishment has commenced, so as not to show any pity or inclination towards the evildoers. Everyone complied with this command, except his wife. As soon as the punishment commenced and she began to hear the painful cries of her people, she turned around and exclaimed with grief and sorrow: "O my People!" Hence she was also destroyed along with the others in that very punishment. (Roohul Ma'aani vol. 6, pg. 306)

Lesson: If merely being inclined to those who are sinful is such a severe act, what will be the effect and result of casually associating with people involved in sin? This brings destruction in this world and the next.

Indeed, one should pity the sinful in that they are heading towards hell. Hence one should make du'aa for them and make an effort to bring them onto the right path.

Preparing for The Realities of Marriage

Munira Lekovic Ezzeldine

How ludicrous would it be for a person to hold a grand opening for a new business then leave for vacation the next day or go to a job interview without having read the job description? Equally absurd is the way many people get married each year without any knowledge of or preparation for the realities of marriage. Couples make elaborate wedding and honeymoon plans but none for a life together. Additionally, many are looking for spouses to marry without looking at their responsibilities in a marriage.

Based on fairy tales spun by the media and pop culture, young women dream of finding their Prince Charming and living happily ever after. We think that once we are married, everything will just sort itself out. Some of us think that marriage is a solution or an escape or that our spouses will "complete us." Compounding this are values of mainstream society and their effect on the psyche of adolescents. Years of struggling with issues of dating and pre-marital sex in school as well as constant bombardment through films and television of unrealistic images of what love, sex and marriage are have affected our outlook on marriage and the opposite sex. So, when the time comes to

get married, we often carry unrealistic expectations of what being married will be like and how our spouses will be.

Many young Muslims are not prepared for marriage and have not cultivated the skills to create a lasting relationship. While the general American population has the world's highest divorce rate, 48.6 percent, Muslims in the United States come in not too far behind at 33 percent. One in three Muslims marriage here will end in divorce- not surprising considering we are living in a "divorce culture" where independence and individual happiness often come first. When the marriage does not fulfill the individual's needs, the marriage is questioned. Terms such as

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"starter marriage" are becoming more common in the Muslim community as divorces among newlywed couples, after only months of being married, increase. Furthermore, couples in multicultural marriages are experiencing complex issues because of their background differences and often find little support from their families and communities because of certain cultural ideas about marriage. These couples often become resigned to ending the marriage. Newlyweds sometimes don't readily acknowledge that they must work on the marriage for it to survive. Many divorce when marriage is not what they expected or harder than they imagined. Divorce is now considered a plausible option among young Muslims, unlike the generation before them. Now, more than ever, we should prepare ourselves and our children for the realities of marriage. Preparing for marriage is as important as having an accurate road map before driving cross country.

Preparing for marriage is more than searching for a spouse; it begins with discovering who you are as a person.

Undergo Self-Reflection

Preparing for marriage is more than searching for a spouse; it begins with discovering who you are as a person and what you will bring to a marriage. Identify what innate beliefs you hold because these are the things that are least likely to change about you. Your values and beliefs are your compass in life and will determine your lifestyle and the choices you make. Understanding what is important to you clarifies the type of person with whom you will be compatible. **Reflection is a process of self-growth that can be difficult, but it shows maturity and a true understanding of the intensity of marriage.** Ask yourself these questions: "What is my personal set of life values?" "What are my fears?" "What are my strengths?" "What are my weaknesses?" Identifying your flaws is

equally important because it provides you with personal goals for self-improvement. It will also provide your future spouse insight into your weaknesses, as well as the things that may never change about you.

Establish Compatibility

Before you can determine the type of person you are compatible with, you first need to understand what compatibility is. It doesn't mean you will be exactly like your spouse, but rather, that you share many similarities and hold mutual respect for your differences. It is important to find someone who shares your core values and beliefs and whose long-term goals correspond with yours. Having complementary

values and goals helps married couples grow closer to Allah because they will constantly strive in the same direction and have fewer disagreements in their marriage. True and realistic love will be found in the everydayness of marriage when sharing common interests and doing interesting things together. But, be careful if you find yourself making excuses for incompatibility or you start believing that the other person will change once you're married. People rarely change. Qualities in a potential spouse that do not align with your core values and beliefs are red flags because that person is about as unlikely to change as you are. When making a decision about an element of incompatibility, ask yourself; "Can I maintain my beliefs while married to this person even if he/she doesn't change?" Acknowledge that you simply can't control your spouse's way of being. Being able to maintain mutual respect for your differences will likely prevent many tensions in the marriage.

