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**EDITORIAL***All thanks for Almighty, the most Merciful and Exalted***Rabi-ul-Awwal - Have We Truly Lived It?**

The month of Rabi-ul-Awwal has ended. The last day of the month in which the bearer of the final and the ultimate message had come to this world, has dawned. Now for the arrival of this blessed month again, we have to wait for eleven months, and only Allah knows how many of us would be dead by then. Before the other people settle their accounts, let us resolve our own.

Our Master (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) would establish salaah with determination; is it, that we left any in this month? Apart from fardh (compulsory) salaah he would be punctual in offering tahajjud and other supererogatory prayers; did we also lend our attention towards the sunnah and optional prayers? For him, the most interesting thing in the world was salaah; did we absorb our hearts in them? The most pleasant things for him were ruku and sujood; did we also extract some fervor from them? He would offer salaah as if in an obvious presence of Lord; do we experience a vivid thought of this kind when we pray? He would cry and weep during the salaah; did our eyes ever also turn moist because of Allah's fear? During salaah, he would get totally relieved from the worldly worries; did we, for even a little time, manage salvation from temptations (waswasa)?

Our Master (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), who rose in the blessed month of Rabiul Awwal, used to execute jobs of others than asking anyone to do his; had we such a tawfeeq ever? He would always treat people gently and affectionately; did we behave like this? With everyone he would deal humbly; did we stoop our hearts? He, in his assembly, would never talk or complain against anyone;

till how long did we hold back our tongues from backbiting and loose talk? Friend or foe, known or unknown, he would serve everyone; did we even try to obey the merciful Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)? He would always eat less and at times remain hungry; have we been able to control our zestful appetite? The dress that he wore used to be extremely simple; did we begin to consider our dress formalities immaterial? He loved to associate with poor people; is it that we hesitate to keep contact with them? Instead of proud family background he laid total stress on good deeds and quality character; have we been able to inculcate such an enthusiasm in our hearts? The worry of money would never touch him; have we liberated ourselves from such concerns? He would devote his time to looking after others and the welfare of the people; have we, apart from the self care, separated some amount of time for anything else?

In case we have not paid attention to any of these things in the least, then the arrival or the departure of Rabi-ul-Awwal is alike to us. For we - the coming of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) went futile, and the guiding radiance remained unproductive. Rains did come but we left our lands dry; winds blew but we didn't let our flower bloom; the sun shined but we closed our eyes. Whose fault is it? Who is to be held responsible? Who is going to be enquired about all these things - we or somebody else? And when we will be questioned about them, are we having any suitable answers? Will any of our excuses help us that time? Do we possess any vindications? If today we address these questions superficially by regarding them

unnecessary owing to the undoubted discretion that we have, what will happen tomorrow when we will be left powerless, when the curtain of negligence will be removed, when we won't be able to laugh or joke? What at the time - when everything will be

laid bare; when no materialistic power will be of any help; when no opportunity will be left for recompense; when self-helplessness will be completely evident. At that time may Allah, the most Merciful and Beneficent, relieve us of our issues. Amin.

### **Earliest Known Chinese Translation of the Qur'an Discovered**

Muslim culture researchers in China's northwestern Gansu province said they have found the earliest Chinese version of the Qur'an, a handwritten copy completed in 1912.

Muslim culture researchers in China's northwestern Gansu province said they have found the earliest Chinese version of the Qur'an, a handwritten copy completed in 1912.

Before the 1912 version was found, experts believed the earliest complete Chinese version of the Qur'an was the one produced and published in Beijing in 1927.

The newly discovered manuscript translation, found among old archives by researchers with the Muslim Culture Institute of Lanzhou University, is believed to have been translated into Chinese by Sha Zhong and Ma Fulu, two noted imams and Arabic calligraphers in Lanzhou, said Ding Shiren, head of the institute.

Sha and Ma began translating the Qur'an in 1909 and completed their work in 1912, Ding said.

Sha then copied out the Chinese text and made three handwritten books, which were widely used in Lanzhou.

Ding said two other Chinese versions of the Koran were finished in Gansu in the 20th century. Ding and his colleagues are still making a comparative study of the three versions.

He said the translation by Sha and Ma is faithful to the Arabic version, though parts of the Chinese text used Lanzhou dialect.

Experts say Islam was introduced to China in the Tang Dynasty (618-907). But early Chinese Muslim scholars did not translate the Koran, out of fear they might misinterpret its text, Ding said.

Sources: "Earliest Chinese version of Koran found in NW China" Xinhua December 17, 2011

"Earliest Chinese version of Quran found" China Daily December 17, 2011

Source: Islam Today



# Question Answer

## Question.

Did the preaching remained continued in the time of break in revelation? (فترة الوحي) Someone has expressed the opinion that it was just a period of training. The order of preaching has been given after passing over the period.

## Answer:

There was a closure of revelation, after the start of the revelation, for three years. This period of time is named as Fatratul-wahi (Break of revelation). Preaching and calling up the people towards the religion (Da'wah wa Tabligh) was not ordained up to this time. After passing-over this time of break in the revelation, the first verses of Surah al-Mudathir were revealed and the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was ordered to warn the people and to preach them. The interpretation of the incident with 'training' by someone is according to his own approach.

## Question.

How can we make a dumb person recite Shahaadah? What are the necessary steps to be taken?

## Answer:

This methodology will not work. He should pronounce his affirmation of Tawhid and Risalah (Faith in oneness of Allah Almighty and the prophet-hood of the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) by his gestures. He will become a Muslim after doing so.

## Question.

Can any Muslim who is an observant of Saum and Salah (Fasting and prayer) can convert a non-Muslim to Islam? If yes what is

its procedure?

## Answer:

Ask the non-Muslim to recite the Kalima Shahadat *أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وأشهد أن محمدا رسول الله* and ask him to repent on his past life of disbelieving. Further he needs that he must be taught the necessary Injunctions of Islam.

## Question.

What is the distinction between Din and Madhhab? Moreover, Islam is a Din or Madhhab?

## Answer:

Din and Madhhab both words have same meanings. Some people are trying to establish a difference between the two, which is in fact a wrong notion.

## Question.

Someone has said that it is not good to pray for the forgiveness of Ummah as the non-Muslims are also included in it.

## Answer:

To the extent that the teachings of the religion of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) are for all the people of Humanity, all the non-Muslims are included in his Ummah Da'wah. But as the Muslims who accepted his call and believed in all his teachings, they are only liable to be properly named as Ummah Muhammadiyyah. Praying for the forgiveness of Ummah Muhammadiyyah is doubtlessly correct and the saying of that person is not correct.

## Question.

Can the people who create changes in anyone of the four revealed Books, by

**Cont'd on page 14**

# Lesson From The Qur'an

Commentary: Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani

## Sura Baqarah—Verse 222-228

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيضِ ۗ قُلْ هُوَ آذَىٰ ۖ فَاعْتَزِلُوا  
النِّسَاءَ فِي الْمَحِيضِ ۖ وَلَا تَقْرُبُوهُنَّ حَتَّىٰ يَظْهَرْنَ ۚ فَإِذَا  
تَظَهَّرْنَ فَأْتُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ  
التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ

They ask you about menstruation. Say: "It is an impurity. So, keep away from women<sup>116</sup> during menstruation; and do not have intimacy with them until they are cleansed. But when they are cleansed, then go to them from where Allah has commanded you. Surely Allah loves those who are most repenting, and loves those who keep themselves pure.

[2:222]

116. This expression prohibits having sexual intercourse with them. It does not mean to avoid sitting with them or treating them as untouchables, as believed by the Jews and Hindus.

ۚ نَسَاؤُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَّكُمْ ۖ فَاتُوا حَرْثَكُمْ أَنَّىٰ شِئْتُمْ ۖ  
وَقَدِمُوا إِلَىٰ أَنفُسِكُمْ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَعَلِمُوا أَنَّكُمْ  
مُلَاقُوهُ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۚ

Your women are tillage for you to cultivate.

So, come to your tillage from where you wish<sup>117</sup>, and advance something for yourselves<sup>118</sup>, and fear Allah, and know that you are to meet Him, and give good news to the believers." [2:223]

117. As explained by the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), this expression is not meant to allow carnal intercourse. Rather, by comparing women with tillage, it is indicated that the right place of intercourse is

that which is productive like tillage, i.e., vagina. However, in order to reach that place any mode or any side can be adopted.

118. This is perhaps a subtle indication that one should not take the marital relationship as a source of sexual gratification only, but he should try to develop a righteous family out of his marital relationship.

وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا اللَّهَ عُرْضَةً لِأَيْمَانِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوا وَتَتَّقُوا  
وَتُصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ۚ

Do not make (the name of) Allah the subject of your oaths against your doing good, fearing Allah and setting things right between people<sup>119</sup>. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

[2:224]

119. It means: "Do not swear oaths to refrain from virtuous acts".

لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ  
بِمَا كَسَبَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ۚ

Allah does not hold you accountable for what is laghw (ineffectual) in your oaths<sup>120</sup>, but He holds you accountable for what your hearts have produced. Allah is Forgiving, Forbearing.

[2:225]

120. Laghw (ineffective) means an oath sworn either by mistake or without volition.

لِلَّذِينَ يُؤَلُّونَ مِنْ نِسَائِهِمْ تَرِيصٌ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ ۚ فَإِنْ  
فَاءُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ۚ

Those who swear to abstain from their wives have four months of waiting<sup>121</sup>. Therefore, if they revert back, Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful, [2:226]

121. If a husband swears an oath that he

would not have sexual intercourse with his wife for four months or more, or for an indefinite period, it is termed in Islamic Fiqh (jurisprudence) as 'Ila'. This verse lays down the rule that, in this situation, the husband has two options, either to break his oath by having intercourse with his wife before four months, and offer kaffarah (expiation) of breaking oath, (in which case the marriage will continue) or to abide by his oath, in which case the wife will be deemed to have been divorced on the completion of four months. This is to prevent the unjust custom whereby the husbands, by swearing such oath, violated the right of woman. They neither gave her the due rights, nor did they divorce her to let her marry someone else. "If they revert back, Allah is most-Forgiving" means that if they break their oath by having intercourse with her, Allah will forgive the sin of oath-breaking.

وَإِنْ عَزَمُوا الطَّلَاقَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٢٤

And if they resolve to divorce, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. [2:227]

وَالْمُطَلَّقَاتُ يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ ثَلَاثَةَ قُرُوءٍ ۗ وَلَا يُحِلُّ لَهُنَّ أَنْ يَكْتُمْنَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي أَرْحَامِهِنَّ إِنْ كُنَّ يُؤْمِنْنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۗ وَبُعُولَتُهُنَّ أَحَقُّ بِرَدِّهِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ إِنْ أَرَادُوا إِصْلَاحًا ۗ وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَالِيَهُنَّ دَرَجَةٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ٢٢٨

Divorced women shall keep themselves waiting for three periods, and it is not permissible for them to conceal what Allah has created in their wombs<sup>122</sup>, if they believe in Allah and in the Last Day. Their husbands are best entitled to take them back in the meantime, if they want a settlement. Women have rights similar to what they owe in recognized manner though for men there is a step above them.

Allah is Mighty, Wise. [2:228]

122. This is the iddah (waiting period) pre-

scribed for divorced women which means that they cannot marry another person unless three menstruation periods have passed after divorce. One of the objectives of this waiting period is that if the woman is pregnant, her pregnancy is discovered, in which case she will have to wait until she delivers the baby. Therefore, the verse has warned her that she should not conceal her pregnancy or menstruation, as the case may be.

### *Help me realize Allah.....*

*I see many people that are busy,  
But it's not a good busy  
They talk to fill the air.*

*Never once do they stop and praise Allah.  
They think we need to have fun  
We only live once  
It makes me sad  
To think that I am the strange one  
To Allah I belong  
To him one day I shall return.*

*I learned so much  
I prayed.  
I stayed.*

*I didn't let go  
I was strong.  
I didn't go wrong.*

*My prophets helped  
They nourished.  
They guided.*

*I am here  
To live.  
And to worship.*

*O'Allah life is so amazing  
Life is so gorgeous.  
Life is so pretty.*

*Thank you for what you helped me realize.*

*(M.Muhammad)*

# Lesson From Sahih al-Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

## The Book of Knowledge

باب التَّسْمِيَةِ عَلَى كُلِّ حَالٍ وَعِنْدَ الْوَقَاعِ

**Chapter 8 : To begin everything with the name of Allah and even when going to wife.**

### Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Imam Bukhari is of the opinion that it is mandatory to recite Tashmiyah (Bismillah-ir-Rahmaan-ir-Rahim) before one starts to perform Wudu, but he could not find any Hadith in this connection which could fulfil his criteria.

Imam Ahmad says that he does not know that there is any authentic Hadith favouring this view. By quoting this Hadith here, Imam Bukhari wants to prove his point that Tasmiyah is a must before Wudu, since it is preferable to start everything with the name of Allah even the sexual intercourse with one's wife, then why it should not be mandatory before Wudu? So, here Imam Bukhari proves his point indirectly.

### Hadith No. 139

حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا جَرِيرٌ عَنْ مَنْصُورٍ عَنْ  
سَالِمِ بْنِ أَبِي الْجَعْدِ عَنْ كُرَيْبٍ عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ يَبْلُغُ بِهِ النَّبِيُّ  
صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ لَوْ أَنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ إِذَا أَتَى أَهْلَهُ قَالَ  
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ اللَّهُمَّ جَنِّبْنَا الشَّيْطَانَ وَجَنِّبِ الشَّيْطَانَ مَا رَزَقْتَنَا  
فَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمَا وَلَدٌ ، لَمْ يَضُرَّهُ

### Narrated Ibn 'Abbas (RA)

*The Prophet said, "If anyone of you on having sexual relations with his wife said (and he must say it before starting) 'In the name of*

*Allah. O Allah! Protect us from Satan and also protect what you bestow upon us (i.e. the coming offspring) from Satan, and if it is destined that they should have a child then, Satan will never be able to harm that offspring."*

### Comments

Shaitan has natural attraction towards filthy things and obscenity, that is why he tries to infiltrate in all such places like toilets, where a person uncovers his private parts and during sexual intercourse. Shaitan has been given the power to influence people and to inculcate in them evil instincts. The recitation of the name of Allah becomes a barrier between a person and Shaitan and he cannot have influence on that person who starts any of his jobs with the name of Allah. When a man approaches his wife and does not take the name of Allah, Shaitan participates in their act and if they get an offspring out of this intercourse, that offspring will also have the influence of Shaitan. On the contrary if a man takes the name of Allah at the time of intercourse, the couple along with their offspring would get protection against the Shaitan.

Tasmiyah necessarily does not mean Bismillah only. It means to remember Him in whatever possible situation. Here Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) teaches us the Dua which should be recited before one approaches his wife for sexual intercourse.

باب مَا يَقُولُ عِنْدَ الْخَلَاءِ

### Chapter 9 : What is to be said while going to the toilet.

#### Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

In earlier chapter it was said that one should recite Tasmiyah at the beginning of executing any job. Here a question would have arisen in the minds of people as to what about while going to toilet. Imam Bukhari answers it by quoting this Hadith here.

#### Hadith No. 140

حَدَّثَنَا آدَمُ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ عَنْ عَبْدِ الْعَزِيزِ بْنِ صُهَيْبٍ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَنَسًا يَقُولُ كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - إِذَا دَخَلَ الْخَلَاءَ قَالَ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْخُبْثِ وَالْخَبَائِثِ . تَابَعَهُ ابْنُ عَرَوَةَ عَنْ شُعْبَةَ . وَقَالَ غُنْدَرٌ عَنْ شُعْبَةَ إِذَا أَتَى الْخَلَاءَ . وَقَالَ مُوسَى عَنْ حَمَّادٍ إِذَا دَخَلَ . وَقَالَ سَعِيدُ بْنُ زَيْدٍ حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْعَزِيزِ إِذَا أَرَادَ أَنْ يَدْخُلَ .

#### Narrated Anas (RA)

"Whenever the Prophet went to answer the call of nature, he used to say, "Allah-umma inni a'udhu bika minal khubuthi wal khaba'ith i.e. O Allah, I seek refuge with You from all offensive and wicked things (evil deeds and evil spirits)."

#### Comments

As already mentioned that Shaitan has predilection towards dirty things and toilet is one of them, so the believers are taught by the beloved Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) that they should first seek refuge in Allah Ta'ala against this accursed enemy i.e., Shaitan before entering the toilet so that they can remain safe from his evil effects. From this one can understand how perfect and comprehensive the Islamic teachings are, that not a single aspect of life whether trivial or vital is left unattended.



### The Adl of Hazrat Ali (RA)

Two friends were sharing some food one had 3 pieces the other 5 pieces of roti (bread). A traveller passed by and they asked him to join in the meal and they shared the bread between the three of them. The next day the traveller left and he gave them 8 dirhams for the bread. One of the friends said as he had provided 5 rotis he should receive 5 dirhams and the other 3. The other friend said that it would be fair to split the money 50/50 i.e. 4 dirhams each. They could not reach an agreement and to reach an agreement and make peace they visited hazrat Ali Radhiallahu anho.

Hazrat Ali RA decided that the person with 5 rotis should receive 7 dirhams and the other person just one dirham. The people were a little confused as to why this was the case. it was explained to them that each piece of bread should be divided in to three thus  $8 \times 3 = 24$  pieces of bread. it would be assumed the food was shared equally thus each would eat 8 of these pieces. This meant that the person who provided 3 rotis would have eaten himself 8 out of his 9 pieces and the guest would have eaten just one of his pieces. The person who provided 5 rotis would have eaten 8 out of his 15 pieces and 7 pieces would have been eaten by the guest and thus he should receive 7 pieces. Subhanallah what an adl by Hazrat Ali RA.



# New Year and Atonement

*By: Sarah K*

New Year marks a whole new beginning. It's always a mystery, we never know what lies ahead but we always hope that it is not disappointing. For some it will be a year to accomplish the milestones that have been set and worked towards. For some it will be a new job, new school, new house, new location or just new goals. For some it will be a year that will show improvement in their health or a total recovery. For some it will be a year to enter marriage and a new life filled with dreams and hopes. For some it will be a year to lose their loved ones to a better beautiful place, Jannah. For some it will be a year filled with the joy of a new born in their family. For some it will be a year to reconnect and rekindle with families, friends & loved ones. For some it will be a year to strengthen our relationship with Allah Subhanahu Taala.

Undoubtedly, for each one of us the New Year will definitely hold Allah's infinite mercy and blessings Insha'Allah that will overshadow the sufferings and losses that we encounter as part of life. Nothing in this life is coincidental. Every interaction, every incident, every condition, every success, every failure, every loss and every gain is from Allah. It has a designated purpose, it's like a piece from a jigsaw puzzle, and every piece connects in the order destined from Allah to complete the "not so perfect" picture called life. With our limited wisdom and no knowledge of the "ghaib" we should believe that the present situation we find ourselves in is for our best, it's our destiny (Qadar) and

hence we should be happy, content & thankful by showing our gratitude to Allah. Indeed, nobody loves us and wants our best more than Allah!

New Year is a hallmark, a time to look back, reflect, make resolutions to forgive, forget, make amends, give more, love more, hate less, laugh more and so on and so forth, but above all its another blessing, an opportunity to thank Allah and ask for HIS repentance (Tauba) from all major, minor, known and unknown sins that we have committed and will commit.

"At-Tawwaab" (The Acceptor to Repentance), "al-Ghafur" (The Forgiver), "al-Ghaffar" (The Forgiving), "al-Afuww" (The Pardoner) are some from the 99 beautiful names (Al-Asma-ul-Husna) and attributes of Allah. Tauba is an underlying principle in Islam. It's a premise for our Deen. Allah repeatedly gives us chance to come back to HIM and to start clean. A beautiful Hadith underlying this principle in Islam:

On the authority of Anas (R. A), who said: I heard the messenger of Allah (S.A.W) say:

*Allah the Almighty has said: "O son of Adam, so long as you call upon Me and ask of Me, I shall forgive you for what you have done, and I shall not mind. O son of Adam, were your sins to reach the clouds of the sky and were you then to ask forgiveness of Me, I would forgive you. O son of Adam, were you to come to Me with sins nearly as great as the earth and were you then to face Me, ascrib-*

*ing no partner to Me, I would bring you forgiveness nearly as great as its."*

The above Hadith highlights that every sin if repented with sincerity except "shirk" is forgiven by the most Gracious and most Merciful Lord of all mankind.

To Ask Allah for forgiveness we must first meet and complete the 3 main prerequisites. I call it the "3 R's".

- 1) Recognize that we have sinned.
- 2) Regret with a sincere heart and
- 3) Repel i.e. discontinue & try to stay away from committing it again.

But sometimes even with the best resolve we tend to repeat our mistakes and sins. We are humans & err and Allah who is our Creator knows our weaknesses. HE is "Oft-forgiving, Oft-Merciful" (Ghaffur ur Rahim) as described in Allah's own words several times in several contexts in the Glorious Quran. He is the one who forgives the sins of His slaves time and time again.

*"And (there are) others who have acknowledged their sins, they have mixed a deed that was righteous with another that was evil. Perhaps Allah will turn unto them in forgiveness. Surely, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful". (9:102)*

*"Then after that Allah will accept the repentance of whom He wills. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful". (9:27)*

*"Ask forgiveness for your sin and also for the believing men and women" [47:19]*

*"And whoever does evil or wrongs himself but afterwards seeks Allah's forgiveness, he will find Allah Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." [4:110]*

Repentance is an act of worship done by the prophets, messengers and all pious predecessors.

*"I heard Allah's Apostle saying." By Allah! I ask for forgiveness from Allah and turn to Him in repentance more than seventy times a day." [Bukhari]*

Subhan-Allah, our beloved Prophet Mohammed (S.A.W.) could never sin. For him to ask repentance more than 70 times a day from Allah is a lesson for all Muslims to follow suit. He taught us not only to ask Allah for forgiveness but also exemplified by being the most forgiving person.

Just like the air we breathe in, Allah's encompassing mercy, blessings, compassion, generosity, protection and forgiveness are descended on us every minute, every second. Shouldn't we all ask Allah for forgiveness and show our obedience before the door of repentance is closed on us?

I would like to end with a beautiful Duaa taken from the book called "Prayers for Forgiveness" which is a collection from Hasan-al-Basri:

*O Allah, I seek your forgiveness for every sin that Your pen recorded and Your knowledge encompassed - every one that I have committed and that I am to commit until the end of my life. I seek Your forgiveness for all my sins: the first and the last, the intentional and the unintentional, the few and the many, the minor and the major, the subtle and the noticeable, the past and the recent, the secret and the open and public - and all those I am to commit throughout my life.*

*Aameen, Ya Rabb!*

### **What to Count**

*People count, complacently, how many times they have recited the name of Allah using prayer beads, but they keep no beads for reckoning how many idle words they speak. Umar ibn Khattab, 'Weigh well your words and deeds before they are weighed on the day of Judgment'. Abu Hamid al-Ghazali*

# The Islamic Dress Code

*By Khalid Baig*

What would you think of a home that provided no shelter and no privacy? What would you think of a meal that provided no nourishment and no energy? It does not take much to realize that if one were in the business of selling any of these he would go bankrupt very quickly. Yet, amazingly the rules seem to be different when it comes to another basic need: clothing, especially women's clothing. Every year fashion centers in Europe and America come up with the latest designs. And what have they designed? Another way of not covering the body; the dress equivalent of the home that provides no shelter and no privacy.

One might ask, if a person did not want to cover themselves why would they buy anything, least of all expensive fashions, to achieve that? If we think about it, we may see the tension between two forces. All human beings (except for the handful of deviants who call themselves naturalists) have an inborn sense of shame. People of all religions agree on the need to cover themselves in public. Yet we also find a force that promotes nudity. Large segments of humanity are caught between two impulses: to cover or not to cover. Our clothing designs reflect different levels of compromise between these opposing forces.

## **Why? What is going on?**

Science cannot answer the question. It cannot trace the origins of forces that take place deep in our mind. In addition, most of the scientific establishment is still dominated by the followers of Mr. Darwin and Darwinism is a system of belief not science. Their beliefs keep them from dealing honestly with a simple fact: while all other animals have a

skin that provides them protection against the elements, human beings don't. Monkeys can live without clothing, human beings cannot.

The Qur'an answers the question. Our bodies did not develop our skin--- so thin and fur free that it requires external covering for protection---because of some unexplained evolutionary accident. Our Creator designed it this way so we will always need clothing. He also put in us the sense of shame that forces us to cover ourselves. On the other hand, the first act of Satan was to cause Adam and Eve to expose themselves: "So by deceit he brought about their fall: when they tasted of the tree, their shameful parts became manifest to them, and they began to sew together the leaves of the Garden over their bodies." [Al-A'raf 7:22]. This is the source of the tension we see. Two opposing forces. Good and evil.