Preparing for marriage is more than searching for a spouse; it begins with discovering who you are as a person.

To be concluded.

Dealing with Loss

*Explanation, benefits and rewards of the statement:
'Inna lilLahi wa inna ilayhi raji`oon'*

Abida A. Mustafa

Whether through death, loss, or disagreement, when we lose someone or something dear to us, we become overwhelmed by the pangs of grief; the pain of loss feels overbearing as though it would never end. Having to face the consequences of detachment can be a traumatic experience. All we can think of is the pain enshrouding our hearts and consuming our minds. With tears streaming down our faces, our faces contorted with emotion and our hearts too feeling as though a heavy burden has landed-the misery takes a hold of us and, blinded by our tears, we fail to see the light.

But there is a light; a light to behold even in the darkest corner of the earth, even in the murkiest depths of the ocean. We don't have to drown in the quicksand of trauma. Nothing and nobody by Allah's Will has the ability to overpower the underlying depth of:

Inna lilLahi wa inna ilayhi raji`oon.

*Verily, unto God do we belong and, verily,
unto Him we shall return.*

When we actually give some time

and thought to reflect upon the words which constitute this statement, we come to realize that there is an extremely powerful and truthful message behind it-an answer to all our questions, grief and emotions.

This profound phrase captures the essence of our entire existence; it encapsulates where we came from and also where we are headed: Allah.

Understanding the statement has the ability to eradicate regrets and past events. It holds the key to finding contentment during those times when we think, 'Why did that have to happen?' We can become immersed in questioning, and drown in the misery of relentless searching for the answer...Or we can discover patience by asserting that regardless of whatever has occurred, we will indeed return to Allah .

When we truly understand the meaning of inna lilLahi wa inna ilayhi raji`oon, we find that no sadness will last forever, and that we shouldn't destroy ourselves by holding even the slightest bitterness or anger within us. By understanding that Allah is the One, the only One to Whom we belong, we

should be able to move on from painful moments in our life (which we should assert as not being able to occur except that Allah willed for it to be) and strive for our goal of meeting Him.

There should be no space for bitterness or anger when one truly comprehends the deep truthfulness of this phrase, and we should be able to forgive those who have intentionally or unintentionally wronged us because we know that Allah alone holds all sovereignty and that even our emotions belong to Him. By forgiving ourselves and others, by showing *sabr* (patience) in the face of death or loss, and by aspiring for Allah's Mercy and Judgment, we open ourselves to a whole new level of understanding ourselves in the context of space and time. We can understand by His Will that Allah is all that matters, and everything else in this *dunya* (current life, world) is a means for us to reach Him because we want to be able to See Him at the end, for without a doubt we will have to return to Him.

'Inna' meaning 'verily' tells us that with certainty we belong to Allah, that is, He Created us and bestowed on us our beginning without a doubt. 'Inna' occurs twice in this phrase, providing an emphasis on the certainty of Allah's Ever-Lasting existence, emphasizing the certainty of our beginning AND our end. So Allah is Al-Awwal (the Beginning, the First) and Al-Akhir (the End, the Last). Al-Awwal ul Akhir (The Ever-Lasting) is the source of light in every single moment of despair, hardship, and difficulty where our tears and grief blind us. Instead of allowing our hearts and souls to become blinded by the darkness of sadness, we can train ourselves in times of positive feelings and negative feelings to find contentment in Allah's Decree, for nothing happens without His decreeing it.

Allah tells us in Surah Baqarah, verses 155-156:

And certainly, We shall test you with some-

thing of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits, but give glad tidings to As-Sabirun (the patient). Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: "Verily! To Allah we belong and verily, to Him we shall return." (Qur'an 2:155-156)

This is our Lord, the One Who Created us when we were nothing, telling us in His Divine Book-tanzil (sent down) to humans and jinn as a *dhikr* (reminder) - that He will definitely test us with trials, but that He has Promised reward for those who are patient.

And how do we be 'patient' in the face of turmoil?