With that background we can understand the importance of clothing. "O Children of Adam! We have bestowed raiment upon you to cover your shame as well as to be an adornment to you. But the raiment of righteousness---that is the best." [Al-A'raf 7:26]. The address here is to all humanity, emphasizing thereby the universal human need to cover ourselves properly. The Qur'an then warns that Satan was not finished after his first attempt: "O Children of Adam! Let not Satan seduce you in the same manner as he got your parents out of the Garden, stripping them of their raiment, to expose their shame." [Al-A'raf 7:27].

Once we realize the nature of the dress issue, it is natural that we should turn to our Creator to seek guidance for the proper dress code. Qur'an and Sunnah have

provided ample guidance on the subject which can be summarized in four essential principles.

Our dress must cover our body adequately. Again we cannot determine what is adequate coverage on our own, as any witness to the misery of those who have tried it can readily ascertain. Shar'iah, as always, takes us out of this misery by defining it for us. For men, it is the middle part of the body from navel to knee. For women, it is the entire body except hands and face. These parts must never be exposed to any other person (except in case of genuine need e.g. medical treatment). In addition, the cloth must be neither see-through nor tight fitting.

Our dress should provide adornment. It should provide for decent appearance. Our appearance should not be an eyesore for decent human beings. For men, this extends the coverage requirements to include most of the body. For women, the essential requirement is that their dress should identify them as respectable ladies who would be honored not harassed. Additionally, hijab rules aim at protecting them from the gaze of other men.

Our dress should establish our Islamic identity. At the least it should not identify us as followers of another religion. But, additionally it should positively identify us as Muslims.

The design of our dress must avoid three deadly sins: show off, arrogance, and self indulgence. These are very serious diseases of the heart in their own right that we must avoid at all times. Our garments provide an easy opportunity to nurture them. Hence the need to be extra cautious. A Hadith states "Eat what you feel like and wear what you feel like. But avoid two things: extravagance and arrogance." [Bukhari]. At the risk of stating the obvious one should be reminded that this Hadith establishes an overriding concern that limits our choices within the realm of

what is considered halal. It does not do away with the distinction between halal and haram.

As one implication of this general requirement, men are also required not to wear their lower garments below the ankle. (Many well-meaning Muslims today have been persuaded that this is a petty issue. This misgiving can be put to rest in a hurry if we just refer to the Hadith of Jabir bin Sulaym (RA) in Abu Dawood. He asked the Prophet, (Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam) for some advice when leaving him after his very first meeting. Of the six pieces of advice given him one was: "Never let your lower garment go below the ankles because that is arrogance. And Allah does not like arrogance." Another was "Never belittle a good deed.")

Islam has not prescribed a particular dress style, giving us ample room to accommodate our needs, circumstances and tastes. However, these principles are for everyone and forever. Any garment that accommodates these principles will be Islamic dress. This is Islamic formula to dress for success. Eternal success.

### ***Did You Know.....***

*That Camels, which could prosper in arid and semiarid environments, were introduced from Asia to the Sahara between the 1st and 5th centuries C.E. had greatly improved the possibilities of trade with Africa, south of the Sahara. But Camels could not penetrate into the humid forest zones because of disease and this delayed the introduction of Islam into the Sabel, the extensive grassland belt at the southern edge of the Sahara. Many countries in the Sabel, however, became Muslim through trade contacts by the 10th Century, C.E.*

# Life—A Prelude to the Hereafter

*Syed A H Nadvi (RA)*

Islam does not regard the earthly life and the present world to be the highest goal of man and the pinnacle of his advancement. It is a transitional stage through which a man must pass for the fulfilment of his destiny. It is a means to greater felicity and a stepping stone to the never-ending life of cloudless bliss. Laying stress on the transitoriness of this world and its worthlessness as compared with Futurity. The Quran says :

*The enjoyment of the worldly life is but trivial in (comparison with) the Hereafter. (9:38)*

*This worldly life is nothing but an amusement and play, and the Last Abode is the real life indeed. Only if they know! (29:64)*

*Know well that the worldly life is but a play and an amusement, and a show of beauty, and exchange of boastful claims between you, and a competition of increase in riches and children. (All this is) like a rain, the growth of which attracts the farmers, then it withers, and you see it turning yellow, then it becomes straw. And in the Hereafter there is a severe punishment (for the disbelievers), and forgiveness from Allah and (Allah's) pleasure (for the believers and the righteous).*

*The worldly life is nothing but a material of delusion. (57:20)*

The Quran asserts that the life of this world is the bridge of the Hereafter and an opportunity for action :

*Surely, We have made what is on earth an adornment for it, so that We test them as to who among them is better in deeds. (18:7)*  
*the One who created death and life, so that He may test you as to which of you is better in his deeds. And He is the All-Mighty, the Most-Forgiving. (67:2)*

*The worldly life is nothing but a game and*

*fun, and the last abode is surely much better for those who fear Allah. Would you still not understand? (6:32)*

*Moreover, whatever of anything you are given is (no more than) an enjoyment of the worldly life and its decoration, and that which lies with Allah is much better and far more lasting. So do you not use reason? (28:60)*

The Quran condemns those who prefer this perishable, transitory, and imperfect world to the eternal and everlasting, unbounded and faultless Hereafter which is free from every kind of evil and meanness, grief and distress, fear and loss and disease and ill-health.

*They are the ones whose abode is the Fire, because of what they used to earn for themselves. As for those who believe and do good deeds, their Lord will guide them by virtue of their belief; rivers will be flowing beneath them in the Gardens of Bliss. (10:8-9)*

*Those who seek (merely) the worldly life and its beauty, We will fully recompense them herein for their acts, and their right will not be curtailed in this world. Those are the people for whom there is nothing in the Hereafter except fire. Nullified will be whatever they worked herein, and void will be what they have been doing. (11:-15-16)*

*Allah, the One to whom belongs what is in the heavens and what is in the earth. Woe be to the disbelievers because of a severe punishment, to those who prefer the worldly life to the Hereafter and prevent (people) from the way of Allah, and seek to make it crooked. Those have gone too far in straying. (14:2-3)*

*They know something superficial of the worldly life, but of the Hereafter they are negligent. (30:7)*

*So, turn away from him who turns away from Our advice, and seeks nothing but (pleasure of) the worldly life. That is the limit of their access to knowledge. Indeed only your Lord knows well about the one who has gone astray from his way, and He knows well about the one who has adopted the right path.*

*(53:29-30)*

*In fact these people love that which is immediate, and neglect a Heavy Day ahead of them. (76:27)*

*Then for the one who had rebelled, and preferred the worldly life (to the Hereafter), the Hell will be the abode. (79:37-39)*

Praiseworthy is the man who, preferring the Hereafter and seeping it steadily in the mind, leads a successful life both in his world and the next.

*"Our Lord, give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and save us from the punishment of Fire." (2:201)*

*And write for us good in this world and in the Hereafter. We turn to You in repentance.*

*(7:156)*

Expressing approval of the conduct of Abraham, the Quran says :

*We bestowed good upon him in this world; and in the Hereafter, he is among the righteous. (16:122)*

The basic attitude of a MusKm towards the material world has been beautifully defined in the following dictum which forms a part of some-of the Friday sermons : "The world hath been created for thee and thou hath been created for the Hereafter." The Believer avails himself of worldly means and powers as if these have been subjugated to him, or, rather, the world has been created for his sake, and strives for the Hereafter as if he has been but created for it. He regards the world and all that it contains to be the mount, not the rider the slave, not the master, and the means, not the end\* The Hereafter for him is the journey's end, the destination, towards which he has been sent. He

looks upon it as the abode where he is to take shelter, and, consequently, harnesses his entire strength, bears all sorts of hardships and willingly and resolutely puts to work his capabilities for its sake. This is what the, holy. Prophet had sought to convey when he had said about himself that "my relation with the world is only this much that my likeness is of a rider who sat under the shade of a tree for a while and then got up and went away.

The mode of expression of the Quran and the similitude regarding the attitude towards the life of the world is evident from the life of the sacred Prophet, his teachings, his feelings, his prayers and all his actions and doings, in private and in public. The lives of the holy Companions, who had received their training and education from him portray the same point of view and the Tabeen<sup>3</sup> and other men of faith, also, continued to uphold it truthfully.

It had become a part of their nature: this is a historical reality which cannot be disputed. It is the point at which the Divine faiths and the Apostolic teachings collide with materialistic thought and concepts which insist that this world is the whole thing, the final and exclusive aim and destination of humanity and therefore are ready to go to any lengths in its glorification and to make it pleasant and comfortable.



***Cont'd from page 4***

adding or deleting something, and act according to their whimsical approach, be named as 'the people of the Books'?

**Answer:**

The Holy Quran is safe from any change in any word and it is, therefore, the question regarding the Holy Quran is irrelevant. Corruption and change took place in the previous Books, but as their followers claim to be the believers of true books they are named as 'the people of the Books.'

# Moderation in Luxuries

In every era and place there have always been the relatively rich people and also the poverty stricken. In the golden era of Islam there were Sahaaba (R.A.) like Hazrath Abu Hurairah (R.A.) who would faint due to hunger. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasalam) would also often pass many days when nothing was available to eat in any of his homes. At the same time there were Sahaaba (R.A.) who were relatively wealthy. However, those in need were taught not to beg. Let alone ask, they would even conceal their poverty to the extent that the neighbour would also not be able to guess that the family next door was passing the night in hunger. Nevertheless, when the Sahaaba (R.A.) detected the plight of the poor among them, they opened up their hearts, even if it meant sacrificing their own basic needs.

The reality of the last statement is vividly witnessed in the famous incident where a Sahaabi (R.A.) received a goat-head as a gift. Despite having nothing himself, he felt that his neighbour was in greater need of the gift than he was. He thus passed on the goat-head to his neighbour. The neighbour, despite his own poverty, felt that the person next door was more in need. He therefore passed on the gift to the third person. In this manner the goat-head was passed on to the seventh neighbour. Not knowing where the gift had originally come from, he passed it on to the first neighbour from whom the gift originated, regarding him as more in need.

Similar is the case of the Sahaabi (R.A.) who put his children to sleep while he and his wife also spent the night in hunger so that the little food available could be fed to

the guest of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasalam). There are numerous other incidents of this nature in the lives of the Sahaaba (R.A.) and even those after them. For us it is very difficult, perhaps almost impossible, to follow this example. But there are great lessons to take from these incidents.

## EXCEPTIONAL GENEROSITY

We are living in times when the distinction between the rich and poor, and the gap between these two classes, is becoming greater all the time. Indeed as a community, the generosity of the Muslims in this country towards the people suffering within their borders and even those abroad is exceptional. But can we be content with what has been achieved?

Undoubtedly, it is unnatural to attempt to create a one-class society. It will never happen. The Qur'an-al-Kareem has declared that some have been elevated over others in livelihood and financial capacity. Also, if someone can afford some luxuries with wealth he has earned in a Halaal manner, he is permitted to do so. The situation of poverty around us nevertheless demands that there should be moderation in our spending on luxuries and at least the savings from such moderation should be shared with the less fortunate.

## LUXURY VEHICLE

To illustrate the above, let us consider the following situation: You wish to purchase a luxury vehicle with money you have earned in a Halaal manner. No involvement in interest or any other violation of the Shariah

will be committed in acquiring the vehicle. In principle it is permissible to spend the few hundred thousand rands to purchase the vehicle. You are now faced with the choice of the model. The top of the range has a much more powerful engine, has more fancy trimmings and a few more features which most owners will rarely use. The bottom of the range has all the luxuries that the top of the range offers. It however has a smaller engine (but can still comfortably travel at 200 km/h - a very dangerous speed to travel at) and it has a few less fancy features. The price difference is some seventy thousand rands. Moderation requires that one remains content in this temporary abode with the luxuries that the bottom of the range offers or at least something in the middle range. The seventy thousand rands will erect a basic shelter for many homeless people, or it could put food into hundreds of hungry bellies. Indeed, there are thousands of such people in our backyards. If one has the courage and the heart to settle for an even simpler vehicle and spread the savings even further in various Deeni aspects and places of need, this will be all the better. If not, at least we can start learning to be content with the bottom of the range which offers hardly anything lesser - apart from the life threatening speed and some fancy frills!

#### **BUILT-IN CUPBOARDS**

The same will apply for instance to the choice of built-in cupboards, curtains, household furniture and many other personal items. Moderation in what one opts for will not deprive one of the luxury but will save many thousands of rands which could be passed on to those who have no idea whether there will be anything available to eat for supper or not.

#### **CONSCIENCE**

Thus great savings can be shared

with the less fortunate merely by adopting moderation in permissible luxuries. Can one then imagine how much could be shared with the less fortunate if all the wealth spent on Haraam or which is wasted in lavish weddings, etc. is saved? While the wealthy would still live in much comfort and luxury, colossal sums of money would be available to alleviate the suffering of the needy and to fund Deeni projects. Despite the fact that we may have already fed thousands of people several meals, the reality is that there are many thousands who are still in dire circumstances. Hence in the face of his reality, does it not hurt our conscience when people in the Ummah who, because they have enough food in their freezers to last months, spend thousands of rands to watch a little red ball being knocked around and others scurrying behind it!! What was achieved by such futility? Yet, what heartfelt Duas one would have received if some hungry person was given that money to buy food, or to some ill person who cannot afford the treatment that he desperately requires!!

#### **COMFORT ZONE**

Indeed we must look beyond our own comfort zones. There are Muslims who are selling their Imaan due to poverty. Little children sometimes fail to attend Madrasah in the afternoons because they are too hungry and weak to come since they did not find any thrown away lunch in the bins at school!! Can we still hanker after every luxury that our eyes fall on? Are we trying to make this world a Jannah? The material luxuries may bring some comfort to the body. But feeding a starving person, putting shelter over a homeless family, clothing a child who comes to Madrasah with hardly any clothing and other such acts of generosity will bring immense tranquillity and peace to the heart and unimaginable comfort in the Hereafter.

*Cont'd on page 27*



# Strengthening Bonds of Brotherhood and Sisterhood

*"The believers are but a single brotherhood." [49:10]*

*Wida Kamal Hamidi*

*It was the best of times; it was the worst of  
times..."*

*(A Tale of Two Cities, by Charles Dickens)*

How fittingly this statement sums up the state of the Muslim Ummah today! It certainly is the best of times in that there have never been more Muslims on the globe. According to Islamicweb.com, Muslims number nearly 1.6 billion people, an increase of over 235% in the last fifty years. With such phenomenal numbers, we should be able to accomplish so much. However, an objective look at the state of today's Muslims shows us a very different picture—one of a people defeated and conquered by others—our land, wealth and other resources all in their control.

Truly, our Ummah is in dire circumstances. We have reached this stage because we have let our Ummah be divided and forgotten the importance of developing and nurturing ties with our fellow brothers and sisters in faith. By losing the precious bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood, which made the Companions so successful, we have become a diseased people. Only when we restore these bonds will we be able to cure our disease so that our Ummah can regain its former autonomy and glory.

"The believers are but a single brotherhood." [49:10] In this verse, Allah describes us as one Ummah. Besides the fact that we all share the same parents (Adam and Eve), we are also united by our faith, so we should behave as we are truly one broth-

erhood.

When the Muslims migrated from Makkah to Madmah, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), instructed every member of the *ansar* to house one *muhajir* (immigrant), and to feed and clothe him as he would feed and clothe himself. The Prophet understood the importance of developing a strong bond from the onset in order to build a strong and healthy community. His wise action made possible the ties of love and friendship that developed between the *ansar* and the *muhajireen* and united the various Arab tribes with the best and purest of bonds—that of faith in one God and His Messenger. If our Ummah is to succeed, we, too, must strive to love one another for the sake of Allah.

In order to strengthen our bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood, we must begin with ourselves. If we can change our behavior towards the Muslims with whom we come into contact, that will, InshaAllah, start a domino effect, which will slowly influence the entire Ummah.

To bring about this change, we simply need to put a few basic rules into practice:

## THE GOLDEN RULE

We should always treat our brothers and sisters the way we wish to be treated by applying the Golden Rule. Anas reported that the Prophet said, "None of you truly believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for him-

self." (Bukhari)

We can begin by praying to Allah for ourselves and our fellow Muslims. The Prophet has said, "The supplication of a Muslim for his brother without his knowledge is an accepted supplication and he will be rewarded by the presence of an angel at his side. Every time he supplicates for his brother, the angel will say, 'Amen, and the same for you, too.'" (Muslim)

### STAY UNITED

Whenever possible, it is important for Muslim brothers to make their obligatory salah at the masjid in congregation. Not only does this serve to bring the community together, but also Allah joins our hearts when we worship Him together.

It is also important to visit one another in times of illness and other difficulties. The Prophet is reported to have said, "Those who help a Muslim in hardship in this world will be protected by Allah from suffering hardship in the Hereafter." (Muslim)

We should be exemplary in our kindness and compassion for one another. The Prophet is reported to have said, "You find the Muslims in their mutual love and compassion, like one body; should any organ of it fall ill, the rest of the body will share in the fever and sleeplessness that ensues." (Bukhari)

We must be faithful and loyal to Muslims by always being on our guard to defend the honor of our brothers and sisters in Islam. The Prophet is reported to have said, "If one of you defends the honor of his brother, Allah will keep the Hellfire away from his face in the Hereafter." (Muslim)

### STAY ACTIVE

It is beneficial to engage our families in halal sources of entertainment with other Muslim families, such as camping, bowling,

horseback riding, and other kinds of sports and activities. It is also vital that we work together for the cause of Islam, and that we constantly invite one another to take part in Islamic projects because it is Islam and faith which will serve to unite our hearts.

### AVOID GOSSIP

We should cease backbiting others and strive to stop others from backbiting as well because the surest and easiest way for Satan to sow<sup>r</sup> the seeds of discord among Muslims is by having us gossip about one another. First, we must remember that backbiting is a major sin, one whose punishment is very severe. Allah says, "...Nor speak ill of each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother?" [49:12]

Second, when we gossip about someone, we only serve to ruin that person's image as well as our own. When we have nothing positive to say, it's best to follow the maxim and say nothing at all. The Prophet said, "Let him who believes in Allah and the last day either speak good or keep silent, and let him who believes in Allah and the last day be generous to his neighbor." (Muslim)

As we have all made mistakes, we should cover one another's faults and not dwell on the mistakes of others. So, if you are aware that your Muslim brother or sister did something wrong, don't exhibit his or her fault to everyone else. Not only will this save you the sin of backbiting about your fellow Muslim, but you will also be rewarded by Allah, as the Prophet said, "One who covers up the faults of somebody in this world, will have his shortcomings covered by Allah on the Day of Judgment." (Agreed upon)

### AVOID ENVY AND SUSPICION

We must not be envious of each

other. The Prophet said, "Do not end a friendship, do not turn your back, do not hate each other, and don't envy each other. As a servant of Allah, maintain brotherhood. Two Muslims may not remain on non speaking terms with each other for more than three days." (Malik)

It is also wrong to harbor suspicions about one another, for Allah states, "O you who believe! Avoid suspicion as much as possible: for suspicion in some cases is a sin." [49:121

#### **BE PLEASANT AND HUMBLE**

We should always be the first to ask forgiveness in disputes, for this will quickly end most disagreements. Also, the person who asks forgiveness first will be rewarded by Allah. Thus, there is double reward for doing this good deed.

Never underestimate the power of a cheerful face and polite words. Be ready to greet every Muslim with a smile on your face and "Assalamu alaikum" on your tongue. Our Prophet said, "Your smiling at your brother is an act of charity (sadaqah) ." (Tirmithi)

#### **THE MORE WE PRACTICE OUR RELIGION...**

In summary, all of the necessary requirements to strengthen the bonds of our brotherhood and sisterhood are included in the comprehensive teachings of Islam. So, it is just a matter of our willingness to practice them and to apply them to ourselves properly. As a matter of fact, we can say that the simple rule is: the more we practice our religion, the better our condition will be.

*Al-Jumua vol 15 issue 07*

*"The dawn does not come twice to awaken a man."*  
(Arab Proverb)

# Abortion - Breast Cancer Link

## *What the Abortion-Breast Cancer Link Means for Women in the Developing World*

*With a release of a new study in Great Britain, evidence of a link between breast cancer and abortion continues to mount. But who will speak for women in the developing world, victimized by abortion, who will endure untold suffering from breast cancer in the years to come?*

**Steve Mosher**

The news that breast cancer has now overtaken lung cancer as the most common British cancer came as a surprise to many. Not to Patrick Carroll, however, the author of a new study from Great Britain that links the huge increase in breast cancer to the widespread practice of abortion. Dr. Carroll's study demonstrates that abortion actually doubles the risk of cancer in women.

And the worst is yet to come. In England and Wales breast cancer rate is expected to rise by over 2 per cent per annum between now and 2023—some 60 percent—among women aged 45 to 49. The total number of breast cancer cases for women of all ages is expected to more than double over the next 26 years. This is largely because, Dr Carroll tells us, of the high rate of nulliparous abortions, that is, of abortions performed on women who have never carried a child to term. "Perhaps as many as 50 per cent of the breast cancer cases of the future will be attributable to abortion," he concludes.

Professor Joel Brind, an endocrinologist at the City University of New York who is perhaps the world's expert on the abortion-breast cancer link, praised the study for its

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scientific rigor. "Those who undergo abortions clearly have an increased risk, which can be precisely calculated, of contracting cancer of the breast. We are talking about thousands of cases of cancer over the next twenty years. These are very sobering numbers."

"Out of 37 independently published studies, 28 show a causal connection," Brind said. "And of those, 17 provide positive associations that reach statistical significance suggesting a 95-percent certainty that this association is not due to chance. That is scientific evidence which simply cannot be ignored."

Shortly after the publication of Dr. Carroll's study came the news that an abortion doctor in Australia had settled with a breast cancer victim. The woman had sued the abortionist for not telling her about research findings linking abortion to breast cancer. Although a confidentiality agreement prevents details of the settlement from being released, Australian attorney Charles Francis is confident that other cases can be brought against abortionists on the same grounds. "It seemed to me that the evidence [of an abortion breast cancer link] was fairly strong," Francis remarked, "certainly strong enough for a good chance of winning."

Another suit involving the abortion-breast cancer link is moving forward in Australia. "In another case to be heard in New South Wales shortly," Francis said, "'Mary' is suing a hospital and an abortionist for failure to warn her that she might subsequently have a bad psychiatric reaction and for failure to warn of the increased breast-cancer risk."

Other litigation is pending as well. Assisted by the Thomas More Law Center, three California women are suing Planned Parenthood to force the nation's largest provider of abortions to reveal scientific evidence of a substantial link between induced abortion and increased risk of breast cancer.

In the developed countries, despite access to regular mammary exams and excel-

lent treatment regimens, many of those who develop breast cancer will die. As Dr Carroll remarks of the British situation, "Unless there is a major improvement in treatment, including a reduction in the waiting-lists, the number of women who die from the disease will rise alarmingly."

In the developing world, unfortunately, this grim picture grows much grimmer. Because of the poor state of primary health care, women who get breast cancer are unlikely to have it diagnosed until it has reached an advanced stage. Those who do, are unlikely to get treatment. And even the lucky few who receive the relatively unsophisticated treatments available are unlikely to survive.

By promoting, performing, and lobbying for the legalization of abortion, the International Planned Parenthood Federation claims to be reducing "maternal mortality." Yet "safe, legal" abortion poses many dangers to the mother, not least of which is a greatly increased risk of breast cancer in succeeding years. And in the developing world, breast cancer is a death sentence.

*Steve Mosher is president - Population Research Institute, a non-profit organization dedicated to debunking the myth that the world is overpopulated.*



*Cont'd from page 23*

them) used to tremble with fear when they were reporting a tradition lest they should make a mistake. It is said of Abdullah bin Masoud (RA) that he turned pale while reporting a saying of the holy Prophet and then said that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) had said like that or something nearly like that.

## Khutbat-i-Madras

# The Historic Aspect of Prophet Muhammad's Life

*Maulana Syed Sylaiman Nadvi (RA)*

Let us now consider the life of the Prophet of Islam (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) in the light of the four criteria set forth in our pervious talk. The first one is "historicity". In this regard, the whole world agrees and marvels at the way the followers of Islam have meticulously preserved not only the record of their Prophet's life but also everything even remotely concerned with his noble personality. There have been narrators and biographers who devoted their life in collecting, recording, classifying and narrating the Prophets sayings, his deeds and everything related to his life. These biographers include his own worthy companions who were his direct disciples, and then those who learnt from them, and then the generation coming immediately after them. In addition, the collectors of the holy Prophet's sayings and his traditions and his biographers include persons up to 4th century since the Prophet's migration to Madinah. When all this heritage was collected, written and arranged, the personal information about each narrator was also recorded which included such important features as the narrator's name and family background, his life history, his moral and ethical conduct, etc. The number of these biographical notes is nearly one hundred thousand. This collection is known as Asma-ur-Rijal.