Just as Allah has created tests involving struggle, risk and loss, Allah has also told us how to approach these tests; He has revealed to us that the patient are those who, when afflicted with calamity, say, "Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji`oon." In His infinite Mercy, Allah has allowed for relief to accompany difficulty. This also shows us that the losses and difficulties won't last forever, and that everything which we regard as 'good' or 'bad' in the *dunya* is of temporal nature.

No pain or grief or disagreement can last forever, but with certainty, Allah lasts forever and from Him we came to be and it is to Him we will with certainty return.

This means that the events which take place in this *dunya* are mere moments. We become so consumed by our grief that we fail to see that al-Qahhar (the Conqueror, the Ever-Dominating) has provided us with light and that even in the most difficult times, Allah provides ease with hardship.

Upon coming to terms with the truth and power imbued in *inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji`oon* and proceeding to integrate this magnificent statement into each moment of your daily life, when you are faced with any minor or major losses, you will see a whole new world of contentment and serenity opened up to you, *insha'Allah* (God willing).

The trials faced by Umm Salamah

(RA), teach us important lessons about how to handle tests, loss and situations in which we do not get something we had hoped for. Her approach towards calamity shows us what it means to be patient in the face of adversity and to recognize that Allah will always restore what He takes away from a patient believer with something better.

All is NOT lost.

The beautiful way in which she approached her afflictions reminds us to rely on Allah and to never despair for He is Able to do anything at any moment; Allah is our Provider, and when we are struck by loss, and things don't go the way we want them to, Allah is Ever-Watching and He is the Best of planners. Umm Salamah's first husband was Abu Salamah (RA), who returned to Allah during Jumada Al-Akhir in the fourth year after Hijra, after receiving wounds in the Battle of Uhud. His passing from this dunya resulted in grief for she had loved him sincerely; nonetheless, Umm Salamah (RA) did not fail to turn to Allah. Heartbroken by his departure, she remained steadfast in her relationship with Allah and supplicated to Him for our Rabb (Lord) is Al Mughni-the Enricher, the One Who satisfies the necessities of His Creation. In her grief-stricken state as she wondered who could possibly be better than Abu Salamah, she supplicated:

inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji`oon; Allahumma ajirni fi musibati wa akhlif li khayran minha
'Verily, we belong to Allah and verily, unto Him shall we return. O Allah! Reward me for the calamity that has befallen me and grant me better than it.'

Allah then answered her du`aa (supplication) by giving her the Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) himself! In Shawwal of the same year in which Abu Salamah (RA) returned to Allah, the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) married her. Thus, because of her patience and acknowl-

edgement that we belong to Allah and unto him we return, Allah compensated her with reward and recompensed her loss. Allah alleviated her and answered her question, "Who is better than Abu Salamah?" by blessing her with our beloved Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

This legacy speaks volumes of the reward and relief Allah grants to those who are patient, and those who have tawwakul (reliance) on Allah to replace what is taken away from the believer who lives with patience. What we are provided with is His to give and take, and it is in acknowledging that He is the Owner of all that we are able to see through loss and hardship, and witness blessings.

If you are facing any trial in the present, know that Allah provides ease and that the cure is with you by Allah's Will. Reflect on, and realize that none other than Allah Knows best about what adversity or struggle you are going through for Allah is the One Who tested you with such, and on no soul does He place more than that which it can bear-Allah is closer to you than your jugular vein, than your own self, and so He Knows what you are feeling. The next time you are faced with a grief or loss, or even happiness and blessing from Allah, by uttering, comprehending and believing that our final destination is Allah - the end is essential for our eternal bliss-through making Allah the means to Him, glimpses of light make their way through your feeling of loss.

For each time that you submit to Allah alone by not only uttering inna liLahi wa inna ilayhi raji`oon but by understanding it and feeling its essence in your heart and limbs through acknowledging Allah's Power, you will not only be rewarded insha'Allah but Allah will return His favors and blessings upon you for submitting to His Will with sabr (patience). Like Umm Salamah (RA), place

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Muhammad (SAW) - The Ideal Prophet

The Practicality in the Holy Prophet's Life

Maulana Syed Sulaiman Nadvi (RA)

The Prophet of Islam (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) commended frugal living and contentment. It has been stated earlier that spoils, tithes, and poor-dues came to Madinah laden on pack-animals from every nook and corner of the country. But the ruler of Arabia more often had nothing in his house, not even enough to make the two ends meet. Sayyida Ayesha (RA) related after his death: "The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) left this world but he never had a full meal twice in a day." She adds that the day he died, she had nothing with her except a handful of oats. His coat of mail had already been pawned with a Jew. He used to say: "Son of Adam has no right to possess anything except a small hut to live, a pair of clothes to wear, simple bread to eat, and water to fill his belly." He perhaps alluded to his own way of living in this manner, for he had a mud house with only one room, thatched with date-leaves and camels' hair. Sayyida Ayesha (RA) says that she never had to keep the Prophet's (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) dresses, meaning thereby that the clothes put on by him were the only one he had at that time. Once a beggar came to complain

that he was hungry. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) sent word to his wives but none had anything to offer except water.

Abu Talha (RA) relates that once he saw the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) lying in the mosque. He was, at the time, hungry and restless. Some of his companions, on another occasion, complained of hunger to the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and showed him the slab of stone each had tied to his stomach to mitigate the aching void. They found the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) still more famished for he had tied two slabs of stones to his stomach. At times his voice showed that he was starving. Another time, when he had had nothing to eat for quite a few days, he went to see Abu Ayyub Ansari (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) who immediately brought some fresh dates and got some meals cooked for him. Before taking anything brought to him, he sent a bread with some meat to Sayyida Fatima (RA) who had not taken anything for the last two days.

Sayyida Fatima (RA) and her two sons, Sayyiduna Hasan and Sayyiduna Husain (RA) were deeply loved by the Prophet

(Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), but he never pampered them with costly clothes and jewellery. Once he saw a gold necklace round the neck of his daughter. He admonished her saying, "Fatima, do you want the people to say that Muhammad's daughter is bedecked with the necklace of fire?" Sayyida Fatima (RA) at once took off the necklace and sold it to liberate a slave with its price. Similarly, on another occasion, he got his beloved wife Sayyida Ayesha (RA) to cast off gold bracelets she had been putting on. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) often used to remark: "Man needs only that much of the world as a wayfarer requires petty cash to meet his urgent needs." This was not a piece of advice meant for others. Some of his companions who were pained to see the marks of a rough mat on his body, offered to provide him soft bedding, but he dismissed their suggestion with the remark: "What have I to do with the world? Only that much is lawful for me as a rider going on his errand requires rest under a shady tree."

The entire belongings of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) in 9 A.H/ 630C.E., when the frontiers of the Islamic State had extended from Yemen to the borders of Syria, consisted of an undergarment which hung down a few inches below his knees, a rough bedstead, a pillow filled with the bark of date, a handful of barley, a hide-skin, and a water pail. This was all he possessed, and such was his contentment with bare subsistence!

Many a preacher can be seen exhorting others to become noble-minded and eschew selfishness, but does anyone himself observe that golden rule? Nevertheless, here is an exalted example of one who preached this lofty ideal not through words but by his deeds. All of us know how Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) adored his favorite daughter, Fatima (RA), but this very beloved daughter had to live in such reduced

circumstances that she had developed blisters through driving the hand-mill and drawing water from the well. Distressed and pinched by her privations, she approached her father one day to ask for a maid servant. The reply she got was, "Fatima, my daughter, no provision has yet been made for the poor Suffah companions. How can your request be granted?" Another reply ascribed to him is: "The orphans of Badr had made a request before you did."

A companion presented a shawl to the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) at a time when he needed one. A man present on the occasion remarked, "How fine!" The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) presented the shawl to him instantly. Another time, a companion had to celebrate certain function but he had nothing to entertain his guests. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) directed him to go and take a basketful of flour from Sayyida Ayesha (RA) although nothing else was available for his own household on that day. Once he came to Sayyida Ayesha (RA) with his Suffah companions and asked her to bring whatever food was available. A few breads, some soup of dates, and a cup of milk were all that was available in his house to entertain the guests. This is how the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) taught the lesson of self-denial and contentment to others.

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your trust in Him to get you through any manifestation of loss, however slight or major you may consider it to be; trust Allah to answer your supplications, for no du`aa is lost.

No distress or loss is too difficult to deal with when we know Allah, and place our trust in Him to get us through everything, whether we consider the moments as good or bad. No distress or loss is too difficult to deal with when we acknowledge and apply that we certainly belong to Allah, and we certainly return to Him.