The well-known German scholar Dr. Springer was in the Indian Education Service in 1854 and was the secretary of Bengal Asiatic Society. In his supervision, Waqidi's

Maghazi was published in 1856. It was edited by Von Kremer. The worthy companions of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) were known as Sahabah. Hafiz Ibn Hajar's book 'Isabah Fi Ahwal-as-Sahabah' was published too. Dr. Springer claims that he is the first European ever to have written the Life of Muhammad from original Arabic sources. In his biography he is generally hostile to the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). But even he writes (in his introduction to Isabah's English edition in 1864) "There is no nation in the world, nor has there ever been one who can match the Muslims in the art of Asma-ur-Rijal [the historical personal facts about the biographers or reporters of the Prophet's traditions] through which we can find out today the biographical details of half a million reporters." Nearly a hundred thousand Sahaba were present in the Hajj known as the Hajjat-al-Wida'a (Farewel Pilgrimage of the holy Prophet). Eleven thousand of these men have had their names recorded in history because they have reported some of the sayings or deeds of the holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). This noble service has made them immortal in the pages of history.

The holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) passed away in the 11th year of Al-Hijra calendar, which begins with his migration to Madinah. Some of the elder companions of the Prophet were still alive in the 40th year of Al Hijrah. By the 60th year a number of Sahabah who were young

in the Prophet's time still lived. By the end of the first century nearly all of the Prophet's worthy companions had died. Here is a list of the last of Sahabah with the times and place of their death.

Name	Place of Death	Year of Death (Hijrah)
Abu Umamah Bahili	Syria	86
Abdullah bin Harith bin Jaram	Egypt	86
Abdullah bin Abi Aufa	Kufah (Iraq)	87
Saib bin Yazeed	Madinah	91
Anas bin Malik	B a s r a h (Iraq)	93

The last of the Prophet's companions to die was Anas bin Malik who had served the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasalam) for ten years as his personal attendant. He died in the 93rd year of Al-Hijrah calendar corresponding to the year 712 of Gregorian calendar.

The students of the Prophet's companions are known in the Islamic history as Tabi een. Their era begins with the first year of Al-Hijrah but they are not considered the Sahaba i.e. the holy Prophet's companions, because they could not receive direct instruction from him, although they were born in his time but could not see him or they were too young to learn. They include Abdur-Rahman bin Harith (born 3 AH), Qais bin Abi Hazim (born 4 AH) and Saeed bin Musayyib who was born in 14th year of Al-Hijrah. A great number of Tabi 'een made it their life's sole mission to spread the teachings of the holy Prophet and the detailed account of his noble life throughout the Islamic world. You can form

some idea of the total number of these dedicated men by Ibn Saad's account of the number of Tabi'een in Madinah alone. He classifies them into three groups. The first group includes those who had met the elder companions of the holy Prophet and received direct knowledge about his life from them. Their number comes to 139. Then there are 129 of those who had met the Prophet's companions in Madinah and received instruction from them. The last group comprises 87 of those who had met several, or at least one, companion of the holy Prophet and learned from them the Prophet's traditions. This brings the total number of Tabi'een in one city alone to 355. This indicates a great number of the companions' students who were present in Makkah, Taif, Basrah, Kufah, Damascus and in Yemen and Egypt. Their whole life was dedicated to preaching the holy Prophets mission and teaching his words and deeds. You may also keep in mind the extreme care taken in recording and reporting the Prophet's traditions from each of his companions. Each companion's reports were carefully counted and classified. The following table gives the names of the elder companions who have reported most of the Prophet's traditions (May Allah be pleased with them all).

Name	Number of Traditions Reported	Year of death (Al-Hijra)
Abu Hurairah	5374	59
Abdullah Bin Abbas	2660	68
Ayeshah	2210	58
Abdullah Bin Umar	1630	73
Jabir Bin Abdullah	1560	78
Anas Bin Malik	1286	93
Abu Saeed Khudri	1170	74

These are the people whose reported traditions are the richest and most dependable source of the biography of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). The years of their death show that they were blessed with a long life. It indicates that innumerable students must have benefited first hand from their immense knowledge, and memorized, collected and preserved the Prophet's traditions. In those days, the only knowledge regarded as real was the knowledge divinely revealed to the holy Prophet. Acquiring it earned a person great admiration and prestige. Thousands of the worthy companions of the holy Prophet imparted this knowledge to their families, their relatives and friends. This was the main purpose of their life and they single-mindedly pursued this purpose. They had been inspired by these words of the holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam): "Pass on to others whatever you hear from me or observe in me." There is another saying of the holy Prophet which calls upon every Muslim to continue the Prophet's mission by spreading the Divine Knowledge to all mankind. It says, "Those who are present [observing me and hearing from me] must pass this Knowledge on to those who do not yet know." That is the reason why immediately after the holy Prophet's companions the younger generation followed in their footsteps and continued the sacred duty of preserving the revealed knowledge. They had to memorize each and every word of the Prophet's traditions, repeat it several times over and preserve it to the letter. The holy Prophet, while urging his followers to spread the knowledge of his words and deeds, had also warned them of very severe punishment in Hell if anyone deliberately falsified his traditions or misquoted him. As a result, many highly esteemed Sahabah (May Allah be pleased with

*Cont'd on page 22*

# The Final Return

*Ahmed*

A police officer in a Muslim country wrote the following letter to a Shaykh describing the events that led to his return to Allah. He recalls: Seeing accidents and crash victims was a normal part of my day, but one incident was different.

My partner and I had parked on the shoulder of the highway and began to chat. In a random second, the scene shattered to the hideous sound of metal bodies becoming one. We threw our heads back to see what had happened: a head-on collision, the result of a vehicle slipping into the lane of the oncoming traffic. You couldn't describe the carnage. Two young men sprawled in the first car, both in critical condition. We carried them gently away from the car and rested them on the ground.

Quickly we returned to assist the owner of the second car. He was dead. Back we went to the two young men lying side by side on the pavement.

My partner began dictating the Shahadah to them. "Say: La ilaha illAllah (there is no god but Allah), La ilaha illAllah..." ... their tongues wouldn't acknowledge. They started humming the hypnotic lyrics of some song. I was terrified. My partner had experience however and he kept repeating his instruction.

I stood watching, no movement, eyes locked. Never in my life had I seen anything similar to what was going on before me. In fact, I've never actually seen someone die, and never in such a satanic way.

My partner continued to instruct them to say the Shahadah but there was no use. The hum of their song came to a slow silence, slowly. The first one stopped and then the other. Not a stir. Dead.

We carried them to our patrol car, my partner made no effort to speak. Not a whisper between us two as we carried the corpses to the nearest hospital...

The police officer fell back into routine, as he narrates, and started to drift from Allah. But another event happened to him that sealed the return. He continues: ... What an odd world. After some time, about six months, a strange accident took place. A young man was moving along the highway normally, but within one of the tunnels leading to the city, he was maimed by a flat tire.

To the side of the tunnel he parked and stepped to the back to remove the spare tire. The whistle of a speeding car from behind. In a second, it collided with the crippled car, the young man in-between. He fell to the ground with critical injuries. I rushed to the scene, myself and another partner other than the first. Together we carried the young man's body into our patrol car and phoned the hospital to prepare for his arrival.

He was a young adult in his blossom years. Religious, you could tell from his appearance. He was mumbling when we carried him, but in our rush, we had not paid attention to what he was saying. However, when we placed him on his back in the patrol car we could make it out. Through the pain his heart was reciting Qur'an! He was so immersed in the recitation ... Subhan Allah, you would have never said that this person was in intense pain.

Blood had soaked his clothes crimson red, his bones had clearly snapped in several places. To tell the truth, he looked like he was staring into the eyes of death. He continued to read in his unique, tender voice. Reciting each verse in proper rhythm. In my entire

life, I had never heard any recitation like it. I said to myself, I'm ... I'm going to instruct him to say the Shahadah just like I saw my friend doing; especially since I had previous experience. My partner and I listened intently to that soft voice. I felt a shiver shock my back and up my arm, the hair stood.

Suddenly, the hymn ceased. I watched silently as his hand rose softly. He had his index finger pointed upward to the heavens, saying the Shahadah (La ilaha illa Allah/There is no god but Allah). Then ... his head slumped. Nothing. I jumped to the back seat, felt his hand, his heart, his breathing. He was dead!

I couldn't stop staring at him. A tear fell but I hid it in shame. I turned back to my partner and told him that the boy's life had ceased – he burst out loud crying. Seeing a man cry like that, I could not control myself and my partner faded away behind the fall of my own tears. The patrol car fogged from the emotions.

We arrived at the hospital. As we rushed through the corridors, we told all the doctors, nurses, and onlookers what had happened. So many people were affected by what we said, some stood there speechless and tearful. No one wanted to lose sight of the boy until they had been assured of the time and place he would be buried. One of the hospital staff phoned the boy's home. His brother picked it up and was told of the accident.

His brother told us about him: He used to go out every Monday to visit his only grandmother outside of town. Whenever he visited her, he made sure to spend time with the poor children idling the streets and the orphans.

The town knew him – he was the one that would bring them the Islamic books and tapes. His dusty Mazda would be filled with rice and sugar and even candies – couldn't forget the candies – for those families who



were in need.

He would not stand for anyone to discourage him from the long journey to that town. He would always politely reply that the long drive gave him time to review his Quran and listen to Islamic lectures on his cassette deck. And ... and that with every step to the town he hoped for the reward he would find with Allah...

It is true, brothers and sisters, that Allah is Merciful and forgives and forgives.

*[Yet I am quite Forgiving ... ] But to whom?*

*[ ... towards anyone who turns (in repentance) and believes and acts honorable; then he will be guided.] – Surah Taha 20/82*

*[O our people! Respond to Allah's Caller (Muhammad - sal Allahu alayhi wa sallam) and believe in him, Allah will forgive you of your sins and will save you from a painful torment.] - Surah al-Ahqaf 46/31*

Just like we reply someone's call when they phone us – this is Allah and His Messenger calling us! Let us answer. There is a verse in the Qur'an that when Shaytaan read it he cried and felt regret. Read this verse, it is the door to our happiness in this life and the next:

*[And those who, if they commit an immorality or wrong themselves, remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins - and who can forgive sins except Allah? - and who do not persist in what they have done while they know.]*

*Allah then continues: [For those - their reward is forgiveness from their Lord and gardens beneath which rivers flow (in Jannah), wherein they shall abide eternally. Excellent is the reward of the (righteous) workers.] –*

*Surah Al-Imraan 3/135,136*

Allah sent the Prophets and the books; He sent the warners and glad tidings; and He sent the reminders. And atop all that, Allah comes down to Samaa' ad-Dunya – in a way befitting of His Majesty – in the third portion of the night – every night – calling to

every one of His servants: "Is there anyone who shall make Dua' so that I shall accept His Du'a? Is there anyone who shall ask for pardon so that I may pardon him?"

Dear brothers and sisters, let us make a pledge tonight to set our alarm clocks at 2 am in the morning. We all know that if there was some special sports event or someone had to catch a plane at that time they would be capable of waking up. Let's set the alarm to pray only 2 raka'at to Allah. And in Sajdah, recall just one sin – just one – between us and Allah and ask Allah Ta'ala to forgive us for that sin, pledging that we shall never return to it.

*Cont'd from page 33*

'Through periods of persecution and doubts, then reassurance, and finally complete confidence in his mission, there is no hint of deceit or dishonesty'. To Bertrand Russell, the great humanist philosopher, 'the Religion of the Prophet was a simple monotheism, uncomplicated by the elaborate theology of the Trinity and the Incarnation. The Prophet made no claim to be divine, nor did his followers make such a claim on his behalf'.

Finally, a quotation taken from Edward Gibbon, the great historian, summarizes the Islamic insistence on placing the character of the Prophet at its proper level, viz., neither exaltation nor denigration: "The Mahometans have uniformly withstood the temptation of reducing the object of their faith and devotion to the level of the senses and imagination of man. I believe in One God and Mohamet the Apostle of God", is a simple and invariable profession of Islam. The intellectual image of the Deity has never been degraded by any visible idol. The honors of the Prophet have never transgressed the measure of human virtue and his living precepts have restrained the gratitude of his disciples within the bounds of reason and religion'.

# Who Will Save You From Me Now?

*Abdul-Rahman A. al-Iyadah*

There was a small community in an isolated area. Weak and defenseless, the people of this community lived in fear and anxiety, because they were being relentlessly attacked by a gang of bandits.

We can scarcely imagine their fear. It is the fear of a helpless person in the face of a strong and merciless abuser. These bandits knew only the law of the jungle. Like lions, they recognized no code of ethics besides their own hunger and lust. Anyone they could subdue was fair game.

Though the community lived in the desert, before the arrival of the gang, they enjoyed peace and security and managed to prosper. Now they were being stripped of their lives, their liberty, and their honor. In desperation, they appealed to the authorities to come save them.

The head of state decided to take it upon himself to lead his forces into the area and punish the ones who were spreading terror and violating the lives and security of his people. News of this mobilization spread quickly and soon the bandits knew that the authorities were coming after them in force. They were compelled to flee the area and seek refuge in the surrounding mountains. They hid among the highest peaks they could find, hoping to save themselves. They knew that they could very well meet their fate in the very place they were fleeing to, but they hoped to at least be able to scope out the forces that were being sent against them.

The forces arrived under the command of the head of state to find that the

bandits had abandoned the area and taken up positions on a nearby mountain to survey the situation from a safe vantage point.

As soon as the forces arrived, a thunderstorm struck, flooding the valleys near the mountain. The head of state was soaked through. After the storm passed, he went off to find a place to remove his clothes and allow them to air out. He found a tree, took off his outer garments, and hung them on a branch to dry. He sat beneath the tree to rest from the tiring journey. Fatigue defeated him and he soon drifted off to sleep.

One of the bandits was watching this with interest, and said to himself: "This is an excellent opportunity to subdue the leader while he is sleeping. Then no one will stand in our way."

Exercising the utmost stealth, he climbed down from the mountain and snuck across to where the leader was sleeping.

As he approached the tree, he noticed the leader's sword beside him. He looked left and right to make sure that no one else was around. Then, with his skill as a thief, he quickly snatched up the sword and then pointed it in the leader's face.

The bandit sneered and exclaimed: "Who will save you from me now?"

The leader woke up at these words to see the bandit standing, threateningly above his head, sword in hand. He realized immediately that the glowering bandit had disarmed him and was threatening to kill him. Imagine what you would do in such a situation.

The leader kept his composure,

straightened himself up where he was sitting, and regarded his assailant calmly. After listening patiently to the bandit's threats, he answered his assailant's question, and said: "God will save me."

The bandit felt a shudder go through his body and down his arm. He dropped the sword. As swiftly as it fell, the leader snatched it up and came upon the bandit with it, repeating the same question that the bandit had asked him moments before: "Who will save you from me now?"

Imagine that you found yourself in this leader's position. What would you do with the bandit? Would your state of mind give you any chance to think before acting? Would anyone blame you if you struck the thief down in self defense?

However, this leader had a strong, magnanimous heart, a heart that knew neither rancor nor vengefulness. He regarded vindictiveness to be a sign of weakness. Imagine that the leader not only pardoned the bandit, but offered him the opportunity to join with his forces in their campaign. Moreover, he promised him that if he took the offer, he would receive all of the entitlements and rewards that the other soldiers would get.

We would suspect the bandit to eagerly take up this offer, at least as an act of deception. However, the bandit did the unthinkable. He refused, and the ruffian did so with all the coarseness and impertinence that he could muster.

The leader said to him: "Then go. You know the way."

The bandit began to hasten away, but then stopped and said: "I will not fight against you, nor will I ever join with any group who fights you." This, in and of itself, was an acceptable enough outcome.

When the bandit returned to the rest of his gang, they could see that he was elated to have survived the encounter. He said to

them: "I have come to you from a leader like no other." He then related to them everything that had happened and how fortunate he was to still be alive."

It remains for us to reveal the identity of this leader. He was the same person who is often maligned and depicted in a most ignoble light.

Yes, he was none other than Muhammad, the Prophet of God (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

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*Cont'd from page 16*

#### **FIND ALLAH TA'ALA**

Crisis upon crisis engulfs the Ummah all around the world. How do we respond to these situations? What is our moral obligation? What answer will we have on the Day of Qiyamah? Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is reported to have said that on the Day of Qiyamah Allah Ta'ala will ask his slave: "I was 'sick' but you did not visit me? The person will reply: "How can I visit You whereas You are the Lord of the worlds?" Allah Ta'ala will say: "Did you not know that my so-and-so servant was sick? Had you visited him, you would have found Me with him." Further Allah Ta'ala will say: "O my servant! I was 'hungry' but you did not feed Me." The person will reply: "How can I feed You whereas You are the Lord of the worlds?" Allah Ta'ala will reply: "Did you not know that my so-and-so servant was hungry? Had you fed him, you would have found Me with him!"

The wealth we possess is a gift of Allah Ta'ala. It is also an amanah. We must spend the wealth of Allah Ta'ala in a manner that He becomes pleased with us. May Allah Ta'ala accept our wealth and lives for the service of His Deen. Aameen.

***Courtesy: Al haadi***

# The Judicial Sytem in Islam

## Part 1

*Dr. Abdur Rahman al-Muala*

Man is a social being by nature. He cannot live perpetually on his own, completely independent of others. People are interdependent. Consequently, friction arise between them when their personal interests come into conflict with each other, or when what they perceive as their individual rights infringe upon those of others. Conflicts between them inevitably break out. In some cases, one party to the conflict might be strong and aggressive while the other is weak and condescending, incapable of defending his rights.

Because of this, it becomes necessary for there to be a way to prevent people from oppressing one another, to ensure that the weaker members of society receive justice, and to determine right from wrong when issues get complicated or uncertain. This can only be realized through a judge that has the power to give legal verdicts in cases of dispute.

For this reason, we find that the existence of a judge is considered by Islamic law and the laws of all the other revealed religions to be both a religious obligation and a necessity of human life. God says: "We have sent Messengers with clear proofs, and sent down with them the Scripture and the Balance that mankind can establish justice..." (Quran 57:25)

Islam – the religion that God wants for mankind from the time that He sent Mu-

hammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him until the Day of Judgment – shows great concern for the judicial system and those appointed to carry out its responsibilities. Islam prescribes for it many legal injunctions. How else could it be, when Islam is the religion of mercy, equality, and justice? It is the religion that comes to free people from worshipping Creation and bring them to the worship of God. It is the religion that comes to remove people from oppression and iniquity and bring them to the highest degree of justice and freedom.

God's Messenger was the greatest of judges. He used to act in the capacity of judge in the city of Medina, which was the first Islamic state. He used to appoint people to be judges in other cities. Among these were `Utâb b. Asyad who was sent to Mecca, Ali b. Abu Talib and Muadh b. Jabal, both of whom were sent to Yemen.

In the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, the head of state continued to be the one to appoint judges, govern their affairs, protect their independence, and keep the governors and political appointees – and even the Caliphs – subject to the judges' verdicts. Umar b. al-Khattaab, the second Caliph, was the first person to make the judge an independent entity, distinct from the Caliph and the governors.

In this way, the judicial system continued to evolve throughout the early Islamic

era, during the Umayyad era, and well into the Abbasid era. The office of Chief Justice came into being at this time. The Chief Justice became responsible for appointing and removing judges. He was responsible for supervising their behavior and monitoring their performance. The first person to be appointed to this post was the justice Abu Yusuf, the student of the great jurist Abu Haneefah (may God have mercy on them both). Thereafter, this office became widespread throughout the Muslim lands. It continued to exist up to the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

The names of many just judges have been preserved in Islamic History. Their names have become like synonyms for justice and integrity. Many pages in the history books are devoted to the lives and careers of eminent judges like Iyâs b. Muawiyah, Shurayh b. Abdallah, al-`Izz b. `Abd al-Salam and others who applied the teachings of Islam in the best possible manner. They give us a living example of how a Muslim judge is supposed to conduct himself.

We should mention, since we are discussing the Islamic judicial system, that Islam sets down broad guidelines and basic principles concerning the affairs of life and rarely concerns itself with the particular details of life. This is so these guidelines can stay relevant for every time and place. One of these guidelines is that establishing justice among people is an obligation that has to be carried out. As for the manner of achieving this objective, this has not been detailed by the sacred texts. This has been left for the people of each generation to deal with in a way most suited to their unique set of circumstances. The only condition is that whatever methods are chosen must not run contrary to Islamic Law.

### **Defining the Judicial System and its Legal basis**

The judicial system in Islam is a system for deciding between people in litigation with the aim of settling their disputes in accordance with the injunctions of the Divine Law, injunctions that are taken from the Quran and Sunnah.

All of the Messengers of God (may God praise them all) acted as judges. God says: "And remember David and Solomon, when they gave judgment concerning the field when people's sheep had browsed therein at night, and We were witness to their judgment. And We made Solomon to understand the case. And to each of them We gave good judgment and knowledge." (Quran 21:78-79)

God also says: "O David, verily we have placed you as a successor on Earth, so judge between people in truth, and do not follow your desires for it will mislead you from the path of God. Verily, those who stray from the path of God have a severe punishment because they forgot the day of reckoning." (Quran 38:26)

Prophet Muhammad, who came with the final and eternal Message, was ordered by God to pass judgment in disputes just as he was ordered to spread the word of God and call people to Islam. This is mentioned in the Quran in a number of places. God says, for instance: "So judge (O Muhammad) between them by what God has revealed and do not follow their vain desires, but beware of them lest they turn you away from some of what God has sent down to you." (Quran 5:49)

God also says: "...And if you judge (O Muhammad), judge between them with justice. Verily, God loves those who act justly." (Quran 5:42)

And He says: "But no, by your Lord, they shall have no faith until they make you (O Muhammad) judge in all their disputes and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions and accept them with full sub-

mission.” (Quran 4:65)

The Sunnah also provides for the legal basis of the Islamic judicial system. It is related by Amr b. al-Aas that the Prophet said: “If a judge gives a judgment using his best judgment and is correct, then he receives a double reward (from God). If he uses his best judgment but makes a mistake, then he receives a single reward.” (Ahmed)

God’s Messenger said: “You should not wish to be like other people, except in two cases: a man who God has given wealth and he spends it on Truth and another who God has granted wisdom and he gives verdicts on its basis and teaches others.” (Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim)

Many scholars have related to us that there is consensus among Muslims on the legal status of the judicial system in Islam. Ibn Qudamah says: “The Muslims are unanimously agreed that a judicial system must be established for the people.”

### **The Islamic Ruling Concerning the Judiciary**

The jurists agree that the duties of the judge are an obligation that must be carried out by society. If some members of society carry out this duty, it is sufficient for everyone. If, on the other hand, everyone neglects it, then everyone in society is sinful.

The proof that these duties are obligatory comes from the Quran: “O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice...” (Quran 4:135)

It is only necessary for a small number of individuals to perform judicial duties since judicial concerns come under the broad duty of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. It is not obligatory for every individual to carry out this duty as long as some people are doing so.

The affairs of the people will not be correct and upright without a judicial system. It is, consequently, obligatory for one to exist, just like it is necessary to have a military.

Imam Ahmad, one of the greatest and most well-known scholars of Islam said:

*“People have to have a judicial authority or their rights will disappear.”*

The duties of the judiciary include enjoining what is right, helping the oppressed, securing people’s rights, and keeping oppressive behavior in check. None of these duties can be performed without the appointment of a judiciary.

A judicial system is a necessity for the prosperity and development of nations. It is needed to secure human happiness, protect the rights of the oppressed, and restrain the oppressor. It is the way to resolve disputes and ensure human rights. It facilitates enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and curbing immoral behavior. In this way, a just social order can be enjoyed by all sectors of society, and every individual can feel secure in his life, property, honor, and liberty. In this environment, nations can progress, civilization can be achieved, and people are free to pursue what will better them both spiritually and materially.

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*Cont’d from page 35*

identified as his mother’s killer.” She did not eat or drink anything for one whole day. Saad came to her and said: “Mother! If you had 100 souls and they die one by one, I will not abandon my religion. So you can eat or refuse to eat, as you please.” When she despaired of his response, she resumed eating. God then revealed this verse, ordering Muslims to be kind to their parents and to treat them with respect but not to obey them in disbelief.

Thus faith overcame the test of close relations, but kindness and dutifulness remained intact. A believer may be subjected to such a test at any time. When and if this does occur, God’s directive and Saad’s action provide proper guidance.

*Source: Arab News*

# Taubah (Repentance)

*Maulana Muhammad Abdullah Gangohi (RA)*

*How is it possible for the heart to become celestially illumined (munawwar) when the forms and images of aliens have become engraved on the mirror of the heart?*

*How is it possible for such a heart to journey towards Allah Ta'ala while it is fettered in the prison of lustful desires? In fact, how can such a heart*

*ever entertain the hope of entering the Divine Presence while it has not purified itself of the impurities of its neglect? How is it possible for this heart*

*to entertain the hope of comprehending the subtleties of the spiritual mysteries when it refuses to abstain from its improper acts?*

How can a heart become illumined when it has been penetrated by worldly wealth, worldly reputation, offspring, property, idle thoughts and false hopes? When the darkness of the phantoms is dispelled from the heart, Noor will then settle in the heart.

The heart which night and day is fettered in the chains of nafsani desires, thinking only of food, garments and wives, cannot advance towards Allah Ta'ala because its feet are tied with chains.

The heart which has not been cleansed of the impurities of neglect (ghafat) and perpetually dwells in negligence, having forgotten the a khirat, cannot enter into the lofty Divine Presence. How can such a heart be granted acceptance in such a pure Court?

Just as an impure (napaak) person is

not permitted entry into a Masjid, so too is a heart which has not been purified of the impurities of ghaflat denied entry into the Divine Presence. Such a heart is not granted Divine Acceptance.

The heart which is engrossed in despicable acts, futility and baseless hopes cannot entertain the desire to comprehend the mysteries and subtleties of Allah Ta'ala. When it has repented of its futility, then only will it be endowed with the ability to understand Divine Mysteries.

If His (Allah's) justice has to be the determinant, then no sin can be described as Sagheerah (minor), and if His grace be considered then no sin will be Kabeerah (major).

Should Allah's attribute of Adl (Justice) be manifested on earth, dealing with us strictly in terms of justice, then even the most insignificant error will not be Sagheerah, every act of sin will be Kabeerah and a punishable offence because the slightest disobedience to such a majestic and great Lord and Benefactor whose grandeur is infinite and whose bounties are innumerable, justifies the punishment of complete destruction of the disobedient one.

On the other hand, if His grace is manifested, then our greatest sins too, wane into oblivion and become insignificant and are forgiven.

When you commit some sin do not despair of attaining closeness with your Rabb because, perhaps this is the last sin destined for you.

When you commit some sin as a result of human nature, never allow this sin to bring about the slightest change in your determination to remain steadfast on the Deen and do not permit it to slacken your bond with Allah Ta'ala. Do not be deceived by the thought: 'I am unable to remain steadfast on the Deen, hence my sinning.' Do not think that firmness on the Deen is impossible on account of the sin committed. With this idea, do not become audacious in sin. This idea which you entertain is baseless because a sin committed as a result of the weakness in human nature is not in conflict with firmness on the Deen. Yes, persistence in sins, abstention from taubah and deliberate commission of sin are negatory of firmness (Istiqamat).

It is quite possible that the sin committed may be the last decreed for you and thereafter such mercy may be directed to you, that you will commit no further sin.

For the heart not to grieve when Taa'at (acts of obedience) and Ibaadaat (acts of worship) are lost, and not to feel remorse when indulging in sin and evil, is a sign of the death of the heart.

Know that just as the life of the physical body is dependent on food, so too is the life of the (spiritual) heart dependent on Imaan and A'maal-e-Saalihah (Righteous Deeds). In the same way as the physical body would perish if deprived of nourishment, the heart will die if it is without Imaan. Thus, if a man is unconcerned about his neglect of obedience, e.g. Namaaz, Roza (fasting), Jama't Salaat, etc., and he experiences no regret and remorse for the sins he commits, it indicates that his heart is dead, devoid of the impressions of Imaan.

If the heart derives pleasure from

acts of obedience and worship, and grieves and feels regret when sins are committed it indicates that the Noor of Imaan is radiating.

There should not be in your mind any sin so grave that it prevents you from holding a good opinion of hope with Allah Ta'ala and causes you to despair of His mercy and grace. He who has recognised his Rabb knows that in front of his Rabb's grace and mercy, his sins are insignificant.

One should not hold one's sins in such a grave light that one loses hope in the grace and mercy of Allah Ta'ala. One should not think: "The gravity of my sin is so great that there is no forgiveness for it, and I have on account of this sin now reached a stage where I am unfit for His grace and mercy." Such despair is the consequence of unawareness of the attributes of Allah Ta'ala.

One who has recognised his Creator and is aware of His attributes, will be acquainted with His attributes of Forgiveness and Grace. He will thus understand that in the presence of these infinite attributes, his sins are insignificant. He will always have hopes of being forgiven.

While this should be one's attitude, one should not consider sin itself to be insignificant. If the gravity of sin is not in the heart, one will then not resort to taubah nor will there be regret and remorse.

The summary of this discussion is: Neither consider the sin in such grave light that one despairs and loses hope in forgiveness, for this too is kufr, nor regard sin so lightly that one feels no remorse and is deprived of taubah. The hope of forgiveness should be tempered with regret for having sinned, and a firm resolution should be made to refrain from disobedience in future.

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***“Two persons are tormented in the life of this world: a rich man who is given a great wealth that keeps him so busy with worldly pleasures, and a poor man who is deprived of such pleasures, and a poor man who is deprived of such pleasures for which he is longing with a heart.” (Shumait ibn Ajlan)***

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# The Verdict of History

*V Muhammad Ashrof*

The following derogatory remarks of some Orientalists have today become part of the English language: 'If mountain doesn't go to Muhammad, Muhammad goes to the mountain'. However, this usage, if viewed from another angle, glowingly reflects his down to earth realism. The scholars all over the world stand amazed at this remarkable aspect of Muhammad's personality.

A Christian critic of Islam, admitted thus: 'In the life of Muhammad, the ruler of Medina, a personal union between spiritual and political authority existed. He was the spiritual spokesman and the political regent of God in one person'. N.K.R Sinha pointed out the aspect of 'anti-exaltation' of his personality: 'His dislike of deification of any object, human or material, except that of one supreme reality was ingrained in him so deeply that he forbade worship of any symbol, in any form, and he took good care that the followers of Islam, out of esteem and affection for him, did not deify him in any way. Perhaps, this is the singular instance in human history of self denial of this kind.' H.G. Wells analyzed the reason behind the Islamic approach in these lines: "Warned by the experiences of Christianity, Muhammad was very emphatic in insisting that he himself was merely a man, and so saved his teaching from much corruption and misrepresentation.'

Bhudev, a great disciple of Vivekananda, found Islam in his scale of values superior to Christianity as a religion. Tapan Raychaudhuri summarizes Bhudev's analysis thus: 'He based his assessment on the ground that while Christianity with its ascetic founder provided no role model for the man of the world, the Prophet of Islam was the perfect

man, *Insan-i-kamil*, who excelled as a man of God as well as a householder and leader of men.

An expert on comparative religion, Houston Smith, writes: 'From first to last, he (Muhammad) resisted every impulse to glamorize his own person.' A leader of the Quaker movement in Christianity, Delight Ansley, has used these words to describe the peculiarity of Prophet Muhammad: stories were told of anything supernatural in connection with his birth. He never performed a miracle, and he died peacefully in bed, without any sign or wonders from heaven. Some legends and myths have developed in the course of time, but they are not essential to the faith of Islam.' The great Indian writer and columnist, Mukul Kesavan, while reviewing a biography of Prophet Muhammad, commented: The insistence on Muhammad's mortality is in striking contrast to the Bible's systematic assertion of Christ's divinity from the Virgin Birth to the Resurrection.'

The Prophet, by sheer dynamism of his personality and splendour of his teachings could convert an entire race. He changed illiterate Arabs, who were prone to superstition and given over to drinking; was indeed one of the greatest social revolutions the world has ever witnessed. Muhammad has been widely acknowledged as the greatest of all time greats in human history ; 'It is this unparalleled combination of secular and religious influence which I feel entitles Muhammad to be considered the most influential single figure in human history'. "The evaluation of a Christian scholar on the life of Muhammad has been summarized in these words:

*Cont'd on page 25*

# Who Benefits by Striving

In the name of God, the Lord of Grace, the Ever Merciful Do those who do evil deeds think that they can escape Us? How ill they judge! Whoever looks forward with hope to meeting God (let him be ready for it); for the end set by God is bound to come. He alone hears all and knows all. Whoever strives hard (for God's cause) does so for his own good. For certain, God is in no need of anything in all the worlds. As for those who believe and do righteous deeds, We shall most certainly erase their bad deeds, and shall most certainly reward them in accordance with the best that they ever did. We have enjoined upon man goodness toward his parents: yet should they endeavour to make you associate as partner with Me something of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them. It is to Me that you shall all return, when I shall inform you about all that you were doing (in life). As for those who believe and do righteous deeds, We shall most certainly admit them among the righteous. (The Spider, Al-Ankaboot: 29:4-9)

Those who subject the believers to hardship and act wickedly will not escape God's punishment, even though they may appear strong and victorious. This is again a true promise made by God: "Or do those who do evil deeds think that they can escape Us? How ill they judge!" (Verse 4)

No wicked or evil person should think that he can escape. If he does then his judgment is absolutely erroneous. God, who has made tests a general rule to distinguish true believers from false claimants, is the One who has also made punishment of the perpetrators of evil a general rule that never fails. This is the second strong note at the opening of the surah, one that balances the first.

The third note the surah strikes is that of reassuring those who hope to meet with God and strengthening their bond with Him: "Whoever looks forward with hope to meeting God (let him be ready for it); for the end set by God is bound to come. He alone hears all and knows all." (Verse 5)

Those who dearly hope to meet God should rest assured. They should wait confidently for the fulfillment of His promise. They can look forward to it provided they do so with certitude. This is an inspiring image: a person of faith cherishing hopes and looking forward to the fulfillment of God's promise. His aspiration is answered with confirmation of its truth. This is followed by the reassurance that God is fully aware of all their hopes: "He alone hears all and knows all". (Verse 5)

Then the surah states to those believers who strive to fulfill the duties of faith, enduring all manner of hardship, that they only strive for themselves and for their own good. By doing so they have set their affairs on the right course. As for God, He needs no one: "Whoever strives hard (for God's cause) does so for his own good. For certain, God is in no need of anything in all the worlds." (Verse 6)

It is true that God has tested the believers and required them to strive hard so that they could endure adversity with patience, but all this is for their own good. It has ensured their benefit both in this world and in the life to come. Striving, or jihad, reinforces a person's good elements, expands his horizons, makes him ready to sacrifice his life and possessions, as also enhances his best qualities and abilities. It does all this for the individual who strives, before it brings further benefits to the community of believers, im-

proving its situation, establishing the truth within it, and making goodness overcome evil in its ranks.

“Whoever strives hard (for God’s cause) does so for his own good.” Let no one, then, stop midway through this process. Let no one stop to demand a price from God, holding what he did as a favor and feeling that his prize is overdue. God benefits nothing by anyone’s striving. He is in no need of people’s efforts. After all, human beings are weak, barely significant. “God is in no need of anything in all the worlds.” (Verse 6)

It is God who grants a favor to those who strive, helping them in their efforts and establishing them in a position of power on earth. Furthermore, He will reward them well in the life to come: “As for those who believe and do righteous deeds, We shall most certainly erase their bad deeds, and shall most certainly reward them in accordance with the best that they ever did.” (Verse 7)

Believers should remain reassured of their great reward. Let them, then, remain patient in adversity, fulfilling the requirements of their test, and persevering in their jihad. A great future and a goodly reward await them. This is sufficient for any believer, even though he may not enjoy justice in this present life.

The surah then refers to a type of test which we have already mentioned: that of ties and bonds with family and loved ones. It gives clear and decisive guidance in such a difficult situation: We have enjoined upon man goodness towards his parents: yet should they endeavor to make you associate as partner with Me something of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them. It is to Me that you shall all return, when I shall inform you about all that you were doing (in life). As for those who believe and do righteous deeds, We shall most certainly admit them among the righteous. (Verses 8-9)

Parents are the closest of all rela-

tives. They give much to their children. Hence, to be kind to one’s parents is a duty required of everyone. Indeed parents must be treated with love, respect, and care. Yet when it comes to one’s duty towards God, they cannot be obeyed in opposition to Him: “We have enjoined upon man goodness towards his parents: yet should they endeavour to make you associate as partner with Me something of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them.” (Verse 8)

The paramount bond is that with God. Hence, if one’s parents are unbelievers, they should be treated with care and kindness, but must not be obeyed or followed. Once this present life is over, all return to God: “It is to Me that you shall all return, when I shall inform you about all that you were doing (in life).” (Verse 8)

When judgment is made between believers and unbelievers, the former find themselves to be a closely knit unit even though they may have no blood relationship: “As for those who believe and do righteous deeds, We shall most certainly admit them among the righteous.” (Verse 9)

Thus, those who maintain their bond with God will be together in one community, as they are in reality. The bonds created by blood and marriage relations are no longer valid; they end when this present life comes to an end. Such bonds are accidental and carry no real substance because they are not linked to the strongest and unseverable bond, faith.

In explaining this verse, Al-Tirmidhi reports that it was revealed in connection with Saad ibn Abi Waqqas and his mother Hamnah bint Abi Sufyan. Saad was a very dutiful son. She asked him: “What is this religion you have embraced? By God, I will not eat or drink until you revert to your original religion, or else I die. You will then be in disgrace for the rest of time as you will be

*Cont’d on page 30*

# Wife Beating

*Dr. Jamal Badawi*

In the event of a family dispute, the Qur'an exhorts the husband to treat his wife kindly and not overlook her POSITIVE ASPECTS (see Qur'an 4:19). If the problem relates to the wife's behavior, her husband may exhort her and appeal for reason. In most cases, this measure is likely to be sufficient. In cases where the problem continues, the husband may express his displeasure in another peaceful manner, by sleeping in a separate bed from hers. There are cases, however, in which a wife persists in deliberate mistreatment and expresses contempt of her husband and disregard for her marital obligations. Instead of divorce, the husband may resort to another measure that may save the marriage, at least in some cases. Such a measure is more accurately described as a gentle tap on the body, but NEVER ON THE FACE, making it more of a symbolic measure than a punitive one. Following is the related Qur'anic text:

Men are the protectors and maintainers of women. because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in (the husband's) absence what Allah would have them guard. As to those women on whose part you fear disloyalty and ill-conduct, admonish them (first), (next) do not share their beds, (and last) beat (tap) them (lightly); but if they return to obedience, seek not against them means (of annoyance): for Allah is Most High, Great (above you all). (4:34)

Even here, that maximum measure is limited by the following:

a. It must be seen as A RARE EXCEPTION TO THE REPEATED EXHORTATION OF MUTUAL RESPECT, KINDNESS AND GOOD TREATMENT, discussed earlier. Based on the Qur'an and hadith this measure may be used in the cases of lewdness on the part of the wife or extreme refraction and rejection of the husband's reasonable requests on a consistent basis (nushuz). Even then, other measures, such as exhortation, should be tried first.

b. As defined by hadith, it is NOT PERMISSIBLE TO STRIKE ANYONE'S FACE, CAUSE ANY BODILY HARM OR EVEN BE HARSH. What the hadith qualified as dharban ghayra mubarrih, or light striking, was interpreted by early jurists as a (symbolic) use of miswak (a small natural toothbrush)! They further qualified permissible "striking" as that which leaves no mark on the body. It is interesting that this latter fourteen-centuries-old qualifier is the criterion used in contemporary American law to separate a light and harmless tap or strike from "abuse" in the legal sense. This makes it clear that even this extreme, last resort, and "lesser of the two evils" measure that may save a marriage does not meet the definitions of "physical abuse," "family violence," or "wife battering" in the 20th century law in liberal democracies, where such extremes are so commonplace that they are seen as national concerns.

c. The permissibility of such symbolic expression of the seriousness of continued refraction DOES NOT IMPLY ITS DESIRABILITY. In several ahadith, Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) discouraged this measure. Among his sayings are the follow-

ing: "Do not beat the female servants of Allah;" "Some (women) visited my family complaining about their husbands (beating them). These (husbands) are not the best of you;" and "[It is not a shame that] one of you beats his wife like [an unscrupulous person] beats a slave and maybe he sleeps with her at the end of the day." (See Riyadh Al-Saliheen, op.cit, p.p. 137-140). In another hadith the Prophet (P) said:

...How does anyone of you beat his wife as he beats the stallion camel and then he may embrace (sleep with) her?... (Sahih Al-Bukhari, op. cit., vol.8.hadith 68,pp.42-43).

d. True following of the sunnah is to follow the example of the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), who NEVER RESORTED TO THAT MEASURE, regardless of the circumstances.

e. Islamic teachings are universal in nature. They respond to the needs and circumstances of diverse times, cultures and circumstances. Some measures may work in some cases and cultures or with certain persons but may not be effective in others. by definition, a "permissible" act is neither required, encouraged or forbidden. In fact it may be BETTER TO SPELL OUT THE EXTENT OF permissibility, such as in the issue at hand, rather than leaving it unrestricted and unqualified, or ignoring it all together. In the absence of strict qualifiers, persons may interpret the matter in their own way, which can lead to excesses and real abuse.

f. Any excess, cruelty, family violence, or abuse committed by any "Muslim" can never be traced, honestly, to any revelatory text (Qur'an or hadith). Such EXCESSES AND VIOLATIONS ARE TO BE BLAMED ON THE PERSON(S) HIMSELF, as it shows that they are paying lip service to Islamic teachings and injunctions and failing to follow the true Sunnah of the Prophet (P).



# An Unmet Challenge

**Description: The inability of Arabs during the time of the Prophet, the Arabs after him, and non-Arabs to meet the challenge of the Quran: to produce anything similar to it.**

## The Evidence

Initially, the Meccan unbelievers said Muhammad is the author of the Quran. God responded to them:

*"Or do they say, 'He himself has composed this [message]?' No, but they are not willing to believe! But then, [if they deem it the work of a mere mortal,] let them produce another discourse like it - if what they say be true! [Or do they deny the existence of God implicitly by denying the fact of His revelation?] Have they themselves been created without anything - or were they, perchance, their own creators?" (Quran 52:33-35)*

First, God challenged them to produce ten chapters like the Quran:

*"Or they may say, 'He forged it,' Say, 'Bring ye then ten suras forged, like unto it, and call (to your aid) whomsoever you can, other than God! - If you speak the truth!' If then they answer not your (call), know you that this revelation is sent down with the knowledge of God, and that there is no god but He! Will you then submit (to Islam)?" (Quran 11:13-14)*

But, when they were unable to meet the challenge of ten chapters, God reduced it to a single chapter:

*"And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down on Our slave, then produce a surah thereof and call upon your witnesses other than God, if you should be truthful. But if you*

*do not – and you will never be able to – then fear the Fire whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the unbelievers.” (Quran 2:23-24)*

Finally, God foretold their eternal failure to meet the divine challenge:

*“Say: ‘If all mankind and all jinn would come together to produce the like of this Quran, they could not produce its like even though they were to exert all their strength in aiding one another!’” (Quran 17:88)*

The Prophet of Islam said:

*“Every Prophet was given ‘signs’ because of which people believed in him. Indeed, I have been given the Divine Revelation that God has revealed to me. So, I hope to have the most followers of all the prophets on the Day of Resurrection.” (Saheeh Al-Bukhari)*

The physical miracles performed by the prophets were time-specific, valid only for those who witnessed them, whereas the like of the continuing miracle of our Prophet, the Noble Quran, was not granted to any other prophet. Its linguistic superiority, style, clarity of message, strength of argument, quality of rhetoric, and the human inability to match even its shortest chapter till the end of time grant it an exquisite uniqueness. Those who witnessed the revelation and those who came after, all can drink from its fountain of wisdom. That is why the Prophet of Mercy hoped he will have the most followers of all the prophets, and prophesized that he would at a time when Muslims were few, but then they began to embrace Islam in floods. Thus, this prophecy came true.

### **Explanation of Quran’s Inimitability**

#### **State of the Prophet Muhammad**

He was an ordinary human being.

He was illiterate. He could neither read nor write.

He was more than forty years old when he received the first revelation. Until then he was not known to be an orator, poet,

or a man of letters; he was just a merchant. He did not compose a single poem or deliver even one sermon before he was chosen to be a prophet.

He brought a book attributing it to God, and all Arabs of his time were in agreement it was inimitable.

### **The Challenge of the Quran**

The Quran puts a challenge out to anyone who opposes the Prophet. The challenge is to produce a chapter (surah) similar to it, even if it were to be a cooperative effort. A person may summon all the help he can from the physical and spiritual realms.

### **Why this Challenge?**

First, Arabs were poets. Poetry was their supreme ornament and their most representative form of discourse. Arabic poetry was rooted in the oral; it was a voice before it acquired an alphabet. Poets could compose intricate poems spontaneously and commit thousands of lines to memory. Arabs had a complex system of evaluating a poet and the poetry to meet rigid standards. Annual competition selected the ‘idols’ of poetry, and they were engraved in gold and hung inside the Kaaba, alongside their idols of worship. The most skilled served as judges. Poets could ignite wars and bring truce between warring tribes. They described women, wine, and war like no one else.

Second, the opponents of the Prophet Muhammad were strongly determined to quash his mission in any way possible. God gave them a non-violent approach to disprove Muhammad.

### **Inability to Meet the Challenge and its Consequences**

History is a witness that the pre-Islamic Arabs could not produce a single chapter to meet the challenge of the Quran. Instead of meeting the challenge, they chose

violence and waged war against him. They, of all people, had the ability and the motive to meet the Quranic challenge, but could not do so. Had they done so, the Quran would have proven false, and the man who brought it would have been exposed as a false prophet. The fact that the ancient Arabs did not and could not meet this challenge is proof of Quran's inimitability. Their example is of a thirsty man next to a well, the only reason he dies of thirst is if he was unable to reach the water!

Furthermore, the inability of previous Arabs to meet the challenge of the Quran implies later Arabs are less competent to meet the challenge, due to their lack the mastery of classical Arabic that the previous, 'classical' Arabs had. According to linguists of the Arabic language, the Arabs before and during the time of the Prophet, in exclusion to subsequent generations, had the most complete mastery of the Arabic language, its rules, meters, and rhymes. Later Arabs did not match the mastery of classical Arabs.

Lastly, the challenge is for Arabs and non-Arabs alike. If the Arabs cannot meet the challenge, the non-speakers of Arabic cannot claim to meet the challenge either. Hence, the inimitability of the Quran is established for non-Arabs as well.

What if someone were to say: 'perhaps the challenge of the Quran was met by someone in the time of the Prophet, but the pages of history did not preserve it.'?

Since the beginning, people have reported important events to their succeeding generations, especially in that which captures attention or what people are looking out for. The Quranic challenge was well spread and well known, and had someone

met it, it would have been impossible for it not to have reached us. If it has been lost in the annals of history, then, for the sake of argument, it is also possible that there was more than one Moses, more than one Jesus, and more than one Muhammad; perhaps many scriptures were also revealed to these imaginary prophets, and it is possible the world knows nothing about it! Just like these suppositions are unfounded historically, it is also unreasonable to imagine that the Quranic challenge was met without it reaching us.

Second, had they met the challenge, the Arabs would have discredited the Prophet. It would have been their biggest propaganda tool against him. Nothing like this happened, instead, they chose war.

The fact that no effort of the non-Muslim has succeeded in 'producing a verse' like a verse of the Quran means that either no-one has taken the Quran seriously enough to make the effort, or that they made the effort, but were not successful. This shows the inimitability of the Quran, a unique and everlasting message. The uniqueness of the Quran combined with the divine message it brings to mankind is a sure indication of the truth of Islam. In the face of this, every person is faced with one of the two choices. He either openly accepts the Quran is God's Word. In doing so he must also accept that Muhammad was sent by God and was His Messenger. Or else he secretly knows the Quran is true, but he chooses in his heart to refuse it. If the seeker is honest in his seeking, he need but explore this question of its inimitability to nurture the inner certainty that he has really found the final truth in the religion it predicates.

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*True Friendship is not something we can create. Rather, it is a grace given to us that we receive from Allah; experiences of almost everyone I know testify to this fact. Many of them say they have made conscience decisions when choosing acquaintances and comrades, but true and best friends, just happen—like fate from Allah.*

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# Khosrau and the old lady

Buzrjamhar, the wise man of Persia, related the story of Khosrau the king and the old lady. The later possessed a chicken and a small cottage, which was situated on a small plot of land that neighbored the palace of the king Khosrau. One day, she had to travel to another village, and before departing she prayed, 'O' my Lord, I entrust my chicken to You.

During her absence, Khosrau usurped her property in order to expand the gardens of his palace. His army slaughtered the chicken and destroyed the cottage. When she returned and discovered the deplorable act, she turned her gaze to the sky and said, 'O' my Lord, I was absent and where were you.' Then Allah did her justice and granted a revenge for her. It came to pass that the son of Khosrau attacked his father with a knife and killed him while in bed.

*"Is not Allah sufficient for His slave? Yet they try to frighten you with those (whom they worship) besides Him! And whom Allah sends astray, for him there will be no guide" [39:36]*

Would that we were all like the worthier of Adam's sons, who said to the other:

*"If you do stretch your hand against me to kill me, I shall never stretch my hand against you to kill you." [5:281]*

The Prophet, sallallahu alayhe wa sallam, said, "be the slave of Allah, the murdered, and not the slave of Allah, the murderer."

The Muslim has a mission and message more important than revenge, malice, and hate.

## Notable Quotes

*"OF all that Allah bestows on His servant, there is no better garment than reason; nor a more beautiful necklace than knowledge; nor a better decoration than forbearance, and the epitome of that is piety (taqwa)'."*

*(Thu-n-Noon Misri)*

*"Abu Sufyan was asked, "How did you reach this status?" "I never quarreled with a man without leaving room for reconciliation", he replied.*

*|People are of two kinds, one, the believer, so don't torment him, the other, the ignorant, so don't compete with him in ignorance."*

*(Rabi' ibn Khaytham)*

*"If you remain quiet, and I remain quiet, how will the laymen know the right from the wrong?"*

*(Ibn Hanbal)*